

# African Diaspora in Latin America, 1441-1804

HIST 251 HIST 251W AAAS 215

Prof. Pablo Sierra

Fall 2023



Image of the *pardo* and *moreno* militias of Veracruz (México), late eighteenth century.

Class time: Monday and Wednesday, 11:50 am-1:05 pm

Class location: Bausch & Lomb 270

Office hours: Mondays, 1:15-3:15 pm

Office location: Rush Rhees 461, fourth floor (behind the stairs)

Contact: [pablo.sierra@rochester.edu](mailto:pablo.sierra@rochester.edu)

This course fulfills the following requirements for the History major:

- Chronological: Pre-1800 requirement
- Regional: Latin American history
- Focus area: Global Perspectives or Social & Economic
- “W” requirement: 251W students will receive intensive-writing credit

The course also counts for the Latin American Studies minor and the African and African-American Studies minor and major.

Students and speakers of Spanish, French, and Portuguese are invited to make use of their foreign-language skills in this course, especially when identifying primary sources for the research paper. All required reading materials for the course are provided in English.

## ***Course Description***

This seminar analyzes the arrival of five million Africans to Latin America and their impact on the Portuguese and Spanish societies of the Western Hemisphere from 1441 to 1804. The course will begin with a spatial and theoretical introduction to the concept of an “African diaspora” and early interactions between North and West African polities with Portuguese mariners and enslavers. We will then shift into the military phase of the Spanish conquest in the Caribbean and mainland Americas. Studying key cases from modern-day Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico we will examine the forced arrival of African-descended populations, the emergence of Black conquistadors, and early instances of afro-indigenous interaction.

The second course unit then turns to questions of resistance to Spanish rule, cultural exchange, and how Africans and their descendants forged vibrant linguistic and religious communities in colonial Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. Our work with primary source documents will lead us to engage the archive left by maroon populations in *palenques* throughout the Latin American region. The third unit centers on the construction of specific Black political, religious and cultural traditions in Angola, Kongo, and Brazil. We will devote significant time to understanding the reign of Njinga Mbandi, queen of Ndongo, in order to understand her legacy among West Central African populations in Brazil.

The last unit of the course moves us away from Black experiences in Spanish and Portuguese-ruled territories by focusing on the African diaspora to Saint-Domingue (modern-day Haiti) and French Louisiana. Understanding the cultural fabric of Blackness in these seventeenth and eighteenth-century Caribbean and American locations will lead us to a deeper understanding of the Haitian Revolution. The course concludes with the 1804 Declaration of Haitian Independence.

## ***Course Grading Structure***

### **For HIST 251W:**

5%	Reading Quiz 1
10%	Reading Quiz 2
10%	Research Outline
20%	First Version Research
30%	Final Research Paper
10%	Participation and Attendance
15%	StoryMaps Group Project

### **For AAAS 215 and HIST 215:**

5%	Reading Quiz 1
10%	Reading Quiz 2
20%	Research Outline
40%	Final Research Paper
10%	Participation and Attendance
15%	StoryMaps Group Project

This course is centered on writing a well-researched, original paper on any aspect of the African diaspora within the Latin American region. This will require you to identify a research topic in a timely manner in order to request InterLibrary Loan materials, take notes, and scan chapters. Identifying an appropriate topic and the primary and secondary sources to pursue the paper is often the most difficult part of this assignment. ***Urge you to begin the research process NO LATER than Week 4.***

Your research process requires holding at least one research meeting with me during office hours (in person or by Zoom). Don't be shy about this. I hold office hours immediately after class on Mondays.

Students in HIST 251W will produce a 12-page research paper as the first version of their research. After receiving individual feedback, this paper will be revised and expanded to 16 pages for the final version. Students enrolled in HIST 251 or AAAS 251 will write a final 10-12 page paper.

### ***Kelly Book Fund***

If you are an undergraduate student facing financial hardship in acquiring the books listed above, you may apply to the Kelly Book Fund. These funds are for undergraduate students in need to purchase books for their history courses; preference will be given to those majoring in History. Students may apply for these funds using this link: <https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>

### ***Required Books***

Brewer-García, Larissa. *Beyond Babel: Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and New Granada*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1108730303

Heywood, Linda. *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0674237445

Johnson, Jessica Marie. *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1512823707

Joy McKnight, Kathryn and Leo J. Garofalo. *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009. (Bilingual edition, 416 pages) ISBN 978-0872209930

### ***Course Schedule***

#### **Module I – Diasporic Beginnings**

*Week 1 – Black Joy, Afro-Latinos, and the Diaspora*  
Aug. 30

- Nicolás Guillén, poetry selections (in class) \*

*Week 2 – History, Silences, and Your Power*

Sept. 6 (No class Sept. 4 for Labor Day)

- Colin Palmer, “Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora,” 1-6 \*
- Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, xxi-29 \*

*Week 3 – Black Iberian, Black Caribbean*

Sept. 11

- James Sweet, “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought,” 143-166 \*
- *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 148-151, 74-78\*

Sept. 13

- Baltasar Fra-Molinero, “Juan Latino and his Racial Difference,” 326-344 \*
  - In-class primary analysis: Juan Garrido’s 1538 letter of merits \*

