History Workshop: Slavery and Islam

Monday/Wednesday 2:50-4:10 pm
Classroom: New Academic Building West, Room 3100

Instructor: Johan Mathew
Office: 002D Van Dyck Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 4:15-6:15 pm and by appt.
Email: johan.mathew@rutgers.edu

Course Description
The History Workshop is designed to teach the basic methods of historical practice. How do historians define research problems and questions? What are primary sources? How do historians find them, interpret them, and use them to write histories? What are secondary sources? How do historians find them and use them to help write histories? What is the difference between writing history and simply remembering the past?

This section of the course explores the concept and practice of slavery in the Muslim World from the time of the Prophet Mohammed up till today. We will begin by examining how the Qur’an and Islamic jurisprudence altered pre-Islamic forms of slavery. The course will proceed chronologically, exploring the evolution of slavery from the early Islamic empires, through Muslim slaves in the Americas, and the abolition of slavery in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of the themes that we will discuss are manumission, rebellion, notions of property in Islam, the role of slaves as concubines, soldiers and rulers, and the slave trades in the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic, and the Sahara. The course will engage with the incredible diversity in the Muslim World and will be pushed to think about whether we can sustain a singular concept of Islamic slavery. Ultimately students will be introduced to the work of constructing history through this rich set of themes and events.

Learning Goals
1. Explore how historical knowledge is produced.
2. Introduce students to the problems and practices involved in historical research, including assessing the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of sources.
3. Introduce students to the problems and practices in historical interpretation, including evaluating conflicting historical interpretations; exploring how the ways in which historians frame their questions influences their interpretations.
4. Introduce students to the problems and practices involved in historical writing and narration.

Required Texts
All other course readings are available on Sakai, under “Resources.”
Policies and Expectations

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, having read the readings for the week and prepared to discuss them. If you have a legitimate reason that forces you to miss class you need to inform me as soon as you are aware of it. You will still be expected to complete readings, assignments and cover any material from the lecture you missed. You have two absences that are free, beginning with your third unexcused absence your participation grade will be lowered. 6 or more unexcused absences from class will result in a failing grade. To self-report an absence, go to: https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ If you are late to class or ill-prepared, this will also be reflected in your class participation grade. Students who attend every class (on time and prepared) will receive extra credit of 5 percentage points on their final project grade.

Electronic Devices: All cell phones must be turned off or on silent (not vibrate) during class. Laptops or tablets will be permitted in class, and we will utilize them for class activities. If you do not have access to a laptop, please contact the instructor to make alternative arrangements. However, use of Facebook, email or other non-class related applications during class time will be penalized.

Disabilities: If you have any learning disabilities or need other accommodations you must register with Disability Services and inform the instructor by the second week of class. See information here: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines.

Academic Integrity: In all course work you are expected to uphold the university’s standards for academic integrity. (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/) Lapses in academic integrity include but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty – these will not be tolerated.

Evaluation

Class Participation: Discussions are an essential part of the course, students are expected to come to class everyday having completed the week’s readings and to thoughtfully engage with the readings and the opinions of their classmates during class time.

Portfolio Exercises: Over the course of the semester, students will write six 300-600 word (1-2 pages) assignments. These assignments are designed to introduce you to the craft of being a historian they include analyses of primary/secondary sources and editing others work. These should be uploaded onto Sakai by 12:00pm on the due date. More details will be provided in class.

Final Project and Presentation: The final project is an “anthology” of documents that address a historical question. This includes introductions to each document and a broader critical introduction that demonstrates how these documents contribute to a historical argument. A draft introduction and bibliography will be submitted in week 10. You will formally present your anthology in the last two weeks of class. Further information regarding expectations and grading for this project will be provided in class. The final anthology and drafts should be uploaded onto Sakai by 12:00pm on the due date. Late papers will be penalized 1/2 of a letter grade each day they are late (so from A to B+ or B to C+). Extensions will only be permitted for emergencies.
### Grading Breakdown

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio Exercises (6 assignments at 5% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
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### Grading Scale

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<tr>
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<td>84.5-89.49%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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### Class Schedule

#### Week 1 – Introduction
Wednesday, 9/6 – Introductions and the craft of history

#### Week 2 – Islam and the Reforms of pre-Islamic Slavery

**Monday, 9/11 – Slavery before Islam**

**Wednesday, 9/13 – What did the Prophet Mohammed think about slavery?**
- Hunwick and Powell, pp. 2-9, 23-32

#### Week 3 – Early Islam

**Monday, 9/18 – What role did slavery play in Abbasid society?**

**Wednesday, 9/20 – Was the Zanj Rebellion a slave revolt?**
- The History of al-Tabari, pp. 29-59

**Portfolio Exercise #1: Was the Zanj Rebellion a slave revolt? Or a religious rebellion?**

#### Week 4 – The Imperial Harem

**Monday, 9/25 – Were Eunuchs the most oppressed or elevated slaves?**
- Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society*, Ch. 1, pp. 3-31

