

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE, SPRING 2004
HISTORY 295: "AFRICANS AROAD:"AN EXPLORATION OF AFRICAN PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF AND IN THE WESTERN WORLD

Instructor: Dr. Fiona Vernal, History/African Studies
Class Times: MWF 11:50-105 p.m.

Office: Dewing 303F
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12 or by appointment
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Prerequisites: None required

Cultures Credit: This course satisfies cultures credit requirements

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course comprises a two-part survey of African perceptions of and experiences in the Western World and African American perceptions of and experiences in Africa. The themes we will explore include: slave captivity narratives, autobiographical and biographical accounts of slaves in Europe and the Americas, the experiences of African royalty abroad, the birth of African-American culture and the emergence of "Creole" societies in the New World.

STRUCTURE

The course employs a combination of lectures, discussion and movies. Lectures are delivered on Mondays and Wednesdays. When there is a movie it will be shown on Wednesdays. Fridays are devoted exclusively to discussion of the assigned readings and individual case studies

READINGS

The following books are available from the bookstore in HICKS
***Indicates heavy reading—please start to read early in the week**

Oludah Equiano, Narrative of the Life of Oludah Equiano

Arthur Japin and Ina Rilke, The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi

*Robin Law and Paul Lovejoy, The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America

*Neil Parsons, King Khama, Emperior Joe and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britian through African Eyes

*Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the 18th Century

Movies: Dates to be announced

Movies are screened on Wednesdays of the relevant class periods. If you miss a class during which a movie is shown, it is your responsibility to go to the library and see the movie on your own. The movies are incorporated into your paper and examination.

Alex Haley's, **Roots (possibly)**

Henry Louis Gates, **Wonders of the African Continent**, (Selections)

Haile Gerima , **Sankofa**

Marcus Garvey, **Catch me in the Whirlwind**

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Components	Percent	Description of Assignment
Participation	25%	The strength and quality of this course depends partly on your engagement with the assigned readings and on participation in weekly discussions. While there will be time for discussion during lecture, Fridays are exclusively reserved for discussing the assigned readings. <i>If you miss a Friday discussion, a two-page overview of the major arguments of the book and how the evidence supports those arguments is due one calendar week from your absence.</i>
Presentation	5%	Students are responsible for presenting on one of the books and leading the discussion for that week
Assignment 1	5%	Make a comparative grid of these four perspectives on the Black Atlantic, The African Diaspora and Images of Africa. What are the major arguments/themes? How is the black Atlantic defined? What sort of theoretical framework does the idea of a “Black Atlantic” provide? Do you agree with the arguments? Has any aspect been elided? On what points do the authors converge/diverge? How was the French, Portuguese and British experience different from and or similar to each other and how did they shape the African/African American experience?
Assignment 2	20%	Paper. Topic to be announced
Assignment 3	10%	Assignment #3 Peruse <u><i>Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery</i></u> , which will be on reserve in the library. Choose a minimum of 5-7 poems that share a unifying theme. 4-5 page paper is due at the end of Week 9
Take-Home Exam	35%	Essays and short-answers on the themes covered during the quarter

CLASS POLICIES:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and is included in your participation grade. Medical and Athletic absences will be excused with the appropriate paperwork from the Health services or coach. Lectures are on Mondays and Wednesdays. Fridays are devoted to the discussion of the assigned readings. If you missed a lecture, be sure to get notes from your classmates. If you miss a discussion on Friday for medical, athletic or any other reason, a 2-page report on that week’s reading is due within one calendar week. You can bring the paper to class or to my office, Dewing 303F.

Academic Integrity: There is a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism on this campus and in this class. Suspected cases will be turned over to the Student Development Office for review and your work will be submitted for inspection by *Turnitin.com*. Confirmation of cheating or plagiarism will result in a **failing grade** for this class.

Assistance: If you are in doubt about correct citation styles, especially about internet sources, please consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian’s *Manual* at the library or the wonderful handbook used by first-year seminars, Kirszner and Mandell’s *The Brief Handbook*. I highly recommend in your academic career here at Kalamazoo College that you invest in mastering this handbook. It has a cornucopia of information about everything from research methods and time management, to grammar and citation styles. Ignorance is no excuse for incorrect citations. If you need help you can see me during office hours, or by appointment; and remember to take advantage of the Academic Resource Center.

Part I
Week One

Lectures: *Introductions: The Black Atlantic, The African Diaspora and Images of Africa*

Readings: Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, 3-57

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 1-40

William Cohen, *French Encounters With Africans*, Ch 1

David Birmingham, *Trade and Empire in the Atlantic*, Ch 1

Discussion: *This week we will look at images of Africa up to the nineteenth century and explore how commercial relations between Africa and the emergence of the slave trade shaped African experiences abroad and the perceptions of Africa*

Assignment 1: Make a comparative grid of these four perspectives on the Black Atlantic, The African Diaspora and Images of Africa. What are the major arguments/themes? How is the black Atlantic defined? What sort of theoretical framework does the idea of a “Black Atlantic” provide? Do you agree with the arguments? Has any aspect been elided? On what points do the authors converge/diverge? How was the French, Portuguese and British experience different from and or similar to each other and how did they shape the African/African American experience? In terms of the length of your answers, at minimum two or three well-constructed, well thought-out sentences should suffice. Feel free to write more. Be prepared to be called on to share your specific answers.

