

AMERICAN SLAVERY
History 3440-018 (54330) • Africana Studies 3440-001 (55332) • Fall 2016
T/Th 2:00-3:15, 144 WEST CLASSROOM

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office: 211 Central Classroom
office hours: T/Th, 12:30-1:30 p.m.,
3:30-5:00 p.m.

Course description: The Atlantic slave trade persisted for 400 years and fundamentally changed the politics, economies, cultures, and environments of the societies involved. This class will explore the enslavement of African and indigenous American peoples and the slave societies that took root in the Americas. The course will concentrate on British North America and the United States, but it will also consider the Atlantic world more broadly, addressing the African roots of the slave trade, its origins in the Portuguese Atlantic, its rise and fall throughout the Americas, and the American Indian slave trade that existed (for a time) alongside it. We will consider the institution of slavery in its broadest sense: how it became ingrained in the economic, political, legal, and labor systems of the early modern world, and how it shaped racial ideologies. And we will also study the slaves in their communities, and the cultures of resistance and resilience that they created through religion, family life, labor, folklore, and other means. And finally, we will consider how emancipation left unresolved conflicts and tensions in slavery's wake. With these themes in mind, this course will encourage students to grapple with the enduring legacy of America's most troubling institution.

Required Readings: The following books will be available at the Auraria Bookstore (bargain-hunters should also try the selection of used books on Amazon.com and Bookfinder.com, but make sure you get the right editions). I have also placed copies on reserve at the library.

David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (2008)

Stanley Engerman et al., *Slavery* (2001)

Gerald Horne, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America* (2014)

Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods of the Old South* (2009)

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (2008)

Assignments, Grading, and Course Policies: The course requirements and their value toward your grade are as follows. *You must complete all of these components in order to pass.*

Attendance/participation: 15%
Midterm exam: 25%

Two papers: 30% (15% each)
Final Exam (cumulative): 30%

Attendance policy: I expect regular attendance and will take roll. Everyone is allowed two "byes" – unexplained absences – in the class. After that, any absences – except in the case of legitimate and documented emergencies, medical or otherwise – will detract from the attendance/participation portion of your grade. You are responsible for making up the work you miss during any absence, excused or not.

Classes will generally include a combination of lecture and discussion. Your level of preparation and participation will both improve the quality of class meetings and boost your participation grade. It should go without saying (but often doesn't) that when you attend class, you will refrain from disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) talking amongst yourselves, reading the newspaper, or texting. If

you have a laptop, please use it only for purposes relevant to the class. **Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices before you enter the classroom.**

Papers: You will write two papers (5-6 pages each), in which you will respond to assigned questions based on the readings and lectures. You will have a choice of topics, but you must write at least one of the papers assigned before the midterm, and at least one assigned after the midterm. More information (including essay questions) will follow. *All papers should be submitted in hard copy and on Safe Assign on Blackboard. You will not get credit for the paper until I have both the Safe Assign submission and the hard copy.*

The Writing Center, located in King Center 415, can help you with any aspect of your writing. For the current schedule or to make an appointment, visit the Writing Center's website at <https://www.msudenver.edu/writectr/> or call 303-556-6070.

Midterm and final exams: The midterm will cover all material taught and reading assigned up to the exam; the final will be cumulative, but weighted toward the second half of the semester. Both exams will include shorter identification questions and essay questions (no multiple choice), covering lectures and readings. More information will follow.

Deadlines and exam attendance: All papers are due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise noted, and all students are expected to take exams on the specified dates. Late papers will be graded down one-third of a grade (A to A-, etc.) for every day they are late, starting after the beginning of class. Papers will not be accepted late or via e-mail, except with a valid excuse (medical or family emergency, etc.) AND prior approval from me. No-shows for exams will receive an F. Make-up exams will not be allowed, except for students who have a valid excuse and have made prior arrangements with me.

Special Needs: Students who need accommodations – for disability, religious observance, or any other reason – should let me know within the first two weeks of class. Those with a documented disability should contact the Disability Resources and Services Office to arrange for accommodations. See Blackboard for a full statement on disabled students' rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Cheating and plagiarism: Either offense is grounds for a zero on the assignment and failure in the course. If you are unsure of what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, I strongly encourage you to check with me *before* you hand in your assignment. Please also note that any student who cannot or will not produce the notes, outlines, and other preparatory work for his or her paper will be considered guilty of cheating or plagiarism and subject to the same penalties. The policy in this class is quite simple and is as follows. In the first documented instance of academic dishonesty (as described in the University guidelines, linked below), the student will receive a zero on the assignment. In the second instance, the student will fail the class. All code of conduct violations will be reported.

