This course will explore the origins, debates, theories and historiography of the African Diaspora from the early modern period to the mid-twentieth century. Its aim is to introduce students to the long history of transnational inquiry into black lives with a particular focus on the Atlantic region. We will begin by covering the key terms, definitions and debates in African Diaspora and Black Atlantic scholarship which reached an apex in the late 1990s and early 2000s around renewed interest in Paul Gilroy’s important text *The Black Atlantic*. The rest of the course covers a broad geography of diasporic communities from the time of early modern/Atlantic slavery and the slave trade through the periods of emancipation and struggles for/in freedom. Into the twentieth century we will explore anti-colonial movements, Pan-Africanism and Black Europe. This course is purposely focused on the transnational/diasporic historical experiences of people of African descent in the Atlantic world and is designed to cover core historical texts in the field of black Atlantic history.

**Required Texts:** (most available at the Barnes and Noble, New Brunswick and others you can get from Amazon): *Readings listed on the course schedule that are not on the following list, that are marked with an *asterisk, will available on Sakai. In addition, each week there will be a list of recommended readings that correlate with the particular theme under discussion:

- **Marlon James**, *The Book of Night Women* (a novel)
- **Stephanie Smallwood**, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008)
- **C.L.R. James**, *The Black Jacobins Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, (Amazon.com)
**Tina Campt**, *The Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender and Memory in the Third Reich*, (University of Michigan Press, 2005)

**Assessments/Assignments:**

**Participation:** Each student (in a pair) is required to lead the discussion on the week’s reading material at least once during the semester. I will give guidelines for the presentation. Participation in the seminar is crucial. Each meeting of the seminar shall be concerned with the following central questions—What is/are the argument/s that the author/s engage? What is the evidence? What is the methodology? What are the key questions to which the author responds? How does the work engage and propel the field? Please come to each class with careful notes on the text—It is essential that your discussion is thoughtful, flows from the particularities of the reading and is designed to facilitate a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of the work in question. Please understand that simply speaking regularly in class is does not constitute excellent class participation.

**Weekly Reading Summaries/Responses:** Each week you will write a 2 page critical summary of the week’s readings including identifying the author’s arguments, evidence and historiographical concerns. You may hold onto your response during the seminar but will turn them in at the end of class.

**Book Review:** You will complete a critical review of one of the recommended texts (or a text not on the list approved by me ~ 5 pages). The purpose of this assignment is to establish a baseline for close reading and being able to reproduce an author’s argument. Here the objective is to be able to discern the argument, delineate the anatomy of the argument, and discuss how it structures the book. In acquiring proficiency in close readings and being able to reproduce an argument, seminar participants will make meaningful progress to mastering the fundamentals of historiography. Participants will have specific instructions about what constitutes a solid review.

**Final Paper:** For the final assignment you will revisit our work from the first week and pretend you are an editor of a special (anniversary issue) of a journal relevant to your field (you will need to research this to find the best fit for your work/area/subject). You will then choose a topic for this special issue that will reflect a theme from the course, thinking about how your chosen theme fits into the wider scholarship. You will ultimately write an introduction to this special issue and will curate (contextualize within the historiography) a few articles or book chapters that you think can be put in conversation with each other around your theme (or historiographical question—the anniversary aspect of this special issue means that you will choose articles and book chapters already written.). This paper should be about 10 pages. It would be helpful for you to look at examples of such special issues and introductions to get an idea of how to approach this assignment. The aim of this assignment is to familiarize yourselves with the important journals in your field, to study the mechanics of article publication and to learn to creatively conceptualize a particular historiography.
For guidance on the above assignments please see:
http://www.trentu.ca/history/workbook/overview.php (This link gives detailed instructions on seminar presentations and book reviews)

For a discussion of Rutgers academic integrity and plagiarism policies see:
http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity
Your work should be cited properly.

**Tues 9/2 First Day of Class, Syllabus Review, Introductions and Themes**
Presentation Sign-up
*History Welcome Party 6pm (at the home of Professor Jennifer Jones)

**Tues 9/9 Black Atlantic: Theories and Methods**
**Required Readings:**
Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Chapters 1, 2 and 6)

*There are many reviews of Gilroy’s text and I recommend you sort through a few of them.

**Tues 9/16 Diaspora: Theories and Methods**
**Required Readings:**

The readings this week will be split: ½ the class will read *The Black Scholar issue* the other ½ will read *African Studies Review issue*. One or two students from each group will lead the discussion on their respective journal. You will speak about structure, theoretical underpinnings, historiography, and content. How do the editors frame each issue and the content? How do the articles relate or speak to each other? What are the main arguments? How well do they choose the key articles for their framing? This assignment will be the background for your final writing assignment.

Recommended Reading:


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**Tues 9/23 Atlantic Movements: Africa and the Slave Trade**

**Required Reading:**


Recommended:


Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)


**Tues 9/30 New World Slavery**

(Visitor Professor Melanie Newton, University of Toronto—Black Atlantic Seminar)

**Required Readings:**
Marlon James, *The Book of Night Women* pp. 1-127. Other readings TBA per Newton’s suggestions. This class will be open to the department as part of the RCHA’s Black Atlantic Seminar and other graduate courses working on similar themes.

**Tues 10/7 Gender, Sexuality and Slavery**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended:**
*The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*, ed. Moira Ferguson

**Tues 10/14 Religion, Culture and Resistance**

**Required Readings:**
*James Sweet, Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World*

**Recommended:**

**Tues 10/21 Black Atlantic Revolutions (Book Review Due)**

**Required Readings:**
*C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins*
*Trouillot, “The Unthinkable History” in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.*

**Recommended:**

**Tues 10/28 Abolitions/Emancipations/Freedoms**
*Required Readings:*

**Tues 11/4 Pan-Africanisms/ Black Internationalism**
*Required Readings:*

*Recommended:*

**Tues 11/4 Emigrations/Race and Europe**
*Required Readings:*

**Tues 11/18 Empire and Jim Crow**
*Required Readings:*
*Kennetta Hammond Perry, “‘Little Rock” in Britain: Jim Crow’s Transatlantic*

Recommended Reading:

**Tues 11/25 (Thursday Classes NO CLASS)**
**Required Reading:**
Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*

**Tues 12/2 Black Atlantic History and Memory**
**Required Readings:**
Caryl Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound*
David Scott, “That Event, This Memory: Notes on the Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World,” *Diaspora* 1, Number 3 (1991): 261-284

Recommended Reading:
Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning The Slave Trade in Ghana*

**Tues 12/9 Open/Research Day**