**HIST/AFRC/LALS 248**

**The Haitian Revolution**

University of Pennsylvania Department of History

Fall 2018

Wednesday 2:00-5:00

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**Course Description**

In August 1791, enslaved Africans on the northern plain of Saint Domingue (colonial Haiti) rose up in a coordinated attack against their French colonial masters, launching the initial revolt in what would come to be known as the Haitian Revolution. In the years that followed, their actions forced the legal abolition of racial discrimination, and then the abolition of slavery, throughout the French Empire. Ultimately, when Napoleon Bonaparte threatened to return slavery to Saint Domingue, they waged a war for independence. After defeating the Napoleonic army, these former slaves then declared the world’s first “Black Republic,” the independent state of Haiti, in 1804.

This seminar will examine some of the major themes and debates surrounding Haiti’s colonial and revolutionary history. We will begin with the colonial paradox: France’s leading role in the intellectual movement called the “Enlightenment” coincided with its ascent as a slaveholding power. We then examine parallels and points of connection between revolutionary movements in France and the Caribbean. Revolutionary principles like “freedom,” “equality,” and “citizenship” resonated differently in Saint Domingue, where leaders struggled to implement them in ways that would endure. The course also considers the influence of African political ideologies and local religious practices (Vodou) on the revolutionaries’ organizational capacity and motivation. Finally, we ask how the revolution in Saint Domingue—and the birth of Haiti--influenced ideas about liberty, sovereignty and freedom throughout the slaveholding Atlantic world, specifically in the U.S. and Cuba.

As we dive into the growing historical literature on this period, we will pay special attention to the question of primary sources. How should we read texts produced during the revolutionary period differently from those produced by later scholars? How can we use the surviving primary sources—generated almost exclusively by colonial officials and elites—to access the experiences of the ex-slave revolutionaries?

**Grade Distribution and Assignments**

* **Participation (20%):**
Active, informed participation in every class is required. As a discussion-based seminar, the course can only be successful if students complete the assigned reading thoroughly and thoughtfully, arriving in class prepared to talk about it. Often, reading questions will be posted to Canvas beforehand; students should be able to discuss those questions in class and cite examples from our texts to support their conclusions. During our class discussions, students should engage their classmates, responding to their perspectives and questions in addition to those of the instructor. This portion of the final grade will also include student contributions to in-class exercises. Any absences will negatively affect students’ grades.
* **Response Papers (20%)**
Students are required to submit five short (1-2 page) papers responding to our weekly readings. Students choose the weeks for which they write their papers, but *three of the five papers must be submitted by 10/10.* Papers must be uploaded to Canvas *no later than NOON* on the day we discuss the readings addressed in the paper.

Response papers should address one of the prompts listed below, incorporating specific examples (cited, with page numbers) from the texts. Students should not respond to the same prompt more than twice. \*\*The selected prompt should appear at the top of each paper.\*\*

How do this week’s readings alter your understanding of the Haitian Revolution?

If more than one secondary reading was assigned: compare the authors’ approaches to the week’s topic. Are they responding to similar research questions, and if so, how do their conclusions differ? Do they use similar sources? Which reading is more compelling, and why?

Identify one primary source referenced in one of the secondary readings. What is it? Who wrote or created it, when, and *why*? Explain in some detail *how* the author of our secondary reading made use of the source. What argument did the author construct, using this source as evidence? Explain why you find this argument convincing, or not.

If we read a primary document, identify and contextualize it: what is it, who created it, when, and *why*? What does it tell us about the Haitian Revolution?

Occasionally, Dr. Fabella will circulate questions specific to the week’s readings, and these questions may serve as Response Paper prompts. Check the weekly announcements on Canvas for such opportunities.

* **Primary document research** **paper (25%) and presentation (10%):** Each student will locate one relevant primary source and write an 8-10 page paper that locates the source in its historical context. The source may be found in the Van Pelt stacks, in the Kislak Center, online, or in another library or archive. Students must incorporate relevant books and articles from the course syllabus as well as outside secondary readings to support their analysis. A proposal will be due, through Canvas, on **Friday, October 19.** Final research papers are due on **Wednesday, November 21**. All students will also give a formal presentation of their research in class, on a date TBD. The presentation should be a polished, concise, 10-minute synopsis of the major research findings. More details on the proposal, paper, and presentation will be distributed in a separate assignment sheet.
* **Final paper (25%):** A final paper is due on **Monday, December 17**. Students will receive the assignment sheet in class on December 6.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic honesty is fundamental to our community. The Penn Code of Academic Integrity can be found online: [www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai\_codeofacademicintegrity.html](http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html).
Violations of that Code, including intentional and unintentional acts of plagiarism, will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and may result in failure for the course.

According to the Penn Code of Academic Integrity, plagiarism includes “[u]sing the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person’s paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else’s ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.”  Paraphrased ideas and directly quoted text must be cited properly in all written work.  If you have questions about how to cite sources correctly, consult with Dr. Fabella or the Weingarten Learning Resource Center.

**Books for purchase at the Penn Bookstore**

Required reading:

Ada Ferrer, *Freedom’s Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (2014)

David Geggus, *The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History* (2014)

Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (2010)

Recommended, and available electronically through the Franklin catalog:

Jeremy Popkin, *A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution* (2012)

**Coursepack**

Readings followed by “CP” can be found in the HIST 233-401 coursepack, available for purchase at the Campus Copy Center, 3907 Walnut St.