Metro State's Academic Integrity Statement: "As students, faculty, staff and administrators of Metropolitan State University of Denver, it is our responsibility to uphold and maintain an academic environment that furthers scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge. We will not tolerate academic dishonesty. We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all activities related to our learning and scholarship. We will not plagiarize, fabricate information or data, cheat on tests or exams, steal academic material, or submit work to more than one class without full disclosure."

For more information on academic dishonesty, see

<https://www.msudenver.edu/deanofstudents/studentconduct/academicintegrity/academicdishonesty/>

For more information, please see the information on LAS policies and deadlines posted in the "Syllabus and Policies" folder on Blackboard.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available in the Assigned Readings folder on Blackboard.

WEEK ONE: August 22-26

Readings: *Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, "What Does it Mean to Think Historically?"
Slavery, Introduction to Section I, plus docs 1-5
Inhuman Bondage, Prologue and chapter 1
Saltwater Slavery, Introduction

August 23: Introductions

August 25: What we are talking about when we talk about slavery

WEEK TWO: August 29 - September 2

Readings: *Slavery*, Introduction to Section II, plus docs 30, 32-35
Inhuman Bondage, chapters 2-3
Saltwater Slavery, chapters 1-2

August 30: Early forms of slavery

September 1: The origins of Atlantic slavery

WEEK THREE: September 5-9

Readings: *Slavery*, docs 117-118, 29
Inhuman Bondage, chapters 3-4
The Counter-Revolution of 1776, Introduction and chapter 1
* Court Cases of the Johnson Family

September 6: Slavery in Latin America and the West Indies

September 8: Slavery and servitude in North American settlements

WEEK FOUR: September 12-16

Readings: *Slavery*, introduction to Section III, plus docs 41-47
The Counter-Revolution of 1776, chapters 2-3
* Review these two websites for Thursday's workshop:
<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/slavelink.html>
<http://www.history.org/history/teaching/slavelaw.cfm>

September 13: Plantation Revolutions and the emergence of slave societies

September 15: Workshop: Slavery, the law, and racial ideology (if possible, bring a tablet or laptop that you can use to research web sites in class)

WEEK FIVE: September 19-23

Readings: Slavery, introduction to Section IV and docs 57-63
Saltwater Slavery, chapters 3-5
The Counter-Revolution of 1776, chapter 4

September 20: Native Americans and North American Slavery
September 22: The Middle Passage (work with database)

***** PAPER OPTION 1 DUE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 *****

WEEK SIX: September 26-30

Readings: Inhuman Bondage, chapter 6
Saltwater Slavery, chapters 6-8

September 27: Slavery in the eighteenth-century southern colonies
September 29: Slavery in colonial New England and the Middle Colonies

WEEK SEVEN: October 3-7

Readings: Slavery, introduction to Section VI and docs 117-122
Inhuman Bondage, chapter 7
The Counter-Revolution of 1776, chapters 7-9
*Selected Revolutionary-era freedom petitions

October 4: Resistance, rumors and repression
October 6: Slaves in the American Revolution

***** PAPER OPTION 2 DUE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 *****

WEEK EIGHT: October 10-14

Readings: The Counter-Revolution of 1776, chapter 10
* The United States Constitution (there is a link on Blackboard, but you could bring a different copy – make sure your copy includes the parts that have been crossed out because they have been nullified by amendments)

October 11: Discussion: Can we reinterpret the American Revolution as a battle over slavery?
October 13: MIDTERM

WEEK NINE: October 17-21

Readings: Slavery, docs 97, 98, 123, 144, 158, 159, 160
Inhuman Bondage, chapter 8

October 18: The Haitian Revolution and its ripple effects
October 20: Slavery and the origins of American capitalism

WEEK TEN: October 24-28

Readings: Slavery, docs 10, 92, 94, 96, 128, 130, 172
Inhuman Bondage, chapter 9
Joining Places, Introduction and chapter 1
* Excerpt from George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South*
* “American Slavery” interactive map

October 25: No longer a wolf by its ears: the ideological turn to pro-slavery
October 27: The plantation household: masters, mistresses, and slaves

WEEK ELEVEN: October 31 - November 4

Readings: Slavery, docs 91, 94, 95, 109, 171
Inhuman Bondage, chapter 10
Joining Places, chapters 2-3
* Selected slave spirituals
* Selected letters between enslaved spouses

