The Haitian Revolution in Global Perspective
AS 100.376

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4pm, Gilman 346

Course description

Between 1791 and 1804, the events of the Haitian Revolution transformed the former French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue. Once a colonial society premised on hierarchies of race, wealth, and power, and sustained by a brutal regime of plantation slavery, it had become the self-proclaimed "Black Republic" of Haiti, the second independent state in the Americas and the only one governed by former slaves and people of color. The Haitian Revolution was also transformative on a global scale: it altered the geopolitics of empire in the Americas; threatened to disrupt the trans-Atlantic slave trade and plantation economy; precipitated a massive, global movement of refugees, and offered a powerful example of collective action, and hope of emancipation, for enslaved people around the world.

In this course, students will learn about the Haitian Revolution as it unfolded in a global context, from the transatlantic movements of people and ideas that laid the groundwork for revolution in the eighteenth-century colony of Saint-Domingue, to the Revolution's continuing ideological influence in the modern world. Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the first section of the course focuses on the global dynamics that shaped colonial society in Saint-Domingue before the Haitian Revolution. This attention to pre-revolutionary history reveals the ways that ideas about race, social integration, and political change were informed through global exchange, even before the first news of the French Revolution reached the colony.

The second section of the course focuses on the events of the Haitian Revolution from 1791 to 1804. Even as the Revolution shaped local realities and impacted individual lives, it was a subject of global concern, as surrounding polities in the Caribbean, North America, and Europe maneuvered for political influence, dealt with the problems posed by revolutionary refugees, and used revolutionary Haiti as a lens for self-reflection. Finally, the third section of the course looks beyond the declaration of Haitian Independence to consider the Haitian Revolution's complex global legacies. In some quarters, the Revolution inspired antislavery and republican movements, but elsewhere, it contributed to the entrenchment of systems of slavery and racial prejudice, while independent Haiti soon faced diplomatic and economic isolation, and a process of "silencing" in global memory. The course concludes with a discussion concerning some of the ways in which the story of the Haitian Revolution has recently been recovered and repurposed.

The Haitian Revolution, a rich subject of study in its own right, will also encourage students to develop new insight into broader historical questions, particularly processes of globalization and the social construction of racial categories. The course represents "global history" in the sense that it emphasizes economic, political, intellectual, and migratory cross-currents that spanned the world, but also because it deliberately situates different "nationalist" narratives in conversation with each other. To complement this macro-level perspective, the course will also consider the effects of the Haitian Revolution as they were experienced at the small scale of individual lives. The course will also maintain sustained, critical attention to the
contingent nature of racial categories, as they were constructed and lived both before and during the Revolution. While some histories treat the Haitian Revolution as a conflict between three consistently defined and clearly delineated racial groups, this course instead emphasizes the ways in which the Revolution shaped the possibilities of racial identity and exerted a lasting influence on Western racial thought.

University requirements and policies

Academic integrity
The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student conduct (or designee) by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 410-516-8208 or via email at integrity@jhu.edu. For more information, see the Homewood Student Affairs site on academic ethics: (https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-life/student-conduct/academic-ethics undergraduates)

Disability services
Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 103 Shaffer, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu

Anxiety, stress, and mental health
If you are struggling with anxiety, stress, depression or other mental health related concerns, please consider visiting the JHU Counseling Center. If you are concerned about a friend, please encourage that person to seek out their services. The Counseling Center is located at 3003 North Charles Street in Suite S-200 and can be reached at 410-516-8278 and online at http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/

Course requirements and policies

Attendance and participation
The purpose of class discussion is to facilitate conversation about the assigned readings and broader themes of the course, and this works best when we work as a collective. Full attendance is essential, and active participation is more than just a requirement of the course--you help yourself and your fellow students make sense of new concepts by asking informed questions and sharing opinions based on an accumulating body of knowledge. So, know your materials in advance, and be prepared to listen to and critically engage with the contributions of others. Respond directly to your peers--not just the instructor.
In case of illness, please contact me by e-mail at least two hours before class begins. In case of emergency, family or otherwise, please contact me or inform the dean as soon as possible.

Classroom climate
I am committed to creating a classroom environment that values the diversity of experiences and perspectives that all students bring. Everyone here has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. I believe fostering an inclusive climate is important because research and my experience show that students who interact with peers who are different from themselves learn new things and experience tangible educational outcomes. Please join me in creating a welcoming and vibrant classroom climate. Note that you should expect to be challenged intellectually by me and by your peers, and at times this may feel uncomfortable. Indeed, it can be helpful to be pushed sometimes in order to learn and grow. But at no time in this learning process should someone be singled out or treated unequally on the basis of any seen or unseen part of their identity.

