

Captives: Past, Present and Future

Class Schedule: Wednesdays 2-4:40 pm

Class Location: Rush Rhees 456

Contact: pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30pm (Rush Rhees 461)



Who or what is a captive? Is a captive the same as an enslaved person? And if so, how should we think of captors, slave merchants, and those who claim dominion over unfree people?

This advanced seminar challenges us to consider the ubiquity of captivity in societies around the world. The course also asks us to confront the continued practice of captivity (in many forms) in our present-day societies.

How do prisons, migrant detention centers, and guerrillas draw on former strategies of coercion and control? How integral is the denial of personhood to these practices, past and present? What of non-human captives?

This course focuses on Latin American countries (Mexico, Brazil, Colombia) and the United States, but our readings will include comparisons to Africa, the Middle East and Mediterranean. We will explore how historical narratives of captivity are crafted, voiced, but also silenced. Our course will follow three units: Captivity and its Theories, Early Modern Captivities, and Blackness & Captivity.

In terms of writing, students will produce a writing response, a long-form book review, and an original research paper on the topic of their choice. This final research assignment will be divided into three components: annotated outline, full first version and revised final version. As a writing-intensive course, the class fulfills the 300-level W requirement for the History major.

All students enrolled in 300W/400-level seminars will receive a grading rubric at the beginning to the semester. This rubric outlines faculty and departmental expectations for grading papers assigned in the seminar.

Expectations

Participation and attendance, worth 20% of your final grade, requires coming to class with notes on the assigned text(s) of the week and contributing comments, criticisms. ALL participants must submit 5 discussion questions to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu on the assigned book by Wednesday at 1 pm.

Students will be expected to lead discussion one to two times during the seminar, although this will depend on the total number of student enrolled. In this regard, our discussions are only possible with your attendance. One unexcused absence will lower your attendance grade by 10 pts., two absences by 20 pts., and so forth.

Participation and Attendance	15%
Response Paper (2-3 pp.)	10%
Long Review (5-6 pp.)	15%
Research Paper Outline	10%
Research Paper First Version (15-20 pp.)	25%
Research Paper Final Version (20-25 pp.)	25%

Required Books

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2010.

Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

Bialuschewski, Arne. *Raiders and Natives: Cross-Cultural Relations in the Age of Buccaneers*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2022.

Brooks, James F. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. 2002.

Escobar, Martha D. *Captivity Beyond Prisons: Criminalization Experiences of Latina (Im)migrants*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016.

Fett, Sharla M. *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Hershenzon, Daniel. *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

Higgins, Kathleen J. *Licentious Liberty in a Brazilian Gold Mining Region: Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Sabará, Minas Gerais*.

Santos-Granero, Fernando. *Vital Enemies: Slavery, Predation and the Amerindian Political Economy of Life*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009.

van Deusen, Nancy E. *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Course Schedule

Unit I - Captivity and its Theories

Week 1 – Welcome! - Wednesday, Jan. 11

- Introductions, syllabus, and motivations
- A primary source... or two

Week 2 – Wednesday, Jan. 18

Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (also available online via Library catalog)

- everyone reads, Introduction-Chapter 3, 1-101
- individual analysis and deconstruction of one other chapters
 - to be assigned on Jan. 11

Week 3 – Wednesday, Jan. 25

Santos-Granero, *Vital Enemies* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 4 – Wednesday, Feb. 1

Bales, *Disposable People* (also available online via Library catalog)

Reading response due Wed. Feb. 1 at 2pm

Unit II - Early Modern Captivities

Week 5 – Wednesday, Feb. 8

van Deusen, *Global Indios* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 6 – Wednesday, Feb. 15

Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 7 – Wednesday, Feb. 22

Bialuschewski, *Raiders and Natives* (also available online via Library catalog)

Long-form review due at 2pm

Week 8 – Wednesday, Mar. 1

Brooks, *Captives and Cousins* (also available online via Library catalog)

Or

Erin Woodruff Stone, *Captives of Conquest* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 9 – Spring Break – No Class

Unit III - Blackness and Captivity

Week 10 – Wednesday, Mar. 15

Higgins, *Licentious Liberty*

Annotated outline of research paper due at 2pm

Week 11 – Wednesday, Mar. 22 (Special guest lecture in-class)

Readings TBD

Week 12 – Wednesday, Mar. 29

Sharla Fett, *Recaptured Africans* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 13 – Wednesday, Apr. 5

Writing week – no assigned reading

First version of research paper due at 2pm

Week 14 – Wednesday, Apr. 12

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 15 – Wednesday, Apr. 19

Martha Escobar, *Captivity Beyond Prisons* (also available online via Library catalog)

Week 16 – Wednesday, Apr. 26

Final version of research paper due at 2pm