**Class Meeting and Assignment Schedule**

**8/29: Introductions**

**9/5: Remembering the Haitian Revolution**

* Michel-Rolphe Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History,” in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, pg. 70-107 (Canvas)
* Laurent Dubois, “Why Haiti should be at the center of the Age of Revolution,” *Aeon Essays*, 7 November 2016: [https://aeon.co/essays/why-haiti-should-be-at-the-centre-of-](https://aeon.co/essays/why-haiti-should-be-at-the-centre-of-the-age-of-revolution) [the-age-of-revolution](https://aeon.co/essays/why-haiti-should-be-at-the-centre-of-the-age-of-revolution)
* Geggus, “Introduction;” document #99

**9/12: Race, slavery and the Enlightenment in the French Atlantic world**

* Guillaume Aubert, “The Blood of France: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61:3 (2004): 439-478. (CP)
* William Max Nelson, “Making Men: Enlightenment Ideas of Racial Engineering,” *American Historical Review* 115: 5 (2010): 1364-1394. (CP)
* Gene E. Ogle, “Natural Movements and Dangerous Spectacles: Beatings, Duels, and “Play” in Saint Domingue,” in *New World Orders: Violence, Sanction, and Authority in the Colonial Americas* (Philadelphia, 2005): 226-248. (CP)
* Geggus : documents #17, 18

**9/19: Slavery in Saint Domingue**

* Paul Cheney, “Humanity and Interest,” in *Cul de Sac: Patrimony, Capitalism, and Slavery in French Saint-Domingue* (Chicago, 2017): 71-104. (CP)
* Jennifer Palmer, “Proximity and Distance in Plantation Society,” in *Intimate Bonds: Family and Slavery in the French Atlantic*, (Philadelphia, 2016): 19-44. (CP)
* Geggus: documents #2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16

**9/26: Defining citizenship in the revolutionary French Atlantic world**

* Shanti Singham, “Betwixt Cattle and Men: Jews, Blacks and Women, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man,” in Dale Van Kley, *The French Idea of Freedom: the Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789* (Stanford, 1994), 114-153. (CP)
* John Garrigus, “Vincent Ogé *Jeune* (1757-91): Social Class and Free Colored Mobilization on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution,” *The Americas* 68.1 (July 2011): 33-62. (CP)
* Geggus: pg. 36-38, documents #20, 21, 22, 23; pg. 57-58, documents #26, 27, 28, 29

**10/3: Religion, resistance, and the slave revolt of 1791**

* Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: the Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*, pg. 25-117.
* Kate Ramsey, “Crimes of Ritual Assembly and Assemblage in Colonial and Revolutionary Saint-Domingue,” in *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (2011): 24-53.
* Geggus: pg. 72-74; documents #10, 11, 12, 33, 34, 35, 37, 41, 43

***10/4-7 - University Fall Break***

***10/8 (Monday): Preliminary research questions due – submit on Canvas***

**10/10: Royalism, republicanism and colonialism: ideology and revolution**

* Laurent Dubois, “Our Three Colors: The King, the Republic and the Political Culture of Slave Revolution in Saint-Domingue,” *Historical Reflections* 29 (2003): 83-102.
* John Thornton, “I am the Subject of the King of Congo: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution,” *Journal of World History* 4: 2 (1993): 181-214 (CP)
* Carolyn Fick, “The Haitian revolution and the Limits of Freedom: Defining Citizenship in the Revolutionary Era,” *Social History* 32:4 (2007): 394-414 (CP)
* Geggus: documents #39, 40

***Visit to the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts – 3:15***

**10/17: Gender, race and emancipation**

* Jeremy Popkin, “Sailors and Revolution: Naval Mutineers in Saint Domingue, 1790-93,” *French History* vol. 24 no. 4 (2012): 460-481. (CP)
* Elizabeth Colwill, “Freedwomen’s Familial Politics: Marriage, War and Rites of Registry in Post-Emancipation Saint-Domingue,” in *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann. (CP)
* Laurent Dubois, “Gendered Freedom: *Citoyennes* and War in the Revolutionary French Caribbean,” in *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann (CP)
* Geggus: pg. 98-100; documents #48, 51, 52

***10/19 (Friday): Primary Document Research Proposal Due on Canvas***

**10/24: Revolutionary dictatorship? Toussaint L’Ouverture**

* Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: the Story of the Haitian Revolution*, pg. 171-250 (available electronically through the Franklin catalog)
* Geggus: pg. 117-119; documents #54-73

**10/31: Individual Meetings in COLL 208C - no class**

Use this week to get moving on your research project!

**11/7: Revolutionary Saint Domingue in U.S. culture, politics and society**

* Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*
* Geggus: documents #93

**11/14: Defining the new nation**

* Laurent Dubois*, Avengers of the New World: the Story of the Haitian Revolution,* pg. 280-306 (available electronically through the Franklin catalog)
* Julia Gaffield, “Complexities of Imagining Haiti: A Study of National Constitutions, 1801-1807,” *Journal of Social History* 41: 1 (2007): 81-103 (CP)
* Geggus: pg. 168-170; documents #74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81

**11/21: PRIMARY DOCUMENT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE BY 4:00PM in COLL 208C**

***No class meeting – University operates on a Friday schedule***

***11/22-25: Thanksgiving Break***

**11/28: Haiti and the Rise of Cuban Slavery**

Ada Ferrer, *Freedom’s Mirror, Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*

Geggus: documents #83, 88

**12/5: Writing the Haitian Revolution – archives and fiction**

* Michel-Rolphe Trouillot, “The Three Faces of Sans Souci,” in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (CP)
* Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, excerpts (CP)

Distribution and discussion of final paper assignment