

HISTORY 254
COLONIAL SEAPORTS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ATLANTIC

Spring 2013
MWF 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.
Lincoln Hall, Rm. 120

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Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00 p.m., or by appt.

Urban seaports were an important part of the “revolutionary” Atlantic. As centers for commerce, shipping, and culture, they knit Atlantic empires together and became the primary venue through which the Atlantic slave trade was channeled. Seaport locales were also potentially radical, as they provided opportunities for disparate groups of people to organize and assert their political and economic rights. This course will examine Atlantic seaports from the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries in three separate zones: West Africa (Calabar, in present-day Nigeria); mainland British America (Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Charlestown, and Newport, Rhode Island); and Western Europe (London). Themes will include slavery, labor, abolition, wealth, poverty, gender relations, and political, social, and religious radicalism. We will consider how each of these elements made urban seaports “revolutionary” in the early modern Atlantic.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are four required texts for the course, which are available for purchase at the bookstore. Additional shorter readings are available on Blackboard, or online. We will also survey GIS maps of London and the Atlantic Slave Trade Database online in class.

Benjamin Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (Oxford, 2009)

Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Harvard, 2009)

Robert Bucholz and Joseph Ward, *London: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2012)

Stephen D. Behrendt, A. John H. Latham, and David Northrup, eds., *The Diary of Antera Duke: An Eighteenth Century African Slave Trader*, reprint edition (Oxford, 2012)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student is required to write three short papers (2 pages each, double-spaced), based on assigned weekly readings. (You may select any of the weekly readings you like.) There will also be an in-class midterm and a final take-home examination. Each student will receive a grade based on the papers, exams, attendance, and in-class discussion of readings. Attendance will be

taken and factored in to your participation grade. The grading distribution will be calculated as follows:

Participation (15%), Mid-term (20%), Final exam (20%), and Three short papers (15% each)

Policy on Absences. More than five unexcused absences in class will result in a lower grade. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, death or illness in the family, personal illness, personal trauma, and participation in University-sanctioned sporting events.

UIC STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism in a paper occurs when the writer uses a source (a book, an article, a book review, an internet site) without citing the source, especially when passages are directly copied, but also when a paper summarizes a source without acknowledgement—it is a form of intellectual theft. Students who plagiarize will automatically fail the course and may be referred to the University for further action. Papers for this course do not require the student to consult any other text other than the book assigned for the paper topic.

COURSE OUTLINE

***Indicates on Blackboard**

Week 1 – Introduction: Old Calabar

Class Introduction

Diary of Antera Duke, Introduction and Chapter 1

Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*, Chapters 1-2

Week 2 – Calabar as Trading Entrepôt

Diary of Antera Duke, Chapters 2-4,

Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson, “Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade,” *AHR* 104 (April 1999): 333-55.*

Week 3 – Calabar and the Atlantic World

Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*, Chapters 3-6

Diary of Antera Duke, “Extracts from the Diary”

Online source: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, available at:
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>

Week 4 – Urban Seaports in the Colonial Americas

Gary Nash, “A Worm’s Eye View,” available at *Common-place: Early Cities of the Americas*, <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/talk/>

Gary Nash, “The Web of Seaport Life,” in *Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Harvard, 1986)*

Assignment: Pick any two essays from the *Commonplace: Early Cities of the Americas* website: Quebec City, Baltimore, Boston, New Amsterdam, Philadelphia, Charleston, Havana, New Orleans, Paramaribo

Week 5 – Boston and New York

Carp, *Rebel Cities Rising*, Introduction, Chapters 1-2

“Descriptions of New York before the Revolution,” available online at :

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/growth/text2/newyorkdescriptions.pdf>

Week 6 – Newport and Charleston

Carp, *Rebel Cities Rising*, Chapters 3-4

Week 7 – Review and Mid-Term

Week 8 – Philadelphia

Gary Nash, “Introduction: Making History Matter” and “Recalling a Commercial Seaport” in *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Penn, 2006)*
Carp, *Rebel Cities Rising*, Chapter 5

Week 9 – London: A Professor’s View of the Sixteenth Century

Bucholz and Ward, *London*, Introduction and Chapters 1-2

Note: For class discussions on London, we will be using a GIS map, available at:
<http://www.locatinglondon.org/>

Week 10 – London: Public Sphere and People on the Margins

Bucholz and Ward, *London*, Chapter 5-6

Week 11 – London: Riot, Rebellion, and the Great Fire

Bucholz and Ward, *London*, Chapters 7-8

Week 12 – Eighteenth-Century London

Bucholz and Ward, *London*, “London in 1750”

Excerpts from James Boswell, *London Journal, 1762-1763**

Week 13 – Urban Seaports and the Unfinished American Revolution

Carp, *Rebel Cities Rising*, “Epilogue: The Forgotten City”

Gary Nash, “The Black Revolution,” and “The Dream Deferred” in *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard, 1991)*

Week 14 – Review

Week 15 – Final Exam (Take Home)