If you ever have concerns in this course about harassment, discrimination, or any unequal treatment, or if you seek accommodations or resources, I invite you to share directly with me. I promise that I will take your communication seriously and seek mutually acceptable resolutions and accommodations. Reporting will never impact your course grade. You may also share concerns with the History Department chair (Professor Michael Kwass, kwass@jhu.edu), the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Professor Erin Rowe, erowe1@jhu.edu), the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion (Darlene Saporu, dsaporu@jhu.edu), or the Office of Institutional Equity (oie@jhu.edu). In handling reports, people will protect your privacy as much as possible, but faculty and staff are required to officially report information for some cases (e.g. sexual harassment).

Grading and assignments
Grades for this course will be calculated as follows:
1. Class participation: 30%
2. Short essay: 20%
3. Materials for first final project deadline: 10%
4. Draft of final project: 10%
5. Final project: 30%

Readings
Readings must be completed by the start of the week for which they were assigned. Mark your texts and always bring them to class so we can refer to them. As you read, you should generally keep in mind the following questions: Is this a primary or secondary source? Who is the author? What does the author argue? What kind of evidence does the author use, and do you find it persuasive? How does this reading address previous themes in the course? In primary sources in particular, what do the details revealed in the source (as well as what is not revealed) say about the author? The moment in which the author is writing?
**Reading responses**
Students will write 1-2 pages responding to the readings for the week in preparation for class discussion. These responses are intended as an informal way for you to articulate questions, reactions, or topics for discussion, and will count toward your participation grade. Reading responses are due by 8:00 am on Tuesday and should be emailed to me at m.gaffield@jhu.edu.

**Writing assignments**
In addition to the weekly readings and responses, you will complete one short paper and one final project, with component written materials due over the course of the semester. I will provide you with more specific details and expectations for these in the next few weeks of class.

These written assignments should be turned in to me electronically, at m.gaffield@jhu.edu, by 6:00 pm on the day that they are due. The final project should be ready for presentation and discussion in-class at the final meeting of the semester.

**Required texts**


**PART ONE**
**Pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue in the Atlantic World**

Week 1 (9/3 and 9/5)
Introduction: The Rise of a Sugar Colony


Week 2 (9/10 and 9/12)
The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the "Plantation Machine"

- Dubois, "Fermentation," in *Avengers of the New World*, 36-59.
Week 3 (9/17 and 9/19)
Cooperation and Conflict in Saint-Domingue's "Tripartite Society"

- Geggus, *Documentary History*, Documents 6-7 (12-14).

Week 4 (9/24 and 9/26)
Racism and Reform on the Eve of Revolution


**PART TWO**
*Colonial Revolution on a World Stage*

Week 5 (10/1 and 10/3)
Colonial Challenges to Revolutionary Ideals

- Dubois, "Inheritance," in *Avengers of the New World*, 60-90.
Week 6 (10/8 and 10/10)
Atlantic Ideologies of Revolt in the North Province

- Dubois, "Fire in the Cane," in *Avengers of the New World*, 91-114.

**SHORT ESSAY DUE THURSDAY 10/10 BY 6:00 PM**

Week 7 (10/15 and 10/17)
Local and Global Perspectives on Emancipation


Week 8 (10/22 and 10/24)
Civil War and Foreign Policy under Toussaint Louverture

- Geggus, *Documentary History*, Documents 63 (143-145); 67-71 (153-164).

**FIRST FINAL PROJECT MATERIALS DUE TUESDAY 10/22 BY 6:00 PM**
Week 9 (10/29 and 10/31)
The Struggle for Haitian Independence

- Dubois, "Those Who Die," in *Avengers of the New World*, 280-301.
- Geggus, *Documentary History*, Documents 74 (171-172); 78-81 (176-182).

**PART THREE**
International Impacts of the Haitian Revolution

Week 10 (11/5 and 11/7)
The First Black Republic in the Global Imagination

- Geggus, *Documentary History*, Documents 82-88 (186-191); 94 (197-198); 99 (203-205).

Week 11 (11/12 and 11/14)
Backlash and Retrenchment


**FINAL PROJECT DRAFT DUE THURSDAY 11/14 BY 6:00 PM**
Week 12 (11/19/ and 11/21)
Revolutionary Migrants


Week 13 (12/3 and 12/5)
Writing, Un-Writing, Re-Writing: The Haitian Revolution's Complex Legacies


**FINAL PROJECT DUE THURSDAY 12/5 FOR PRESENTATION IN CLASS**