

ENG 399
Fall 2017
MW 10:00 – 11:20
191 Anstett

Prof. E. Bohls
527 PLC; 6-5484
Hours W 12:00 – 3:00
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**THE BLACK ATLANTIC:
LITERATURE, HISTORY, THEORY**

Slavery shaped the ecology, economy, and culture of the Atlantic Rim, including parts of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. In the long eighteenth century (1660-1838), British slavery on the Caribbean sugar islands reached its peak, was fought by the abolitionist movement and ended by Parliament. Meanwhile, a rather different slave society matured in the United States. We will study the literary production of early Black writers and the representation of slavery in the Anglophone literature of the Atlantic Rim in its historical context. Readings include travel narratives, slave narratives, planter histories, political tracts, diaries and ships' logs, as well as two novels and assorted poetry.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Available at Duck Store. Please get the specified editions.

Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices*, expanded edition (2004, Kentucky)

Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997, Harper Collins)

William Earle, *Obi, or the History of Three-Fingered Jack*, ed. Aravamudan (Broadview)

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. V. Carretta (Penguin)

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1988, Penguin)

Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, ed. K. Marsters (Duke)

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*, ed. S. Salih (Penguin)

Additional readings posted on Canvas. See attached Bibliography for full citations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Read literary texts about British slavery, fiction and nonfiction, with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of the formal conventions which shape them
2. Draw on relevant historical and cultural information about the slave trade and slavery to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary texts, including close readings
4. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments
5. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:

Books on the schedule below are available at the UO Bookstore. All items except the required texts listed above (and the videos, available online) are posted on Canvas. Please bring the assigned readings with you to class, in hard copy or on a screen.

This course requires regular and vigorous participation in discussion. Come to class prepared!

Assignments must be submitted on the due dates listed below, formatted according to current MLA guidelines (1 inch margins, correct citation and quotation, and a works cited page). Consult the *MLA Handbook* if you are uncertain of correct format. I will mark late assignments down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late. I will not accept late assignments more than one week after the due date. You may submit assignments in hard copy or via email.

Reading journals may be hard copy or electronic and will be collected, unannounced, several times throughout the term. Bring hard-copy journals to class, or be prepared to email me your journal promptly after class.

I encourage you to come to my office hours and discuss with me anything related to the course: readings; paper topics; my comments or grades on your written work; any questions that arose in class and didn't get resolved; anything else that's on your mind. To make it easier for us to be in contact, you may Skype in to my office hours if that's easier than coming in person: my Skype address is lizbohls and I will be on Skype every Wednesday from noon to 3:00. If that's not a convenient time, you can also make an appointment to come in or to Skype at another time that's convenient for us both.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>) send me a letter outlining your approved accommodations.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should acknowledge and document all sources of information. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, see me. I will vigorously pursue and sanction any knowing violation of the conduct code.

The UO is committed to providing an environment **free** of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are **not alone**. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Here is a link to the current UO policy on the reporting responsibilities of University employees: <https://prevention.uoregon.edu/reportingmemo>. Most faculty are what's called student-directed employees. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I am not required to report this information to anyone else unless you request that I do so. I am required to consult with a "confidential employee"—someone with a legal privilege of confidentiality, such as a counseling professional or a crisis center advocate—to ensure that you're supported in every available way. If you decide to make a report, I and other UO employees will help you to do so. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you, have access to the resources you need, and can make an informed decision about how to proceed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Syllabus quiz = 5%

Participation = 10%

Reading response journal (400 words/class meeting) = 10%

Close readings = 5% each= 20%

Essay 1 (4 pages **minimum**) = 20%

Final essay draft (6 pages **minimum**) = 5%

Final essay = 30%

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

AFRICA AND THE FIRST PASSAGE

Sept. 27

Watch Crash Course World History #24, Atlantic Slave Trade (11:07 minutes), at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnV_MTFEGIY

Read Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, pp. 1-19 (Canvas)

Read Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799), pp. 67-96

Oct. 2

Read Park, *Travels*, 221-313

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Oct. 4

Watch History Channel on the Middle Passage (2:35)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IJrhQE6DZk>

Read John Newton, *Journal of a Slave Trader*, selections (Canvas)

Read Newton, *Letters to a Wife*, selections (Canvas, 2 small files)

Read Newton, *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* (Canvas)

Close Reading 1 due Thursday, Oct. 5, 5 p.m.

