

# The Atlantic World Since 1450

## Slaves and Capitalists, Rebels and Zombies

Dr. David McNally  
[djmcnally@uh.edu](mailto:djmcnally@uh.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1 – 2:30 PM, Thursday, 11 AM – 12:30 PM

This fourth-year capstone seminar surveys major themes in Atlantic history from 1450 until the late nineteenth-century. Our approach will be to investigate the Atlantic World as a *global region*, an interconnected set of world spaces—Europe, Africa, and the Americas—whose histories are inseparable. The focus will be on the role of slavery in the rise of capitalism, work and life in the Americas, revolutionary movements in the Atlantic World, and cultures of resistance, abolition, and emancipation. The following six themes will figure prominently:

- Slavery, European capitalism, and the Middle Passage
- European colonialism, African societies, and Indigenous Peoples of the Americas
- Haiti and the Atlantic revolutions
- The Black Atlantic and the Black Radical Tradition
- Zombies and the Culture of the Atlantic World
- Abolition, Emancipation, and Decolonization in the “New World”

The course is designed to foster the skills necessary for students to develop their thesis for a 15-20-page research paper. We will explore the key historical approaches to each of the major themes, and students will develop their final papers by way of sequenced assignments. Each session offers a series of recommended readings pertinent to final papers. Students will choose from recommended readings, and other readings discussed with the course director, to guide the research for their essay topic.

### Core Texts

- John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*
- Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*
- Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*
- C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingue Revolution*
- Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*

## Course Assignments (with percentage value)

- One-page thesis proposal for research paper – 10% (due date: February 5)
- Five-minute presentation of thesis questions – 15% (due date variable according to topic)
- Draft of opening section of research paper – 15% (due date: February 26)
- Rough draft of research paper – 25% (due date: March 26)
- Research paper – 35% (due date: April 23)

## COURSE OUTLINE

### January 15 – **Course Introduction: Seas, Ships, and the Atlantic World**

Readings: Marcus Rediker, "Ghosts on the Waterfront," Eurozine, July 27, 2012, available at: <https://www.eurozine.com/ghosts-on-the-waterfront/>

### January 22 – **Human Cargoes, 1: Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade**

Readings: Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, Introduction and Ch. 1-2; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, pp. 98-112

Recommended: Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*; John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, esp. pp. 13-53; Hugh Thomas *The Slave Trade: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870*; Joseph E. Inikori, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe*; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800*; Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in African Slavery*; Daniel Mannix, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518-1865*; Colin A. Palmer, *Human Cargoes, The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700-1739*

### January 29 – **Human Cargoes, 2: The Slave Ship and the Middle Passage**

Readings: Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, Ch. 3-4; Robert Weisbord, "The Case of the Slave-Ship Zong," *History Today*, v. 19, n. 8 (August 1969), available here: <https://www.historytoday.com/robert-weisbord/case-slave-ship-zong>

Recommended: Sowande M. Mustaeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship*; Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*; James Walvin, *The Zong: A Massacre, the Law, and the End of Slavery*; Marcus Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*; Multiple narratives at "Recovered Histories: Reawakening the Narratives of Enslavement, Resistance and the Fight for Freedom," available here: <http://www.recoveredhistories.org/storiesmiddle.php>; Extracts from John Newton's *Journal* (1754), available here [http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/middle\\_passage/john\\_newton.aspx](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/middle_passage/john_newton.aspx)

February 5 – **Indigenous Peoples and European Colonization**

Readings: Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Studies*, v. 8, n. 4 (2006), pp. 387-409; Gary B. Nash, *Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early North America*, selections TBA

Recommended: Andres Resendez, *The Other Slavery*; Tiya Alicia Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*; Hans Koning, *Columbus: His Enterprise*; Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, *Indians of the Americas*; John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime that Should Haunt America*; and Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*

February 12 – **Controversies about Capitalism and Its Origins, 1: The Brenner Thesis**

Readings: Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*, Parts I and II

Recommended: \*Robert Brenner, “Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial England,” *Past and Present*, 70 (1976); T.S. Ashton, ed., *The Brenner Debate*; Rodney Hilton, ed. *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*; Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*; Spencer Dimmock, *The Origin of Capitalism in England 1400-1600*; Jane Whittle, *The Development of Agrarian Capitalism: Land and Labour in Norfolk, 1440-1580*; James M. Blaut, “Robert Brenner in the Tunnel of Time,” *Antipode*, v. 26, n. 4 (1994); Richard Lachmann, *From Manor to Market: Structural Change in England, 1534-1640*.

