SLAVERY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fall Semester 1992

Instructor: Jean B. Lee

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

For more than three centuries after Columbus's voyages, more Africans than Europeans crossed the ocean to the Americas. The Atlantic slave trade, 1450-1850, constituted the largest forced migration in human history and dramatically affected the entire Atlantic basin. Slavery left no major area of life untouched, whether demography, economic development, social relations, religion, politics and law, or ideology.

This course begins with an examination of justifications for slavery and the enslavement of black Africans, servile labor in Africa, and long-distance slave trades that predated the Atlantic trade. After investigating the economic rationale, nature, and scope of the Atlantic trade, students will consider a variety of slave systems established in the Western Hemisphere, particularly in the Caribbean, British colonial America, and the antebellum United States.

In addition to the intrinsic interest and importance of slavery in the Atlantic world, the topic offers fascinating insights into how scholars work. This course introduces significant questions and interpretations, as well as an array of techniques through which they are approached. For in analyzing relevant sources, scholars have employed traditional historical methods, anthropology, archaeology and material culture, economic theory, epidemiology, linguistics, and folklore, to name some of the most important. Exploring the many dimensions of slavery is truly an interdisciplinary undertaking.

REQUIRED READINGS: All assigned readings are on three-hour reserve. In addition, the following books are available at the University Bookstore:


READING ASSIGNMENTS:

NOTE: All readings must be completed before the beginning of each class, so that students are able to participate fully and meaningfully in discussions. Sources preceded by an asterisk are on reserve at the Helen C. White Library. All others are on reserve at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
THE OLD WORLD

September 3 Organizational Meeting

September 10 Slavery: An Ancient Institution


September 17 African Slavery and Slave Trading


AN ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

September 24 The Plantation Complex

October 1

**Voyage of No Return**


Philip D. Curtin, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade," *Political Science Quarterly* 83 (June 1968): 190-216.

October 8

**The Caribbean**


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**THE FORMATIVE PERIOD IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA**

October 15

**Chesapeake Beginnings**


October 22

**The Carolina Lowcountry**


October 29

**The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution**

**PAPER NO. 1 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**


THE MATURE PLANTATION SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

November 5

The Plantation

Leslie H. Owens, "Into the Fields: Life, Disease, and Labor in the Old South," This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South (1976), 19-49.


November 12

Slave Consciousness


Charles Joyner, "'Come by Here, Lord,' "'All De Bes' Story," and "Gullah," Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community, 141-224.

"Yamacraw" and "Sopelo Island," in Georgia Writers' Project, Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes (1940), 23-31, 158-72.

November 19

"Mortifications Peculiarly Their Own": Female Slaves

Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (1985).


The narrative of Fannie Berry, in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves, 30-50.


November 24

You are heartily encouraged to attend a lecture presented by Professor Michael Chamberlain, entitled "Slavery, the Household, and Politics in the Islamic Middle East." 8:00-9:15 am., 1121 Humanities Bldg.
THANKSGIVING VACATION

Resistance and Rebellion

Leslie H. Owens, "The Logic of Rebellion," *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South*, 70-105.


Crime and Punishment


"My Time Up with You"

PAPER NO. 2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS


Charles Joyner, "'My Time Up with You,'" *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*, 225-42.


WRITTEN WORK:

Several times during the semester, students will be asked to write an in-class "micro-theme" based on the readings assigned for the week. In addition, two short, analytic papers are required:

Paper No. 1 -- Due October 29:

On October 22 you will receive a packet containing copies of several eighteenth-century documents related to slavery. Your assignment is to analyze and interpret the documents and to present your findings in a well written paper. Length: 4-5 double-spaced, typewritten pages.
Paper No. 2 -- Due at the last class meeting:
At the beginning of the semester, each student will select one of the following topics related to the slave experience: work, family and community, religion, cultural assimilation, master-slave relations, diet and disease, and resistance. Paper No. 2 is to be a comparative analysis of the chosen topic, based upon assigned readings and class discussion. Length: up to 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages.

EVALUATION:
50% class discussion
15% micro-themes
15% Paper No. 1
20% Paper No. 2

INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30 pm, and Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 pm, in 4116 Humanities. Also by appointment. My office phone number is 263-1661.