**“The Black Atlantic”**

Ian Baucom and Laurent Dubois

Tuesdays, 3:05-5:25

Forum for Scholars & Publics, 011 Old Chemistry

This seminar, open to advanced undergraduate students and graduate students in all disciplines, explores the history and literature of what has come to be known as “The Black Atlantic.” Our goal will be to think through the histories of slavery and emancipation in this Atlantic world and the way they have shaped our politics and culture. Our reading will range widely, including works of history and theory as well as poetry and novels. But we will also explore how visual art, music, and various types of performance condense, transmit, and examine this history. Students in the class will be invited to participate in the “Digital Black Atlantic Project,” a collaboration between Duke, Columbia, and Harvard, which will be exploring innovative ways to use Digital Media to showcase and present scholarship, literature, and artistic production around the theme of the Black Atlantic.

**Part I: Introductions**

January 14: The Birth of the Black Atlantic

Reading:

Reading: Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of Afro-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Beacon Press, 1992)

January 21: Visit of Vincent Brown and Richard Rabinowitz

Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden* (Harvard University Press)

**Part II: Middle Passages**

January 28: In the Hold

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Harvard University Press, 2009)

(Introduction to Wordpress and discussion of collaborative digital project)

February 4: Specters

Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*, selections(Duke University Press, 2006) (Chaps 1-4, 7, 8, 10 & 12) and M. Nourbese Philip, *Zong* (Wesleyan Poetry Series). (Morgan and Thayne)

February 11: Remembrance

Saiyida Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Trade Route* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008) (Meghan & Sasha)

(First writing assignment due)

**Part III: Caribbean Creations**

February 18: Vengeance

Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (Harvard University Press, 2004) (Sandie, Andy & Courtney)

February 25: Spectacles of History

C.L.R. James, *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History; A Play in Three Acts* (Duke University Press, 2012)

(Lindsay & Hannah)

March 4: Epics

Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992)

(Spring Break) (Jonathan)

(Second writing assignment due)

**Part III: Modern Black Atlantics**

March 18: Epics

Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992)

March 25: Workshop Presentation of Collaborative Digital Projects

April 1: The Black Atlantic

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1995) (Lynda)

April 8: Practice

Deborah Thomas, *Modern Blackness: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Politics of Culture in Jamaica*, selections; (Duke University Press, 2004); (Lenny) Teju Cole, *Open City: A Novel* (Random House)

April 15: Final Presentation of Digital Projects