New York University in Ghana

Course: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Second Semester, 2010/2011 Academic Year

Meeting Place: New York University in Ghana Campus, Labone, Accra.
Meeting Time: Thursday 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Course instructor: Dr. D.E.K. Baku
Office hours: Thursday, 1:30 pm to 2:25 pm

Course Description

Using the Atlantic slave trade as a backdrop the course provides and introduction to slavery and slave trade in Ghana and Africa. The course also provides an introduction to the dispersal of Blacks throughout the world since the outset of the different slave trades that took Africans out of Africa with emphasis on the Atlantic slave trade that took Africans into the New World of the Americas. Instead of presenting a comprehensive survey, covering every aspect of this vast subject, this course takes a topical approach by focusing on a selection of themes and issues that are crucial to developing an understanding of the slave trades to which Africans were subjected. Themes include slave routes out of Africa; middle passages; Blacks and the making of the New World; cross-cultural encounters in the diasporas; Black resistance to slavery and oppression, Black emancipation and notable Blacks in the diasporas and their contributions to wider Black concerns and the reverse diasporas. Using Ghana as case study, attention would also be paid to slavery in Africa.

Throughout the course, we will pay attention to the debilitating effects of the slave trades on Africa; the enormous contributions of Blacks to the making of the modern world, particularly the modern world of the Americas and how contributions of Blacks continue to shape the modern world and Black societies all over the world. Select case studies will allow us to gain an understanding of the historical experiences of Blacks as they were enslaved and encountered European colonizers, other peoples and cultures in other parts of the world. This course is designed for all students wishing to learn about the fascinating history of the enslavement of Africans outside Africa.

Requirements

1. The course is organized around lectures and discussions in class.

2. Students are required to attend all lectures. Attendance at lectures is not optional and the roll will be taken at random and excuses will not be accepted for absence from lectures unless prior permission has been sought. Students who frequently
absent themselves from lectures will not be eligible to take the end of semester examinations.

3. You are expected to read the materials before lecture, take notes of the readings, and be prepared to discuss them in class.

4. Grades

(a) Attendance and class participation will account for 10% of the end of semester grade. Unexcused absence from class will lead to deduction of grades.

(b) There will be 3 in-class tests each of which will be graded over 10 making a total of 30. This will represent 30% of the final score for the semester.

(c) There will be 3 take home assignments each of which will be graded over 10 making a total of 30 representing 30% of the final end of semester grade.

• First take away assignment due on 17 February 2011. This is a 3 page type written reflection paper on the Field Trip to the Danish Slave Plantation at Sesami.


(d) The remaining 30% will be earned in the end of semester examinations.

5 Use of mobile phones in lectures in any form (i.e., making or receiving calls and sending or reading text messages etc) is **strictly** forbidden. You will be **severely sanctioned** if you use a mobile in lectures.

6. Ensure to contact your Course Instructor during his office hours. You may also contact him via email at kofi.baku@gmail.com

Readings
You will understand the course better if you read the recommended books and the assigned readings. Failure to read extensively will reflect in your performance in class, in-class tests and end of semester examinations.

**Academic Dishonesty**

In keeping with University policies, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possessions of examinations questions and answer booklets, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, tempering with the academic work of other students or signing any name other than your own on the attendance sheet. Where you are found guilty of any act of academic dishonesty, you will be given an F grade for the course. You will also be reported to the management of New York University in Ghana for further disciplinary sanction.

**Week 1 (20 January 2011)**

Introducing the course and getting started – expectations etc

**Week 2 (27 January 2011)**

Slavery in Africa

S. Miers and I Kopytoff: *Slavery in Africa*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977, pp. 3 – 81. (This material is available in the NYU Library)

**Week 3 (3 February 2011)**

Academic studies of slave trade and slavery in Ghana


**Week 4 (10 February 2011)**

Field trip:

Sesami - a Danish slave plantation in the Gold Coast.

A small book was published to commemorate the opening of the museum at Sesemi. It is entitled Frederiksgave Plantation and Common Heritage Site, A Historical Exhibition and
Cultural Centre Covering a Chapter in the History of Ghana’s and Denmark’s Common Past and Cultural Heritage. (This material is available in the NYU Library; you must read it before the trip and you will also need it for your reflection paper)

A reflection paper would be written on the field trip to be submitted on 17 February 2011. You will be expected to show how the museum tells the story of domestic use of slaves in the Gold Coast. Credit would be given for any comparisons with the use of slave labour in the New World. (10 points)

**Week 5 (17 February 2011) (Reflection paper on field trip due)**

Slavery in Ghana – an introduction

A.A. Perbi: *A history of indigenous slavery in Ghana*, Accra, Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004, pp. 1 – 110. (This material is available in the NYU Library)

**Week 6 (24 February 2011)**

1st in class test (open book)

**Sources:**


**Week 7 (3 March 2011)**

Slavery and social structure in Ghana

A.A. Perbi: *A history of indigenous slavery in Ghana*, Accra, Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004, pp. 111 – 151. (This material is available in the NYU Library)

K. Arhin: “Rank and class among the Asante and Fante in the nineteenth century”, *Africa*, vol. 53, no. 1, (1983), pp. 2 – 22. (This material is available on-line and can be obtained in JSTOR).

**Week 8 (10 March 2011) (Second take away assignment due)**

African initiatives against slavery and slave trade


**Week 9 (17 March 2011)**

Mid semester break

**Week 10 (24 March 2011)**

Dutch and Euro-African slavers in the Gold Coast


L.W. Yarak: “West African coastal slavery in the nineteenth century: The case of the Afro-European slave owners in Elmina”, Ethnohistory, (1989), vol. 36 no. 1 (Ethnohistory and Africa), pp. 44 – 60. (This material is available on-line and can be obtained in JSTOR).

**Week 11 (31 March 2011)**

2nd semester in-class (Open book test)

**Source:**

F. Cooper: “The problem of slavery in African studies”, Journal of African History, vol. 20, no. 1, (1979), pp. 103 – 125. (This material is available on-line and can be obtained in JSTOR).

**Week 12 (7 April 2011)**

Memories of slavery and slave trade in Ghana

**Week 13 (14 April 2011)**

Legacies of slave trade and slavery in Ghana


**Week 14 (21 April 2011) (Third take away assignment due)**

Incomplete emancipation? Claims of emancipated slaves to property in the Gold Coast


D.C. Penningroth: “The claims of slaves and ex-slaves to family and property: A transatlantic comparison”, *American Historical Review*, (2007) pp 1039 – 1069. (This material is available on-line and can be obtained in JSTOR).

**Week 15 (28 April 2011)**

3rd in class test (open book)

D.C. Penningroth: “The claims of slaves and ex-slaves to family and property: A transatlantic comparison”, *American Historical Review*, (2007) pp 1039 – 1069. (This material is available on-line and can be obtained in JSTOR).

**Week 16 (2 May 2011)**

Wrap up