

HI2H6-15 Freedom Fighting: Race, Slavery and War in the Revolutionary Caribbean, 1790-1812

21/22

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

David Lambert

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This 15 CATS second-year module option introduces students to the tumultuous years across the European colonies of the Caribbean that followed the French Revolution and the subsequent outbreak of warfare between imperial powers. The birth of Haiti, the first black-led republic, from the ashes of French Saint-Domingue in 1804 was the most significant historical occurrence in this period, but this module offers a wider perspective. It examines how various social groups, most notably free and enslaved people of African descent, sought to survive in and shape the region by drawing on established beliefs, traditions of authority and practices of warfare, as well as by seeking to mobilise, or suppress, new ideas of liberty.

Module aims

During the term, students will study the period from Vincent Ogé's uprising in Saint-Domingue to the Aponte Rebellion in Cuba, and encompassing military interventions by, and conflict between, Britain, Spain and France. They will examine the role various social groups played as allies and enemies across the Caribbean, including free and enslaved people of African descent, white

colonists, indigenous Caribs and Maroons. The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) looms large, of course, but students will also learn about less well-known insurgencies and counter-insurgencies in Grenada, Jamaica, Cuba and elsewhere in order to develop comparative perspectives on war and revolution across the region. The module also attends to the connections between these events, especially those in Saint-Domingue, and to the circulation of ideas and individuals within and beyond the region. In conceptual terms, the module seeks to eschew the usual categories of 'power', 'domination' and 'resistance' often employed in histories of slave societies to consider a series of thematic realms - including 'communication', 'belief' and 'violence' - that brought different social groups and individuals together in asymmetrical ways as they fought for - and against - freedom.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1. Introduction: Empires, plantations and slavery

Week 2. A revolutionary cockpit

Week 3. Old beliefs, new ideas

Week 4. Communications, conspiracies and censorship

Week 5. Labour and liberty

Week 6. Reading week - no seminar

Week 7. Authority and leadership

Week 8. Acts of violence

Week 9. Shifting alliances

Week 10. Conclusions: The conch and the cane

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Caribbean history, particularly its political, social and military dimensions
- Utilise comparative perspectives on events and processes in different European empires and colonial societies
- Show capacity to engage with relevant contributions made by existing and emergent scholarship
- Demonstrate enhanced study, writing and communication skills, in both written work and group discussion
- Exhibit a capacity for independent study skills, clear/concise expression and critical analysis
- Exhibit improved ability to assess and evaluate historical sources

Indicative reading list

Bessel, Richard, Nicholas Guyatt and Jane Rendall (eds), *War, Empire and Slavery, 1770-1830* (Basingstoke, 2010)

Brown, Christopher Leslie and Philip D. Morgan (eds), *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the modern age* (New Haven, 2006)

Buckley, Roger, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (London, 1979)

Burnard, Trevor G., and John D. Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica* (Philadelphia, PA, 2016)

Candlin, Kit, *The Last Caribbean frontier, 1795-1815* (Basingstoke, 2012)

Childs, Matt, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006)

Cormack, William, *Patriots, Royalists, and Terrorists in the West Indies: The French Revolution in Martinique and Guadeloupe, 1789-1802* (Toronto, 2019)

Craton, Michael, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, NY, 2009)

Dawson, Kevin, *Undercurrents of Power: Aquatic Culture in the African Diaspora* (Philadelphia, PA, 2018)

Dubois, Laurent and John D. Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, 2017)

Dubois, Laurent, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2004)

Duffy, Michael, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War against Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 1987)

Ferrer, Ada, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Fick, Carolyn, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville, 1990)

Geggus, David and Norman Fiering, eds, *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009)

Geggus, David, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, IN, 2002)

Geggus, David, *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, SC, 2001)

Hazareesingh, Sudhir, *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture* (London, 2020)

McNeill, John R., *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge, 2010)

Mikaberidze, Alexander, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History* (Oxford, 2020)

Moya Pons, Frank, *History of the Caribbean: Plantations, Trade, and War in the Atlantic World* (London, 2007)

Mulich, Jeppe, *In a Sea of Empires: Networks and Crossings in the Revolutionary Caribbean* (Cambridge, 2020)

Oostindie, Geert, *Curacao in the Age of Revolutions, 1795-1800* (Brill, 2011)

Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, 'Massacre in the Old and New Worlds, c.1780–1820', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 15:2 (2013)

Scott, Julius S., *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (London, 2018)

Stinchcombe, Arthur L., *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World* (Princeton, NJ, 1995)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Tutorials	1 session of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	131 hours (87%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Seminar contribution	10%	
1000 word applied task (biographical account)	40%	
1000-word critical biographical account of someone who was active during the 'Revolutionary Caribbean' (illustrated if possible). Students should reflect on the limits to what is known about the individual, in terms of sources, and their legacies, including how they are remembered today.		
3000 word essay	50%	
3000-word essay answering a question of the student's choice, with the topic agreed with module tutor		

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on essay plan and essay
Student/tutor dialogues in one-to-one tutorials

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
 - Year 2 of V100 History