

## Historical contexts

*A Mercy* explores the racialized Atlantic world of a particular seventeenth-century colonial American moment. Students can research and report to their peers on the historical contexts it touches, theorizing how understanding them enriches our understanding of the novel. This assignment could be used in class or for a longer paper and/or presentation. Topics could include:

- British versus Portuguese transatlantic (African) slavery
- Indigenous Slavery in the North American colonies
- Bacon's Rebellion
- Indentured servitude / "white cargo"
- "Tobacco wives"
- King Philip's War
- The Middle Passage
- Maryland in the seventeenth century
- Virginia in the seventeenth century
- Religious diversity in colonial British North America
- Salem witchcraft trials
- Smallpox