November 1: The slaves’ world: bodies, communities, and spaces
November 3: Antebellum slave religion

WEEK TWELVE: November 7-11

Readings: Inhuman Bondage, chapter 11
Joining Places, chapters 4-5
* Selected narratives by and about enslaved women

November 8: Gender and the experience of slavery
ELECTION DAY – GET THOSE BALLOTS IN!!
November 10: Discussion: using runaway notices to understand antebellum southern society

***** PAPER OPTION 3 DUE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10 *****

WEEK THIRTEEN: November 14-18

Readings: Slavery, docs 173, 180, 181
Inhuman Bondage, chapters 12-13

November 15: Abolitionism in Britain and the United States
November 17: Slavery, the law, and politics in the nineteenth-century United States

***** PAPER OPTION 4 DUE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17 *****

WEEK FOURTEEN: November 21-25 – NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

WEEK FIFTEEN: November 28 - December 2

Readings: *Slavery*, introduction to section VIII and docs 174, 177, 179, 182, 183, 184

Inhuman Bondage, chapters 14-15

Joining Places: chapter 6, Epilogue

* Look at the “Visualizing Emancipation” website

* Susan Schulten, “Visualizing Slavery” (read the article and link to the map)

November 29: The Age of Emancipation in the Americas

December 1: Emancipation and its aftermath in the United States

WEEK SIXTEEN: December 5-9

Readings: *Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic* (June 2014)

* Marie Tyler -McGraw, “Southern Comfort Levels: Race, Heritage tourism, and the Civil War in Richmond,” from Horton and Horton, eds., *Slavery and Public History*

* Sandra A. Arnold, “Why Slaves’ Graves Matter”

* Allison Meier, “A New Database Will Document the Burial Sites of US Slaves”

* Tracy Thompson, “The South Still Lies about the Civil War”

Inhuman Bondage, Epilogue

December 6: Slavery in American historical memory

December 8: The legacy of slavery in American society

***** PAPER OPTION 5 DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8 (If you did not write papers 3 or 4, you must write this one). *****

***** FINAL EXAM: DATE AND TIME TBA (BASED ON PREVIOUS SEMESTERS, IT WILL LIKELY BE ON TUESDAY, DEC. 13, FROM 2:00-4:00 P.M., BUT STAY TUNED FOR CONFIRMATION) *****

HIS/AAS 3440 • AMERICAN SLAVERY PAPER TOPICS

- *You must respond to TWO of these questions, distributed as follows:*

Everyone must do topic one OR two.

Everyone must do topic three, four, OR five.

- *Responses should be 5-6 pages each, typed in 12-point font and double-spaced, with 1" margins. Use fonts typical for academic papers (i.e., Times New Roman), not novelty fonts or exceptionally large fonts (like Courier).*
- *All papers should be submitted in hard copy and on Safe Assign on Blackboard.*
- *For more tips, see the "Paper Guidelines," following this page.*

Topic One (due September 22): Many historians have argued that between the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century, slavery transformed in North America and the West Indies, both as an institution and in terms of how enslaved people experienced slavery. Do you agree with this assessment? Using examples from the law (among other examples), argue for or against this interpretation.

Topic Two (due October 6): Orlando Patterson's theory of "social death" argues that the violence and domination that were central to captivity and slavery caused enslaved people to become so marginalized and alienated from society that they lost the ability to see themselves separately from their status as slaves. Using evidence of the Middle Passage, argue for or against the theory of social death. Based on the evidence you have, did the experience of the Middle Passage rob slaves of their social identities and connections?

Topic Three (due November 10): How did "terrains of struggle" give shape to the communities and spaces that made up the landscape of slavery? To answer this question, you should think about specific kinds of spaces enslaved people occupied, and how they used those spaces to form relationships, carry out resistance, and negotiate the realities of their daily lives. What kinds of spaces were the most important settings for a culture of struggle or resistance?

Topic Four (due November 17): How did the constraints of both race and gender structure the experiences of enslaved women? This question does not merely ask you to describe differences that we can attribute to gender, but rather to analyze whether slavery was essentially different for women than for men, using examples of specific kinds of spaces, exploitation, and authority that women experienced or exercised differently.

Topic Five (due December 8): What were the main components or themes of the pro-slavery ideology that dominated antebellum American politics? How did slaveholders and their supporters weave these themes together to develop a coherent political argument? Choose three components of the pro-slavery argument or rhetoric to support your analysis.

