(Re)Connecting the Black Atlantic: Comparing Afro-Brazilian and African-American History until the 19th Century

Instructor: Luciana da Cruz Brito

Course Description:

This course explores slavery, abolition, and freedom in Brazil and the United States from the 16th to the 19th century. While approximately 400,000 Africans were transported to North America during this time, more than 4 million were brought to Brazil, the largest Latin American country. From such numbers, in both countries, in the United States somewhat organically through reproduction and in Brazil through importation, emerged the foundation of massive slave societies. Slavery in the U.S. relied on a highly racialized society, one that formally institutionalized a racial code; slavery in Brazil was less formalized, but no less racial. Such differences had important implications for the eradication of slavery in the two countries. Brazilian and American leaders at first strove for a compensated emancipatory process; however, slave owners, the military, and the slaves themselves all played vital roles in emancipation. The African populations in both societies bore a deep social and cultural influence in the region that is broadly conceived of as the Black Atlantic. This course uses the academic work of Brazilians, Americans and scholars of other nationalities who have produced an extensive bibliography about slavery and abolition in both countries, as well as the experiences of other black Atlantic societies.

Assignments:

1- For each class, all students must submit a 1-2 page paper comparing the readings of the week. 25%
2- In each week, one student must assume the role of facilitator by providing questions and initiating/conducting the discussion. 25%
3- Visual Media Paper: Movies, music, photography, and art produced in the black Diaspora, specifically by Afro-Brazilians and African-American artists should be the theme of a two-page paper. Materials are available online and in the digital collections of Trinity Library. 10% (deadline: March, 25th)
4- Final Paper: A paper of 10-15 pages in length covering one of the topics discussed during the course. Related topics may be considered. 40% (deadline: May, 11th)

COURSE POLICIES

Laptop and cell phones: Before each class begins, please turn off your computer and cell phone. There should be no computer use during class time unless otherwise specified.

Participation: Participation is a fundamental part of the class. Debating and contributing with original ideas is important for intellectual thinking. It is extremely important to read the required texts at least a week ahead of class.

Intellectual integrity: Please check the Trinity College Student Handbook to know more about the college policies about plagiarism and proper citation.

Required Reading


**Week 1 - Patterns of the Slave Trade in Brazil and the U.S.:**

David Eltis and David Richardson, “A New Assessment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (chapter 1) in, Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, 2008, pp. 1-60. (During this class, Eltis and Richardson ‘s maps of slave-trade routes will be analyzed).


Documentary, Blacks in Latin America: The Slave-Trade in Brazil and the U.S. 8min.

Websites:
http://abolition.nypl.org/home/ (attention to maps and images)
http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces (see introductory maps)

**Week 2 - Patterns of Slavery in Brazil and the U.S**


Photo Exhibit on Brazilian slavery:
http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/Slaveryand

**Week 3- Building Diaspora: Afro Brazilians and African-Americans in the Black Atlantic**


**Week 4- African Reminiscences, American creations and Religiosity in the Americas**


Movie: 12 years a Slave: Funeral Scene (Roll Jordan Roll)
Movie 2: Orixas- Interview with Pierre Verger (part 1)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Szvx3XpeFp0

Week 5- Family and Social Life: Striving to Keep the Ties


Movie: Beloved (the killing of babies scene)

Week 6- Black Women and Resistance to Patriarchy and Slavery


Movie: Quanto Vale ou é por quilo? 2005 (Is it Worthy?) The fugitive slave scene (1.09.43 to 1.12.48 sec) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUhyGhynIRk

Week 7- Revolts and Resistance


Week 8- Degrees of Color, Miscegenation and Slavery


Movie: *Who is Black in America?* by Soledad O'brien
Website: 1drop.com (The one drop project)

Black and Latino (short documentary)

**Week 9- Free Black people in Slave Societies**


Michael P Johnson and James L. Roark, “April’s Story” (chapter 1) and “Freedom Bound” (chapter 2) in, *Black Masters: A free Family of Color in the Old South*, 1984, pp. 1-64.

Movie, “Quanto Vale ou é por Quilo?” (Is It Worthy?) Scene: Maria Antônia buys Lucrécia’s Freedom, 0.19,20 min -0.26.55 min  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUhyGhynIRk

**Week 10- Abolitionism and Black Protagonists**


Newspapers


Documentary: The Abolitionists – Frederick Douglass, part 2, chapter 1:  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMd5G4RpFLk

**Week 11- Abolition in Brazil and the U.S**


**Week 12- Race in post-Emancipation Societies**


“No race Distinctions There: In Brazil Negroes May Waltz with Pink-cheeked Beauties” in, *Chicago Daily Defender*, July 30, 1892.

Movies: Blacks in Latin America, episode: Brazil

Other Sources:
The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross, episode: Racist Images in Jim Crow Era

**Week 13- From “Pó de arroz” (Rice Powder) to Black Giants: Race and Sports in Brazil and U.S.**


Other Sources: Race and Sports in Brazilian Media


World Cup and Racial composition of Stadiums


**Week 14- Memories and struggles in the Black Atlantic**


Keisha Khan-Perry, “Violent policing and the disposing urban Landscapes” and “Picking up the pieces: everyday violence and community”, in Black women against the land grab: the fight for racial justice in Brazil. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. pp. 87-138

**Other Sources**


Marc D. Perry, “Hip Hop’s Diasporics Landscapes of Blackness” in, *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (West; Martin and Wilkins - Eds.) 2009, pp. 233-258.