This course explores the place of Africa in Atlantic history, focusing on the nature of West African societies, the slave trade, and the transit of peoples, cultures, and modes of resistance to the Americas. We will study the main frameworks of interpretation of African, diasporic, and African-American history, ranging from the world-system analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein, to the global historical anthropology of Eric Wolf, to the Marxist dependency theory of Walter Rodney, to the cultural/intellectual history of the Black Atlantic of Paul Gilroy, to the substantial literature built up by Africanist historians.

Each student will write a weekly two-page paper reflecting on the assigned reading. These will be collected and disseminated by e-mail to all students, who will read them before the weekly class meeting. (Papers will be due on Monday at noon, before class on Tuesday.) Each student will also take responsibility for introducing one week’s reading, setting it in context and outlining its scholarly reception for the class as a whole. There will be no final exam, no final paper. It is expected that every student will give maximum effort to the class and contribute to it (in writing and in discussion) in utterly serious and conscientious ways.

The following books are available at the University of Pittsburgh Bookstore:


Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007). (Note: Do not buy this book as it will be made available for purchase at cost.)


Copies of the readings are on reserve in Hillman Library.

Assignments:

I: FRAMEWORKS (three weeks)

**Week one, 1/15/08** -- Discussion leader: Niklas Frykman


**Week two, 1/22/08** – Discussion leader: Isaac Curtin

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

**Week three, 1/29/08** – Discussion leaders: Pete Kotowski and Valquiria Pereira Tenorio

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

II. AFRICA (Five weeks)

**Week four, 2/5/08** – Discussion leader: Charlie Alessi
*Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*


**Week five, 2/12/08 – Discussion leader: Colter Harper**
James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*

**Week six, 2/19/08 – Discussion leaders: Catherine Ballériaux and Katie Phelps**
Robin Law, *Ouidah*

**Week seven, 2/26/08 – Discussion leader: Jake Pollock**
Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death*

**Week eight, 3/4/08 – Discussion leader: Ryan Durkopp**
Sylviane Diouf, ed., *Fighting the Slave Trade*

III. AMERICAS (Five weeks)

**Week nine, 3/18/08 – Discussion leader: Titas Chakraborty**
Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship*

**Week ten, 3/25/08 – Discussion leader: Julien Comte**
Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden*

**Week eleven, 4/1/08 – Discussion leader: Mark Kramer**
Michael Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*

**Week twelve, 4/8/08 – Discussion leader: Jamie Holeman**
Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas*

IV. REFLECTIONS ON AFRICA AND THE ATLANTIC

**Week thirteen, 4/15/08 – Discussion leader: Kavin Paulraj**
Student evaluation of course – first 20 minutes of class time

*Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*

Available online at: http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/journals/ral/ral27-4.html