Slavery in the Early Modern World
HIST 1964L

Prof. Adam Teller
Fall 2018
Thursday, 4:00-6:30pm
Contact Details
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:15pm-1:45pm
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Course Description
There were multiple forms of slavery in the Early Modern world. We will look at three major systems: Mediterranean slavery and the Barbary Corsairs, Black Sea slavery and the slave elites of the Ottoman Empire, and the Atlantic triangular trade. We will examine the religious, political, racial, and economic bases for these slave systems, and compare the experiences of individual slaves and slave societies. Topics discussed include gender and sexuality (e.g. the institution of the Harem and the eunuchs who ran it), the connection between piracy and slavery, plantation slavery, and the roles of slavery in shaping capitalism and the Western world.

Over the course of the semester students will be expected to read three monographs and write a response paper on each (1,500-2,000 words each). In addition, there will be a midterm (10/18) and a final exam (T.B.D.).

Each topic in the syllabus will be covered in that week. Classes will combine a frontal lecture with open discussions of the week’s readings and primary sources in English translation. Students will be expected to begin each week having done the reading and ready to discuss it in class. Active participation in class discussions will form part of the final grade for the course.

Course Goals and Objectives
By introducing students to the basic themes of early modern slavery, this course will:
1. Situate the history of the slavery within a broader history of the early modern world.
2. Encourage reflection and critical comparison of a range of methodological approaches to historical research on slavery.
3. Give students the tools they need to understand the nature of slavery in the contemporary world.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Identify the key issues in the study of early modern slavery.
2. Read and critically analyze historical writing on early modern slavery from a range of different approaches.
3. Understand the various forms of slavery in comparative contexts.
What to Expect
The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for all full credit courses at Brown is approximately 180 hours over the length of a 14-week semester. In this class, students seeking to maximize their learning can expect to spend 42 hours in class (3 hours per week, 14 weeks), 84 hours reading (approx. 6 hours per week, 14 weeks), 21 total hours on the three response papers, 15 hours reviewing for the midterm, and 20 hours reviewing and studying for the final. Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

Grading
1. Class Participation 10%
2. Three Response Papers: 15% each = 45%
3. Midterm Exam 20%
4. Final Exam 25%

Readings
All readings are scanned and can be found on the course Canvas page.

Response Papers
Students will be expected to write papers of 1,500-2,000 words on the three following monographs.

The books themselves should be available in the Brown Bookstore and will be put on reserve in the library.

I will provide guiding questions for each paper ahead of its due date.

The due dates are:
1. Lewis, Race and Slavery – 9/30, 12:00pm
2. Eltis, The Rise of African Slavery – 11/4, 12:00pm
3. Rediker, The Slave Ship – 11/25, 12:00pm
Topics

1. **Introduction**  
   **September 6**  
   **Reading:**  

2. **Slavery: The Religious Background**  
   **September 13**  
   **Reading:**  

3. **Slavery: The Racial Background**  
   **September 20**  
   **Reading:**  

4. **Slavery: The Mediterranean**  
   **September 27**  
   **Reading:**  

   **September 30: First Response Paper Due (on Lewis, Race and Slavery), 12:00pm**
5. **Slavery: The Black Sea**  
   **October 4**  
   **Reading:**  

6. **Slavery: The Atlantic**  
   **October 11**  
   **Reading:**  
   - Lisa A. Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade*, London 2007, 22-53

   **October 18: Midterm Exam**

   **October 25: No Class: Makeup class will be held after reading period (see below) – Details T.B.D.**

7. **Slavery and Sexuality**  
   **November 1**  
   **Reading:**  

   **November 4: Second Response Paper Due (on Eltis, African Slavery), 12:00pm**

8. **The Economics of Slavery**  
   **November 8**  
   **Reading:**  
9. Jews and Christians, Slavery and Redemption  
   November 15  
   Reading:  

10. Slave Societies and Resistance  
   November 29  
   Reading:  
   - David Brion Davis, Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World, Oxford 2008, 157-174  

   November 22: No Classes: Thanksgiving Holiday

   November 25: Third Response Paper Due (on Rediker, The Slave Ship), 12:00pm

11. Abolition  
   December 6  
   Reading:  
   - Ehud R. Toledano, Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East, Seattle-London 1998, 112-134

   I will also schedule a special review session in preparation for the final exam.