

ARCH 1792: The Archaeology of Slavery

Tu/Th: 1:00-2:20

Dr. Matt Reilly

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World

207 Rhode Island Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00-12:00

Matthew_Reilly@brown.edu



Overview

The institution of slavery was a far-reaching tragedy that plagued the world, particularly the Atlantic region, for roughly four centuries. Its vast geographical span is matched by the legacies that have persisted into the present. The topic of Atlantic world slavery has received warranted and substantial attention from a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities including history, literature, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, psychology, Africana studies, and women's studies. Archaeology has been similarly engaged in such scholarship and offers a material lens through which to closely examine the physical traces of the everyday lives of those involved in and affected by the slave trade. Archaeologists have confronted the material manifestations of slavery in a variety of forms through the study of plantation landscapes, West African slavery forts, wrecks of slaving ships, plantation villages for the enslaved, burial grounds, and maroon (runaway) communities. While such diversity of studies has contributed tremendous temporal, geographic, and intimate depth to the slave trade as well as the lived experience of slavery, this is still a lively ground for scholarly debate with numerous unresolved questions. In particular, to what extent were enslaved Africans able to bring cultural characteristics and practices with them across the Atlantic? How did the enslaved cope with their conditions? What are

the very real and physical legacies of slavery on the contemporary landscape? Finally, what do these debates reveal about how we study and teach slavery today?

Goals

This course is designed to offer an archaeological perspective to the study of slavery. No prerequisites are required for this course and brief introductions to archaeological method and theory, as well as the African slave trade, will be provided. While examples and antecedents from antiquity will be discussed for comparative purposes, we will primarily be concerned with slavery as it unfolded in the Americas from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Our discussions will encompass a broad geographic survey of how the trans-Atlantic slave trade affected diverse areas including West African, Europe, Brazil, the Caribbean, and what would become the United States. At a different level, we will also engage with the everyday lives of the millions of enslaved individuals forced to make the Middle Passage across the Atlantic. Detailed analyses of the material record of slavery reveals, uniquely, issues surrounding life on the plantation, planter control and labor management, the work habits of the enslaved, leisure time, economic networks, kinship, religious beliefs and practices, and resistance, to name but a few. This course will provide students with an overview of the archaeological study of slavery as well as the major theoretical, practical, and ethical debates ongoing in the field.

Format

Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions in a meaningful, substantive, and respectful fashion. Discussions will take place in class and on Tuesdays the instructor will offer a short introductory lecture to inspire dialogue. Thursday discussions will be led by students. Students are expected to arrive to each class having completed all required readings and prepared to intelligently discuss them with classmates. Readings listed for a particular class meeting should be read *before* class.

Assessment

Attendance, participation, and discussion leading	20%
In-class exam (Thursday, March 12 th)	30%
Book review (Tuesday, March 31 st)	20%
Final paper (Tuesday, April 28 th)	30%

Discussion Leading

Each student is responsible for leading discussion during a Thursday class period. An example of discussion leading will be provided by the instructor during the first few weeks of class. In general, all students are expected to do all readings for the week's class. Each week a different student(s) will provide a short written introduction to summarize the themes, issues, and arguments of the readings to begin class. From here, discussion leaders can introduce open-ended questions that spark discussion amongst classmates. Discussion leading will be part of your attendance and participation grade.

Book Review

Students are responsible for reading and reviewing a book dealing with the archaeology of slavery. The book to be reviewed can NOT be a book assigned for class (unless only a small part of the book has been formally assigned). The book can relate to any geographical area as long as the archaeology of slavery is the predominant subject matter. Reviews are NOT to be summaries of the book but, rather, a critical assessment of the author's arguments, theoretical position, methods, data, and conclusions. Students should address how the book relates to issues and themes discussed in other readings and in class. Reviews should be between 6 and 8 pages, standard formatting.

Final Paper

For the final paper students will choose a particular theme or issue discussed in class and provide an in-depth assessment of the topic. Papers should engage with course readings as well as utilize journal articles and books not assigned for class. More specifically, students are required to have a bibliography of at *least* 15 sources, at least 5 of which are non-class related materials. Papers should be between 15 and 20 pages, standard formatting. Students should discuss their preferred topic with the instructor before or directly after spring break. Additionally, students are responsible for giving a ten minute presentation about their paper on our last meeting which will toward the final paper grade. More details will be provided in class.

Required Texts

The required books are available at the Campus Book Store and through web retailers like Amazon and half.com.

Katherine H. Hayes (2013). *Slavery before Race: Europeans, Africans, and Indians at Long Island's Sylvester Manor Plantation, 1651-1884*. New York University Press: New York, NY.

James A. Delle (2014). *The Colonial Caribbean: Landscapes of Power in the Plantation System*. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY.

Mark P. Leone (2005). *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 22nd

Thursday: Syllabus, introductions

Week 2: Jan. 27th and 29th

Tuesday: Old World antecedent – conceptualizing labor

Readings: Robin Blackburn (1997). "The Old World Background to European Colonial Slavery." *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 54(1):65-102.

