

2020-2021 Rutgers High School Teachers Institute

9/25/2020

“The Making of Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean”

Yesenia Barragan, Assistant Professor of History, Rutgers University

Over 90% of an estimated 12.5 million African descended people who were kidnapped and forced to cross the Atlantic Ocean as slaves were brought to Latin America and the Caribbean—a fact little known to Americans. This seminar explores the making of slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean over the course of three centuries. We will first examine Africa and the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century, with a focus on economics and the social experiences of African captives. We will then analyze the economic, social, and geographic dynamics of three main kinds of slavery that developed in the region: sugar, gold mining, and urban slavery—from Brazil and Colombia, to Cuba and Mexico. Finally, we will explore the making of spiritual and ethnic cultures that developed among enslaved Africans and their descendants, including the Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* and the Afro-Cuban religious tradition of *Santeria*. Overall, the seminar will serve as an introduction to the everyday lives of enslaved Africans and their descendants as they lived, labored, and resisted across Latin America and the Caribbean.

10/16/2020

“Accidents and Disaster in the US and the World”

Jamie Pietruska, Associate Professor, Department of History, Rutgers University

Although accidents and disasters are often perceived as isolated, rare events, they have become increasingly central to the history of the United States and the world over the past four centuries. Through efforts to anticipate hazards, develop new tools for risk management, build infrastructures for relief, expand government capacity for disaster response, and remember victims, accidents and disasters have become a part of everyday life. This seminar will begin with an introduction to some concepts (including normal accidents, unnatural disasters, and disaster capitalism) that scholars have used to understand risk and catastrophe in modern life. Then we will examine three historical case studies of catastrophe: hurricanes and empire in the Atlantic World, the mid 19th-century railroad collision crisis, and the rise of the 20th-century disaster-security state. We will also consider present-day connections to each case study: climate catastrophe, motor vehicle accidents and driverless cars, and federal response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

10/30/2020

“African American Young Women, Brown vs. Board of Education, and the Long Civil Rights Movement”

Rachel Devlin, Associate Professor of History, Rutgers University

Brown vs. Board of Education has been called “The Case of the Century” and “the finest hour of American law.” This workshop will examine how and why African American young women

and girls led the fight to bring *Brown* to fruition and then, in vastly disproportionate numbers, volunteered to desegregate historically white schools in the early nineteen sixties. In the process we will examine the everyday lives of black girls at midcentury with an eye toward understanding the particular skills and commitment they brought to school desegregation in particular and the larger civil rights movement in general. We will follow girls through the arduous process of filing desegregation law suites and into formerly all-white schools where they were met with daily violence, harassment and social ostracism. We will consider their oral histories, keeping in mind how individual women chose to tell their stories of what was, by all accounts, a war inside American public schools. We will also consider how girls and young women fought back against sexual harassment and violence, the outsized role women played in the Montgomery bus boycott and other landmark civil rights protests, and how their activism informed the civil rights movement as a whole from the 1940s through the 1960s.

11/13/2020

“The World of the Gothic Cathedral: From the Building of Chartres to the Burning of Notre Dame:”

Anthony Di Battista, Lecturer, Department of History, Rutgers University

Gothic Cathedrals are the most beautiful and the most visible remainders of the Middle Ages. They required generations of laborers to construct them, and in the modern era are still used every day for precisely the same purpose for which they were built.

This seminar will examine the world that fostered the construction of these edifices: the economic changes necessary to build on a monumental scale, the role of pilgrimage, the technical challenges, and the flowering of the Gothic style across Europe.

2/05/2021

“Vagrants and Vagabonds: Poverty and Mobility in the Early American Republic”

Kristin O’Brassill-Kulfan, Coordinator & Instructor of Public History, Rutgers University

This workshop will explore the history of the criminalization of homelessness in the United States. Focusing on the experiences of people classified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as "vagrants" and "paupers", we will work through the legal and social contexts in which systems of welfare and punishment operated. We will consider issues of freedom of movement, slavery, race, class, gender, immigration, and labor during the first several decades of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York's existence. Through case studies, demographic data, and hands-on work with primary sources from almshouses, jails, and legal officials in the early nineteenth century, we'll lay out the case for arguing that the policing of vagrancy and the mobility of people experiencing poverty were key functions of local and state municipal authority in the early American republic.

2/12/2021

“Lincoln and the Civil War”

Louis Masur, Distinguished Professor of American Studies and History, Rutgers University

Lincoln once proclaimed that "the dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present." In this workshop we shall examine Lincoln's ideas about nation, secession, slavery, emancipation, democracy and peace. His beliefs never remained static and he changed his mind in response to changing conditions. We will pay particular attention to his ideas for how to reconstruct the nation once the war was over, ideas he did not live to see come to fruition.

3/05/2021

“Medical Ethics in times of Pandemics”

Johanna Schoen, Professor of History, Rutgers University

This seminar will explore issues of medical ethics by looking at the history of epidemics and pandemics, including COVID-19.

4/12/2021

“Inventing America: Thomas Edison and the History of Technology and Industry”

Paul Israel, Research Professor; And Director and General Editor, Thomas A. Edison Papers Project, Rutgers University

The Thomas A. Edison Papers at Rutgers is documenting the career of the famous inventor and of his many technological innovations. These are not only of national and international importance, but they also have special significance for the history of New Jersey, where Edison lived and worked from 1870 until his death in 1931. Edison helped to invent industrial research at his laboratories in Newark, Menlo Park, and West Orange. And the inventions developed in his laboratories laid the foundation for three major industries—electric light and power, sound recording, and motion pictures—and contributed to many others, including telecommunications, electric batteries, electric automobiles, mining, cement and office technologies. This seminar will examine Edison's historical significance and introduce participants to ways of incorporating the resources of the Edison Papers and the history of technology and industry into the teaching of history and social science. The seminar will be held at Edison's last laboratory in West Orange, N.J., which is part of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

4/23/2021

“Revisiting the Gilded Age: the Making of Modern America. 1865-1920”

Jackson Lears, Board of Governors Distinguished Professor, Department of History, Rutgers University

We will explore how politics and economics intertwined with changes in cultural values to create the foundations of the modern United States. Major themes will include: the long shadow of the Civil War, the rising significance of race, the triumph of monopoly capital, and the emergence of empire as a way of life.

4/30/2021

“The Netherlands: Progenitor of the Modern Age”

Michael Adas, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, Rutgers University

Though often neglected or marginalized in history texts and teaching, the tiny Netherlands (often referred to as Holland, the most prominent of its provinces) was perhaps the greatest single progenitor of globalization in the early modern era. From city planning (think Amsterdam and New York), global exploration, and the slave trade to religious reformation, artistic expression, fundamental changes in waging war, and the international obsession with coffee, the Netherlands was a central and enduring factor. Using slides, a thoroughly entertaining historical novel, and wide-ranging discussion, we will explore the golden age of one of the most transformative cultures all of human history.