**Wednesday, 9/27 – How did Ottoman concubines shape the Imperial household?**
- Leslie Pierce, *The Imperial Harem*, Intro and Ch. 2
- Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Dining with the Sultana”

**Portfolio Exercise #2: Analyze the letter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Who is she? Why is she writing? Who is her intended audience? What should we be suspicious of?**

#### Week 5 – Slaves at War

**Monday, 10/2 – Slave Raiding in the Mediterranean**
- Ellen Friedman, “Christian Captives at “Hard Labor” in Algiers, 16th to 18th Centuries,”

**Portfolio Exercise #3: Analyze Friedman’s article: What is the argument? What is the evidence? Is it compelling? What are the stakes of the argument?**
Wednesday, 10/4 – Why did slave soldiers emerge in Islamic Empires?  
• The Tribute of Children, 1493

**Week 6 – Muslim Slavery in West Africa**  
Monday, 10/9 – Slavery in West Africa  
• Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah*, Ch. 1  
Wednesday, 10/11 – How did the Atlantic Slave Trade impact Islamic Slavery?  
• Thomas Clarkson, *Letters on the Slave Trade*, pp. 68-81  
• Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Quran*, Ch. 3  
**Portfolio Exercise #4: Read Rudolph Ware’s chapter and the text from Thomas Clarkson. How does he construct his argument from this evidence? Is it compelling?**

**Week 7 – Abolition**  
Monday, 10/16 – The Abolition of Slavery  
Wednesday, 10/18 – How to find primary sources: In Class Exercise

**Week 8 – Slavery on the Nile**  
Monday, 10/23 – Brainstorming session for final project  
**Portfolio Exercise #5: Search Databases of Newspapers, Slavery etc. for two primary sources on Abolition and make a historical argument for what this evidence shows.**  
Wednesday, 10/25 – Slavery on the Nile  
• Hunwick and Powell, *African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*, pp. 67-81  
• Kim Searcy, “The Sudanese Mahdi’s Attitudes on Slavery and Emancipation”  
• Ahmad, Sikainga, “Slavery and Social Life in nineteenth Century Turco-Egyptian Khartoum,” in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, Ch. 6, pp. 147-168

**Week 9 – East Africa**  
Monday, 10/30 – Slavery and the Slave Trade in East Africa  
• Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, Ch. 1, pp. 23-46, Ch. 6, pp. 213-252  
• History of a small slave buried alive, or filial love (Swema’s narrative), Trans. Pier M. Larson  
Wednesday, 11/1 – Individual meetings on research topics  
**Submit a draft research question/topic, search terms and potential databases to look for primary sources that will provide answers**

**Week 10 – The Indian Ocean World**  
Monday, 11/6 – Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean world  
• Johan Mathew, “Trafficking Labor”  
• Selected Narratives of Manumitted Slaves from the India Office Records  
Wednesday, 11/8 – In Class Exercise: Finding Secondary Sources and citing them  
• Abdul Sheriff, “Social Mobility in Indian Ocean Slavery: The Strange Career of Sultan b Aman”
Workshop Syllabus – Slavery & Islam

Week 11 – Muslim Slaves in the Americas
Monday, 11/13 – Slavery in Brazil and the Caribbean
   • Sylviane Diouf, Servants of Allah, Ch. 5
   • Abd al-Rahman al Baghdadi, The Amusement of the Foreigner, pp. 5-20
Wednesday, 11/15 – The Bahia Uprising
   • Joao Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia, pp. 93-136
Submit draft introduction to your anthology and a final bibliography of sources

Week 12 – Muslim Slaves in the United States
Monday, 11/20 – A Prince Among Slaves
   • Sylviane Diouf, Servants of Allah, Ch. 3
No Class Wednesday, 11/22 – Happy Thanksgiving

Week 13 – Muslim Slaves in the United States
Monday, 11/27 – Peer Editing of anthology introductions in class
Portfolio Exercise #6: Provide constructive criticism and editing advice on your peer’s draft introduction
Wednesday, 11/29 – Muslim Slaves in the United States
   • Sylviane Diouf, Servants of Allah, Ch. 4
   • The Autobiography of Omar bin Said

Week 14 – Legacies of Slavery and Islam
Monday, 12/4 – Legacies of Muslim Slavery today
   • Sylviane Diouf, Servants of Allah, Ch. 6
Wednesday, 12/6 - Presentations
Submit PowerPoint presentations or presentation outlines

Week 15 – Presentations and Conclusion
Monday, 12/11 – Presentations
Wednesday, 12/13 – Presentations and Conclusion
Submit final version of your Anthology

This syllabus is subject to change as the semester proceeds, you will be notified well ahead of time if there are any such modifications.