Simon P. Newman (2013). "England" in *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic*, pg. 17-35. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA.

Thursday: Early (West) African encounters

Readings: J.D. Fage (1969). "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History." *The Journal of African History*. 10(3):393-404.

Philip D. Curtin (1990). "Africa and the Slave Trade" in *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 29-45. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY.

Paul E. Lovejoy (2012). "On the Frontiers of Islam, 1400-1600" in *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, pg. 24-44. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY.

Week 3: Feb. 3rd and 5th

Tuesday: Conceptualizing slavery

Readings: David Eltis (2000). "Slavery and Freedom in the Early Modern World" in *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, pg. 1-28. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY.

Ira Berlin (1998). "Prologue: Making Slavery, Making Race" and "The Charter Generations" in *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, pg. 1-28. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Orlando Patterson (1982). "Introduction: The Constitutive Elements of Slavery" in *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, pg. 1-16. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Thursday: New World cultural persistence or transformations?

Readings: Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price (1992[1976]). "Introduction", "The Encounter Model", "The Beginnings of African-American Societies and Cultures", and "Retentions and Survivals" in *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, pg. 1-22, 42-60. Beacon Press Books: Boston, MA.

Melville J. Herskovits (1990[1941]). "The Significance of Africanisms", "Enslavement and the Reaction to Slave Status", and "The Acculturative Process" in *The Myth of the Negro Past*, 1-32, 86-142. Beacon Press Books: Boston, MA.

Week 4: Feb. 10th and 12th

Tuesday: Introduction to archaeology and the archaeology of slavery

Readings: Lydia W. Marshall (2015). "Introduction: The Comparative Archaeology of Slavery" in *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion*, edited by Lydia W. Marshall, 1-23. Center for Archaeological Investigations Occasional Paper No. 41, Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale, IL.

Theresa A. Singleton (1999). "An Introduction to African-American Archaeology" in *I, too, am America*, edited by Theresa A. Singleton, 1-17. University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville, VA.

Charles E. Orser, Jr. (1990). "Archaeological Approaches to New World Plantation Slavery." *Archaeological Method and Theory*. Vol. 2:111-154.

Thursday: Theorizing an archaeology of slavery

Readings: Paul R. Mullins (2008). "Excavating America's Metaphor: Race, Diaspora, and Vindicationist Archaeologies." *Historical Archaeology*. 42(2):104-122.

Douglas V. Armstrong (2008). "Excavating African American Heritage: Towards a More Nuanced Understanding of the African Diaspora." *Historical Archaeology*. 42(2):123-137.

Terrence W. Epperson (2004). "Critical Race Theory and the Archaeology of the African Diaspora." *Historical Archaeology*. 38(1):101-108.

Week 5: Feb. 19th

Tuesday: No class

Thursday: Early archaeologies of slavery

Charles H. Fairbanks (1984). "The Plantation Archaeology of the Southeastern Coast." *Historical Archaeology*. 18:1-14.

John S. Otto and Augustus M. Burns (1983). "Black Folks and Poor Buckras: Archeological Evidence of Slave and Overseer Living Conditions on an Antebellum Plantation." *Journal of Black Studies*. 14(2):185-200.

Leland Ferguson (1992). "Handmade Pots" in *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*, pg. 1-32.

Week 6: Feb. 24th and 26th

Tuesday: The plantation – landscape, organization, management, power, and resistance

Readings: James A. Delle (2014). *The Colonial Caribbean*, Chapters 1-4.

Thursday: The plantation (continued)

Readings: Delle (2014). Chapters 5-8.

Week 7: Mar. 3rd and 5th

Tuesday: Plantation and landscape transformations

Readings: Douglas V. Armstrong (1998). "Cultural Transformation within Enslaved Laborer Communities in the Caribbean" in *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology*, edited by J. Cusick, pg. 378-401.

Douglas V. Armstrong (2011). "Reflections on Seville: Rediscovering the African Jamaican Settlements at Seville Plantation, St. Ann's Bay" in *Out of Many, One People: The Historical Archaeology of Colonial Jamaica*, edited by J. Delle, M. Hauser, and D. Armstrong, pg. 77-101. University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, AL.

Mark W. Hauser (2015). "Blind Spots in Empire: Plantation Landscapes in Early Colonial Dominica (1763-1807)" in *The Archaeology of Slavery*, 143-165.

Thursday: Everyday life on the plantation – foodways and architecture

Readings: Elizabeth J. Reitz, Tyson Gibbs, and Ted A. Rathbun (2009). "Archaeological Evidence for Subsistence on Coastal Plantations" in *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, edited by Theresa A. Singleton, 163-191.

Steven L. Jones (2009). "The African-American Tradition in Vernacular Architecture" in *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, 195-213.

Maria Franklin (2001). "The Archaeological Dimensions of Soul Food: Interpreting Race, Culture, and Afro-Virginian Identity" in *Race and the Archaeology of Identity*, edited by Charles E. Orser, Jr., 88-107. University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, UT.