Week Two.

Lectures: *Slavery as a Defining Moment in the Concept of the African Diaspora*

Readings, *Africa Remembered*, selections

Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr, eds *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century*,

Selections

Discussions: *This week we will discuss the captivity Narratives of several Africans who were enslaved and had a chance to record their experiences. We will look at the stories of Ukasaw Gronniosaw, John Marrant, and Quobna Ottobah Cugoano in the 18th century*

Week Three

Lectures: The agency of Slaves: Anti-Slavery and Slave Narratives, the 18th Century

Readings. Equiano, *Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, continued

Discussion: This week we explore the anti-slavery movement through the life of Olaudah Equiano. We will explore how his experiences in some instances serve as a microcosm of the experience of slavery as whole, but we will also examine how he stood apart from millions of other slaves who did not gain literacy, have their voices heard, much less publish a book in the 18th century.

Week Four

Lectures: *Back to Africa Movement; Illegal Slaving*

Readings *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America*

Discussion: *This week we will look at a slave who was captured during the era when the slave trade was illegal and when the slave trade had ended in British colonies (though not yet in French and Spanish territories).*

Assignment #2 A 5 (five) Page Paper due on this discussion theme that compares the experiences of Equiano and Baquaqua due on Tuesday of Week 5.

Part II.
Week Five
African Royalty Abroad (I)

Lectures: From Anti-Slavery to Imperialism

Readings: Arthur Japin and Ina Rilke, The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi

Discussion: This week we will explore this historical reconstruction of two young Ghanaian princes who were sent to Holland to be educated. As African royalty they expected to be treated with the same hospitality accorded other high class individuals. We will explore the specific details of assimilation and prejudice in European society, as well as the challenges of reconstructing this sort of history with limited written sources.

Reading Theme of African Royalty Abroad, continued

Week Six.

Lectures: *Imperialism and African Anti-Imperialism in the 19th Century*

Reading: Neil Parsons, King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes, Chapters 1-7, pages 1-131

Discussion: This week we explore the extraordinary visit of three African Chief to the British royal court in 1895. There they persuaded Queen Victoria to intervene on their behalf to prevent an imperialist Cecil Rhodes from annexing their territory. With great foresight they hired an agent to document their tour around the British isles to support their cause.

Part III

The third part of the course inverts the travelers gaze and explore African American images of and relationship with Africa, as well as the issues of African cultural retentions in the New World and the birth of African American Culture

Week Seven.

Lectures: *Africa and Great Britain*

Reading: Neil Parsons, King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes, Chapters 8 to the end pages 131-269

Discussion: This week we explore the extraordinary visit of three African Chief to the British royal court in 1895. There they persuaded Queen Victoria to intervene on their behalf to prevent an imperialist Cecil Rhodes from annexing their territory. With great foresight they hired an agent to document their tour around the British isles to support their cause.

Week Eight

Lectures: *The Birth of African American Culture I*

Readings: Short Selections from the following

Sidney Mintz, The Birth of African-American Culture, Melville Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past

Richard Price, First Time, John Butler, "The Death of The Gods," Albert Rabatoeu, "Slave Religion," Packet on Candomble and Santeria in Brazil

John Thornton, "African Religions and Christianity in the Atlantic World"

This week we will explore historical and anthropological debates about African cultural retention and the birth of a distinct African-American culture with a special case study on religion

Week Nine

Lectures: *The Birth of African American Culture II*

Reading Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana, The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the 18th Century*, Chapters 1-7; pages 1-200

This week we will look at an extended study of African and African American culture.

Week Ten

Lectures: *The Birth of African American Culture III*

Reading Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana, The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the 18th Century*, Pages –201-380

This week we will continue with our exploration of African and African American culture in Louisiana.

Bibliography

Basker, James G., ed. *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery, 1660-1810*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Birmingham, David. *Trade and Empire in the Atlantic, 1400-1600*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Butler, Jon. *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Cohen, William B. *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.

Curtin, Philip. *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, [1964] 1973.

_____. *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans From the Era of the Slave Trade*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

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Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1993.

Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana, The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the 18th Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Herskovits, Melville J. *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958.

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Law Robin and Paul Lovejoy, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001.

Mintz, Sidney and Richard Price. *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Parsons, Neil *King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Potkay, Adam and Sandra Burr. *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Living the New Exodus in England and the Americas*. Basingstoke, England: Macmillan, 1995.

Price Richard. *First Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983.