

SLAVERY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fall Semester 1992

History 571
Thursdays, 2-4 p.m.

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:

- Breen, T. H., and Stephen Innes. "Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676 (1980).
- Curtin, Philip D. The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History (1990).
- Dunn, Richard S. Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (1972).
- Joyner, Charles. Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community (1984).
- Melton A. McLaurin. Celia: A Slave (1991).
- Oates, Stephen B. The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion (1975).
- White, Deborah Gray. Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (1985).
- Wood, Peter H. Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 to the Stono Rebellion (1974).

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

David B. Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (1966), 29-121.
William McKee Evans, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea:
The Strange Odyssey of the Sons of Ham," American Historical
Review 85 (Feb. 1980): 15-43.

*Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, "African 'Slavery' as an Institution of
Marginality," in Miers and Kopytoff, eds., Slavery in Africa:
Historical and Anthropological Perspectives (1977), 3-78.

September 17 African Slavery and Slave Trading

*Roland Oliver, "Masters and Slaves," The African Experience (1991), 116-
29.

Patrick Manning, "Contours of Slavery and Social Change in Africa,"
American Historical Review 88 (Oct. 1988):835-57.

*Paul Lovejoy and Martin A. Klein, "Slavery in West Africa," in Henry A.
Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn, eds., The Uncommon Market:
Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade (1979),
181-235.

*Joseph C. Miller, "The Value of Material Goods and People in African
Political Economies: An Interpretation" and "Foreign Imports and
Their Uses in the Political Economy of West Central Africa," Way of
Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-
1830 (1988), 3-7, 40-104.

AN ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

September 24 The Plantation Complex

*Philip D. Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in
Atlantic History, ix-xi, 3-169.

*Joseph C. Miller, "The Paradoxes of Impoverishment in the Atlantic Zone,"
in David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin, eds., History of
Central Africa (1983), 1:118-59.

October 1

Voyage of No Return

- *Joseph C. Miller, "Voyage of No Return: The Experience of Enslavement: Flight, Disease, and Death," Way of Death, 379-442.
- *Mary C. Karasch, "The Crossroads: The Slave Market of Rio de Janeiro," Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850 (1987), 29-54.
- *Olaudah Equiano, "The Early Travels of Olaudah Equiano," in Philip D. Curtin, ed., Africa Remembered (1967), 84-98.
- Philip D. Curtin, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade," Political Science Quarterly 83 (June 1968): 190-216.

October 8

The Caribbean

Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (1972).

THE FORMATIVE PERIOD IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

October 15

Chesapeake Beginnings

- T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, "Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676 (1980).
- Russell R. Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," Southern Studies 16 (Winter 1977): 355-90.
- Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake, 1650-1820," in Stephen Innes, ed., Life and Labor in Early America (1988), 144-88.

October 22

The Carolina Lowcountry

Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 to the Stono Rebellion (1974).

October 29

The Problem of Slavery in the Age of RevolutionPAPER NO. 1 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

- Donald R. Wright, "African Americans in the Revolutionary Era," African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins Through the American Revolution (1990), 116-52.
- Mary Beth Norton, Herbert Gutman, and Ira Berlin, "The Afro-American Family in the Age of Revolution," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution (1983), 175-91.
- Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (1964 ed.), 155-56.

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.
- Charles Joyner, Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community (1984), xv-xxii, 1-140.
- Eugene D. Genovese, "A Duty and a Burden," Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (1972), 75-86.
- The narrative of Frank Bell, in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (1976), 25-28.
- Peter J. Parish, "The Business of Slavery," Slavery and Historians (1989), 43-61.

November 12

Slave Consciousness

- Albert J. Raboteau, "The Slave Church in the Era of the American Revolution," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution, 193-213.
- Lawrence W. Levine, "The Sacred World of Black Slaves" and "The Meaning of Slave Tales," Black Culture and Black Consciousness: American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (1977), ix-xiv, 3-135.
- 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).
- "Documents: Testimony of Slave Women," in Linda K. Kerber and Jane DeHart Mathews, Women's America: Refocusing the Past (1982), 98-102.
- The narrative of Fannie Berry, in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves, 30-50.
- Kate Chopin, "La Belle Zoraide," in Dorothy Abbott and Susan Koppelman, eds., The Signet Classic Book of Southern Short Stories (1991), 101-07.

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.

November 26 THANKSGIVING VACATION

December 3 Resistance and Rebellion

Leslie H. Owens, "The Logic of Rebellion," This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South, 70-105.
 The narrative of Susan Broadus, in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves, 55-56.
 William W. Freehling, "A Disturbing Institution," Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836 (1965), 49-65.
 Stephen B. Oates, The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion (1975).

December 10 Crime and Punishment

Eugene D. Genovese, "The Hegemonic Function of the Law," Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made, 25-49.
 Melton A. McLaurin, Celia: A Slave (1991).

To be arranged "My Time Up with You"

PAPER NO. 2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

*Philip D. Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History, 173-206.
 Charles Joyner, "My Time Up with You," Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community, 225-42.
 The narratives of Armace Adams, Archie Booker, and Charlotte Brown, in Charles L. Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves, 1-5, 52-54, 58-59.
 "Slavery," Newsweek, May 4, 1992, 30-39.
 Edward A. Gargan, "A Single-Minded Man Battles to Free Slaves," New York Times, June 4, 1992.

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.