Week 8: Mar. 10th and 12th

Tuesday: Symbolism and Africanisms in artifact styles

Christopher Fennell (2003). "Group Identity, Individual Creativity, and Symbolic Generation in a BaKongo Diaspora." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. 7(1):1-31.

Marcos André Torres de Souza and Camilla Agostini (2012). "Body Marks, Pots, and Pipes: Some Correlations between African Scarifications and Pottery Decoration in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Brazil." *Historical Archaeology*. 46(3):102-123.

Kenneth L. Brown (2015). "Retentions, Adaptations, and the Need for Social Control within African and African American Communities across the Southern United States from 1770 to 1930" in *The Archaeology of Slavery*, 166-191.

Thursday: In-class Exam

Week 9: Mar. 17th and 19th

Tuesday: Burials

Readings: Jerome S. Handler (1997). "An African-Type Healer/Diviner and His Grave Goods: A Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. 1(2):91-130.

Mark E. Mack and Michael L. Blakey (2004). "The New York African Burial Ground Project: Past Biases, Current Dilemmas, and Future Research Opportunities." *Historical Archaeology*. 38(1):10-17.

Ross W. Jamieson (1995). "Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices." *Historical Archaeology*. 29(4):39-58.

Thursday: Perspectives from West Africa

Liza Gijanto (2015). "The Nature of Marginality: Castle Slaves and the Atlantic Trade at San Domingo, the Gambia" in *The Archaeology of Slavery*, 64-92.

J. Cameron Monroe (2015). "Cities, Slavery, and Rural Ambivalence in Precolonial Dahomey" in *The Archaeology of Slavery*, 192-214.

Neil L. Norman (2015). "Slavery Matters and Materiality: Atlantic Items, Political Processes, and the Collapse of the Hueda Kingdom, Benin, West Africa" in *The Archaeology of Slavery*, 215-229.

Christopher R. DeCorse (1999). "Oceans Apart: Africanist Perspectives on Diaspora Archaeology." In *"I, too, am America"*, pg. 132-158.

Week 10: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 11: Mar. 31st and Apr. 2nd

Tuesday: Pots, identity, and Caribbean networks – **Book report due in class**

Readings: Mark W. Hauser (2011). "Routes and Roots of Empire: Pots, Power, and Slavery in the 18th-Century British Caribbean." *American Anthropologist*. 113(3):431-447.

Jonathan Finch (2013). "Inside the Pot House: Diaspora, Identity, and Locale in Barbadian Ceramics." *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage*. 2(2):115-130.

Laurie A. Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth (2005). *Sampling Many Pots: An Archaeology of Memory and Tradition at a Bahamian Plantation*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville, FL. Selections.

Thursday: Local economic activity

Readings: Heather R. Gibson (2009). "Domestic Economy and Daily Practice in Guadeloupe: Historical Archaeology at La Mahaudière Plantation." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. 13(1):27-44.

Jerome S. Handler and Diane Wallman (2014). "Production Activities in the Household Economies of Plantation Slaves: Barbados and Martinique, Mid-1660s to Mid-1800s." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. 18(3).

Matthew Reeves (2011). "Household Market Activities among Early Nineteenth-Century Jamaican Slaves: An Archaeological Case Study from Two Slave Settlements" in *Out of Many, One People: The Historical Archaeology of Colonial Jamaica*, edited by James Delle, Mark Hauser, and Douglas Armstrong, pg. 183-210.

Week 14: Apr. 21st and 23rd

Tuesday: Resistance – maroons and rebellion

Readings: Pedro Paulo A. Funari (1999). “Maroon, race and gender: Palmares material culture and social relations in a runaway settlement.” In *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*, edited by P. Funari, M. Hall, and S. Jones, pg. 308-327.

Emmanuel Kofi Aghorsah (2007). “Scars of Brutality: Archaeology of the Maroons in the Caribbean.” In *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora*, edited by A. Ogundiran and T. Falola. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN.

Terry Weik (1997). “The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity and Transformation in the African Diaspora.” *Historical Archaeology*. 31(2):81-92.

Thursday: Race and gender

Readings: Maria Franklin (2001). “A Black Feminist Inspired Archaeology?” *Journal of Social Archaeology*. 1(1):108-125.

Whitney Battle-Baptiste (2011). “Understanding a Black Feminist Framework” and “Constructing a Black Feminist Framework” in *Black Feminist Archaeology*, pg. 19-72. Left Coast Press: Walnut Creek, CA.

Week 12: Apr. 7th and 9th

Tuesday: Slavery in an American city

Readings: Mark P. Leone (2005). *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital*. Chapters 1-4.

Thursday: Slavery in an American city (continued)

Readings: Leone (2005). Chapters 5-8.

Week 13: Apr. 14th and 16th

Tuesday: Slavery and race

Readings: Katherine H. Hayes (2013). *Slavery before Race*. Chapters 1-3.

Thursday: Slavery and race (continued)

Readings: Hayes (2013). Chapters 4-6.

Week 15: Apr. 28th

Tuesday: Class presentations and final paper due