

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

William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006).

John O. Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell, *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2002).

Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: NYU Press, 2013)

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		Grading Scale		
Class Participation	20%	Percentage Totals	Grade	Credit Points
Portfolio Exercises (6 assignments at 5% each)	30%	89.5-100%	A	4.0
Presentation	15%	84.5-89.49%	B+	3.5
Final Project	35%	79.5-84.49%	B	3.0
Draft	10%	74.5-79.49%	C+	2.5
Final	25%	69.5-74.49%	C	2.0
		59.5-69.49%	D	1.0
		0-59.49%	F	0

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

- W.G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-48

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?

- Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century*, pp. 9-29

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,”
- Khalid Berkaoui, *White Women Captives in North Africa*, Appendices, pp. 256-275

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

- W.G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, Ch. 6 pp. 98-129, Ch. 8, pp. 151-176, Ch. 10, pp. 195-218.
- Hunwick and Powell, *African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*, pp. 181-87

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”

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.