Oct. 9

Look at and read "The Sable Venus" (Canvas)

Read Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, Ch. 7 (Canvas)

THE PLANTATION

Oct. 11

Watch Whitney Plantation, Louisiana video (9:15 minutes)

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4641055/sugar-cane-plantation-living-slaves>

Read Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, Ch. 2, "Production," excerpt (Canvas)

Read Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657), sel. (Canvas)

Read Richard Steele, *Spectator* No. 11 (Inkle and Yarico) (Canvas)

Close Reading 2 due Thursday, Oct. 12, 5 p.m.

Oct. 16

Read Thomas Thistlewood, diary (1750-86), selections (Canvas)

Read Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1815-18/1834), selections (Canvas)

Read Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, introduction (Canvas)

THE SLAVE NARRATIVE

Oct. 18

Read James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *Narrative*, selections, *Unchained Voices* (32-58)

Read John Marrant, *Narrative*, selections, *Unchained Voices* (110-133)

Read Venture Smith, *Narrative*, selections, *Unchained Voices* (369-387)

Close Reading 3 due Thursday, Oct. 19, 5 p.m.

Oct. 23

Watch "London, Sugar, and Slavery" (4:05)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39VSVHsvPQ>

Watch Equiano reading/images (7:31)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X485Irzty-E>

Read Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and other Writings*, ed. Carretta, to p. 94

Oct. 25

Read Equiano (finish)

Close Reading 4 due Thursday, Oct. 26, 5 p.m.

THE ABOLITION DEBATE

Oct. 30

Watch Pathfinder Archive Abolition Part 1 (4:08)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRylZlrYAWU>

Read Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, selections in *Unchained Voices* (145-184)

Read Robert Wedderburn, *The Horrors of Slavery* and *The Axe Laid to the Root* (Canvas)

Read Bryan Edwards, "A Speech . . . On the Subject of Mr. Wilberforce's Propositions . . ." (Canvas)

Nov. 1

Read Maria Edgeworth, "The Grateful Negro" (In *Obi*, Appendix C, 227-245)

Read Abolitionist verse: William Cowper, "The Negro's Complaint," "Pity for Poor Africans," "Sweet Meat has Sour Sauce"; Robert Southey, "Poems Concerning the Slave Trade" (Canvas)

Complete Poetry Kit for poem of your choice

Essay 1 due Thursday, Nov. 2, 5 p.m.

SLAVERY AND GENDER

Nov. 6

Watch Mary Prince reading/images (11:36 min.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gofLBjbbX2k&has_verified=1

Read Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*, ed. Sarah Salih, including Introduction

Nov. 8

Read Mary Prince, Supplement & Appendix (39-65) and Appendix 2 and 3 (99-103)

Read Bryan Edwards, selections (Canvas)

Read Jerome Handler, "Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados" (Canvas)

THE ZONG MASSACRE

Nov. 13

Watch History Pod (2:38)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lad092IoHwQ>

Read Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*, to p. 134

Nov. 15

Read *Feeding the Ghosts* (finish)

SLAVE REVOLTS AND OBEAH

Nov. 20

Read Chronology of Resistance (Canvas)

Read William Earle, *Obi, or the History of Three-Fingered Jack*, ed. Srinivas Aravamudan,

Final essay rough draft due Wed., Nov. 22, 10 a.m.

Nov. 27

Read *Obi*, Appendix A (159-180)

AFTERMATH

Nov. 29

Read Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Final essays due Friday, Dec. 8, 10:00 a.m.

Bibliography

- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hall, Douglas. *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86*. University of the West Indies Press, 1989.
- Handler, Jerome S. "Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados." *Slavery and Abolition* 19:1 (1998): 129-140.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
- Kitson, Peter J., and Debbie Lee, ed. *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period* (8 vols.) Vol. 2, *The Abolition Debate*, ed. Peter Kitson. Vol. 4, *Verse*, ed. Alan Richardson.
- Lewis, Matthew. *Journal of a West India Proprietor*. Ed. Judith Terry. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999.
- Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
- Newton, John. *The Journal of a Slave Trader. With Newton's Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade*. Ed. Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell. London: The Epworth Press, 1962.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Wedderburn, Robert. *The Horrors of Slavery and Other Writings*. Ed. Iain McCalman. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1991.