February 19 – **Controversies about Capitalism and Its Origins, 2: The Williams Thesis**

Readings: Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 5 (available online at Internet Archive:

[https://archive.org/stream/capitalismandsla033027mbp/capitalismandsla033027mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/capitalismandsla033027mbp/capitalismandsla033027mbp_djvu.txt)

Recommended: \*Hilary Beckles, “Capitalism and Slavery: The Debate over Eric Williams,” *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (December 1984), pp. 171-189; Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, ed., *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery*; R. Bailey, “The Slave(ry) Trade and the Development of Capitalism in the United States: The Textile Industry in New England,” *Social Science History*, v. 14, n. 3 (1990), pp. 373-414; Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660*; John G. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, eds., *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*; Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy 1660-1700*; Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy 1660-1800*; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*, selections.

February 26 – **Work and Life on the New World Plantation, 1: Labor and Production**

Readings: Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, Ch. 2, 4; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, Ch. 6

Recommended: Philip A. Howard, *Black Labor, White Sugar: Caribbean Braceros and Their Struggle for Power in the Cuban Sugar Industry*; Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery: Masters and Management*; Richard A. Dunn, *Sugar and Slavery*; Sidney Mintz, “Was the Plantation Slave a Proletarian?” Review, v. 1. n. 2 (Summer 1978); R. Keith Aufhauser, “Slavery and Scientific Management,” *Journal of Economic History*, v. 33, n. 4 (December 1973), pp. 811-824; Charles Post, *The American Road to Capitalism*, Ch. 1; John Clegg, “Capitalism and Slavery,” *Critical Historical Studies*, (Fall 2015); Pepijn Brandon, “Rethinking Capitalism and Slavery,” *TSEG/Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History*, v. 12, n. 4 (2015), pp. 117-137; Trevor Burnard, “Jamaica as America, America as Jamaica,” *Small Axe*, n. 31 (March 2010)

March 5 – **Work and Life on the New World Plantation, 2: Social Reproduction and the Slave Community**

Readings: Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, Ch. 6; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, Ch. 5

Recommended: \*Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*; Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive*; Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, eds., *Women and Slavery, v. 2: The Modern Atlantic*; Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, eds., *Children in Slavery Through the Ages*; Catherine M. Lewis and Richard Lewis, *Women and Slavery in America: A Documentary History*; Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture and Identity Formation in Early America*; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*; Charles W. Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*; Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796*; Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*

March 12 – Spring Break

March 19 – **The Revolutionary Atlantic, 1: Commons and Commoners**

Readings: Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Ch. 3-5

Recommended: Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas in the English Revolution*; Gerard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom and Other Writings*; Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution*; Colin Woodward, *The Pirate Republic*; Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime*

*World, 1700-1750*; Margaret Jacob and James Jacob, eds., *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism*.

March 26 – **The Revolutionary Atlantic 2: Resistance, Runaways, and Rebels**

Readings: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, Ch. 10; Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Ch. 6-7

Recommended: \*Joseph Kelly, “The Masterless People: Pirates, Maroons, and the Struggle to Live Free,” *Longreads*, available here:

<https://longreads.com/2018/10/30/the-masterless-people-pirates-maroons-and-the-struggle-to-live-free/?fbclid=IwAR1v7nSp4JVyLhAPQVNUPb80D4e7cXAMo9-1ZvCDZkMsihPLpgwwS8DU7s>

Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*; Hilary Beckles, “From Land to Sea: Runaway Barbados Slaves and Servants, 1630-1700,” *Slavery and Abolition* 6 (1985); D. Barry Gaspar, *Bondsmen and Rebels*; Lesli Manigat, “The Relationship Between Slave Revolt, Marronage and Revolution in San Domingue-Haiti” in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, v. 292, issue 1 Comparative Perspectives, pp. 420-438; Raymond and Alice Bauer, “Day to Day Resistance to Slavery,” *Journal of Negro History* 27 (1942); C.L.R. James, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live in*

April 2 – **The Revolutionary Atlantic 3: Revolution in Haiti**

Readings: C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingue Revolution*, selected chapters

Recommended: Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The San Domingue Revolution from Below*; Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*; David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*; Wim Kloster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*; Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*

April 9 – **The Black Atlantic and the Black Radical Tradition**

Readings: Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, Ch. 1, 2, 6; Joan Dayan, “Paul Gilroy’s Slaves, Ships and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor,” *Research in African Literatures*, v. 27, n. 4 (Winter 1996), pp. 7-14

Recommended: Douglas B. Chambers, “The Black Atlantic: Theory, Method, and Practice,” in *The Atlantic World, 1450-2000*, ed. T. Falola and K. D. Roberts; Samantha Pinto, *Difficult Diasporas: The Transnational Feminist Aesthetic of the Black Atlantic*; Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley, “Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, v. 14, n. 2-3 (2008); Melissa Schindler, “Home, or the Limits of the Black Atlantic,”

*Research in African Literatures*, v. 45, n. 3 (Fall 2014), pp. 72-90; Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*

April 16 – **Life, Death, and the Living Dead in Atlantic Culture**

Readings: Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, Ch. 5; Vincent Brown, “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” *American Historical Review*, December 2009; Mike Mariani, “The Tragic, Forgotten History of Zombies,” *The Atlantic*, October 28, 2015; Roger Luckhurst, “Where do Zombies Come From?” *BBC-Culture*, August 31, 2015, available here:

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20150828-where-do-zombies-come-from>

Recommended: Sarah Juliet Lauro, *The Transatlantic Zombie*; Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods*; David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, Ch. 3.

April 23 – **The Common Wind: Abolition, Emancipation, and Decolonization from Haiti to the United States and Beyond (with nods to C.L.R. James, W.E.B. Du Bois, Claudia Jones, Sylvia Wynter, and Frantz Fanon)**

Readings: Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Ch. 8-9; Peter Linebaugh, “The Significance of the Common Wind,” *Counterpunch*, December 14, 2018; Guy Emerson Mount, “When Slaves Go on Strike: W.E.B. Du Bois’s *Black Reconstruction* 80 Years Later,” *Black Perspectives*, December 28, 2015

Recommended: Julius Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*; Matthew G. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*; Ada Ferrer, “Haiti, Free Soil, and Anti-Slavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *American Historical Review*, February 2012; W.E.B Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*; Ira Berlin, Thavolia Glymph and Barbara Fields, *Slaves No More*; Julie Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction*; Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*; David Williams, *I Freed Myself*; Mark A. Lause, *Long Road to Harper’s Ferry: The Rise of the First American Left*; Lause, *Race and Radicalism in the Union Army*; Lause, *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class*; David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Age of Revolution*; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*; Aaron Kamugisha, *Beyond Coloniality: Citizenship and Freedom in the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition*.

\*\*\*

## Important UH and CLASS Policies

**Students with Disabilities:** The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to students who request them. Students seeking accommodation must register with the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) 713-743-5400. Please present approved documentation to me as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty:** To cultivate an environment of academic integrity, the University of Houston expects students to abide by the University's Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy, found in the Undergraduate Catalog. <http://www.uh.edu/academic-honesty-undergraduate>

**Counseling and Psychological Services:** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) -- [www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)-- are available for students having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or somebody you know is in crisis. The "Let's Talk" program provides a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html)