**Reading Quiz #1**

**Module II –Black Maroons, Black Interpreters**

*Week 4 – Making War, Making Race*

Sept. 18

- Erin Woodruff Stone, “America’s First Slave Revolt,” 195-217 \*
- Robert Schwaller, “Contested Conquests,” 609-638 \*

Sept. 20

- Selections from *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom*, pp. 1-33 \*
- (Optional) *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 5, pp. 64-81
  - In-class exercise: Mexican Maroons, Docs. 37-45 \*

**StoryMaps – Progress Report 1 due Friday, Sept. 23**

*Week 5 – Blackness, Religion, and Cultural Exchange*

Sept. 25

- Larissa Brewer-García, *Beyond Babel*, Intro-Ch. 2, pp. 1-115

Sept. 27

- *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 2, pp. 30-37
- *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 4, pp. 52-63

*Week 6 – Translating Faith, Inventing Community*

Oct. 2

- Larissa Brewer-García, *Beyond Babel*, Ch. 3-5, pp. 116-246

Oct. 4

- *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 11, pp. 175-194

**Reading Quiz #2**

**Module III – Angola, Kongo, and Brazil**

*Week 7 – The Warrior Queen, pt. I*

Oct. 9

- Linda Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*, Intro-Ch. 4, 1-113

Oct. 11

- *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 3, pp. 30-38
  - Screening: *Njinga Queen of Angola* (2018, dir. Sérgio Graciano)

*Week 8 – The Warrior Queen, pt. II*

No Class on Oct. 16 (Fall Break)

Oct. 18

- Heywood, *Njinga*, Ch. 5-7, 114-244
  - Screening: *Njinga Queen of Angola* (2018, dir. Sérgio Graciano)

Extra credit: Guest lecture by Prof. Iris Morales, “Revisiting Herstories,” 3:30-5:00 pm, location TBD

- (Optional) 400-word response reflecting on how Morales’ lecture engaged, affected, or complicated your understanding of decolonizing activism

*Week 9 – Memories of Kongo and Angola*

Oct. 23

- James Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, Ch. 1-2, 13-58\*
  - Georgina Herrera poem, *Always Cimarroneando*

Oct. 25

- In-class activity: UNESCO Comic strip analysis
  - Njinga Mbandi: Queen of Ndongo and Matamba
  - <https://en.unesco.org/womeninafrica/sites/default/files/pdf/Nzinga%20Mbandi%20Women%20in%20African%20History%20Comic%20Strip.pdf>

**Research outline due by noon Friday, Oct. 27**

**Send as PDF or Word doc to [pablo.sierra@rochester.edu](mailto:pablo.sierra@rochester.edu)**

*Week 10 – Afro-Brazilian Culture*

Oct. 30

- James Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, Ch. 6-7, 119-160 \*
  - *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 15, pp. 269-283

Nov. 1

- Cécile Fromont, “Dancing for the King of Kongo,” 184-208 \*
  - *Afro-Latino Voices*, document 14, pp. 240-267

**StoryMaps – Progress Report 2 due Friday, Nov. 3 by noon**

**Send as PDF or Word doc to [pablo.sierra@rochester.edu](mailto:pablo.sierra@rochester.edu)**

***Module IV – Haiti, Louisiana, and the Meaning of Freedom***

*Week 11 – Research Week*

No Class on Nov. 6 and 8 – research meetings with librarians, work on your papers

*Week 12 – Saint-Domingue, Black People, and the Buccaneers*

Nov. 13

- Joan Dayan, “Codes of Law, Bodies of Color,” 283-308 \*
- Sierra Silva, “Afro-Mexican Women in Saint-Domingue,” 3-34 \*

Nov. 15

- John Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 21-50

**Research Paper – First Version due by noon Friday, Nov. 17.**

**Send as PDF or Word doc to [pablo.sierra@rochester.edu](mailto:pablo.sierra@rochester.edu)**

*Week 13 - From Senegambia to Louisiana*

Nov. 20

- Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, Intro-Ch. 3, 1-120

No class on Nov. 22 – Thanksgiving break

*Week 14 – Creole and Criolla: Or How to Think of French and Spanish Louisiana*

Nov. 27

- Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, Ch. 4-5, 121-186

Nov. 29

- Jennifer Spear, *Race, Sex, & Social Order in New Orleans*, Ch. 4-6, 100-177 \*

*Week 15 – Mapping the Diaspora*

Dec. 4

- Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, Ch. 6-Conclusion, 187-232

Dec. 6

- StoryMaps Project

**Group Presentations – in class on Wednesday, Dec. 6**

*Week 16 – Haiti, Freedom, and Unthinkable History*

Dec. 11

- Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, Ch. 3 “An Unthinkable History,” pp. 70-107
- Crystal Eddins, *Rituals, Runaways and the Haitian Revolution*, Ch. 8, 277-300

Dec. 13

- In-class exercise: 1804, The Declaration of Haitian Independence \*

*Finals Week*

**Research Paper – Final Version due Monday, Dec. 18 by noon.**

**Send as PDF or Word doc to [pablo.sierra@rochester.edu](mailto:pablo.sierra@rochester.edu)**