**HIS/AAS 3440 • AMERICAN SLAVERY
PAPER GUIDELINES**

The Basics: Every paper should have....

- *a title.* It need not be a masterpiece of wit or metaphor, but it should consist of something other than “History Paper #1.”
- *a thesis statement.* Your thesis statement (1-2 sentences) should appear toward the end of your introduction. It must make some sort of historical argument, which you will then support with evidence in the rest of your paper. Some examples:

Weak thesis: "This paper will discuss how African Americans' legal status changed in the decades after World War II." [*Describes the topic but makes no argument.*]

Somewhat better: "African Americans' legal status improved dramatically in the decades after World War II." [*Suggests an argument but not the reasoning behind it.*]

Much better: "African Americans' legal status improved dramatically in the decades after World War II, partly due to improved economic opportunities and growing sympathy among whites, but even more due to mounting activism by blacks themselves." [*States a clear argument, and summarizes the reasoning behind it.*]

- *clear paragraph structure.* Your paragraphs should be clear unto themselves and relative to each other. Each paragraph should begin with a clear topic sentence that takes up *one point*, which supports your thesis statement. When you are finished making your point, transition to the next paragraph, which should focus on another component of your overall argument. Use transitions to show how your argument builds logically from one paragraph to the next.
- *a combination of primary and secondary evidence.* Every point you make needs to be backed up with historical evidence from the readings or lectures. You are expected to use the relevant chapter in the *Major Problems* document reader, but you should also use other course readings that apply. *You are not expected to do outside research, but if you do use outside sources, you must include a Works Cited page.* For more on evidence (and correct citation), see below. These papers should focus not just on the documents (the primary evidence), but also on how the details fit into a broader historical context. So, for example, if you are writing about African Americans' struggles after World War II, you might show how one person's recollection of difficulties finding work reflected the broader context of employment discrimination at the time. This secondary evidence should come from course texts, the essays in your document reader, and from lectures (cite accordingly).
- *clear style.* Get to the point, use clear wording, and avoid awkward phrases and sentences. Steer clear of overly formal or informal prose (for example, unnecessarily complicated or elaborate language, colloquialisms or slang, contractions, etc.) Use correct grammar and spelling.

Using Evidence: You must include primary and secondary evidence to craft and present a historical argument. Otherwise, it's not a historical argument – it's just an opinion piece. Evidence can include quotes, facts, statistics, anecdotes – anything that helps support your argument AND that you can document. Here are a few practical tips on using evidence.

- *Quoting*: When you quote from a source, you must use quotation marks to indicate those portions that you are quoting. You should reproduce the words exactly and use citations to indicate from where they came. **Quote ONLY primary sources** (sources from the time you are writing about that serve as evidence in your paper). You may quote from a secondary book or article, but only if the portion you are quoting comes from a primary source (so you might, for instance, use a quote from George Washington that appears in a book, but you should not quote the author of that book, who is writing about George Washington.). The reason: when you quote the author of a secondary source, you are letting that person do the historical thinking and analysis for you. In these assignments, *you* must do that work yourself.
- *Paraphrasing*: When you paraphrase, you use someone else's idea but explain it in your own words. You must indicate whose idea it is, just as you would for a direct quotation. You should not, though, use the original author's words; you must rephrase it in your own words. If you are paraphrasing, you may use ideas or arguments that historians present in their secondary works, as long as you give credit and synthesize these points in your own argument.
- *Citing your sources*: You should cite all evidence that is not common knowledge. This includes quotes, little-known facts and anecdotes, and statistics, along with any paraphrasing or reference to someone else's ideas. You will not be penalized for excessive citation, so if you are in doubt, cite it. Either footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations (author and page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence) will do. You need not include a bibliography unless you use a source outside of class material (which is not expected). Citing sources properly is an important matter of academic integrity. If you paraphrase or quote another person's ideas without acknowledgment, you are plagiarizing. This is illegal, unethical, and grounds for a failing grade. Don't do it.

Some Other Things to Do, Questions to Ask, Ideas to Try:

- Please do not begin your first paragraph with some variation of "Throughout time" If it's been true throughout time (and almost nothing of historical consequence has been true forever), then it probably isn't relevant to the specific topic at hand. It's not a bad idea to start with some general perspective, but you should limit your scope to the immediate context of the paper topic (for example, a general statement on slavery during the antebellum era if you're writing about slavery during the antebellum era).
- Does your paper say what you want it to say? Does it say what you think it says? The most brilliant thought in the world is of no use if it's only in your head and not on the paper.
- What is your argument? Can you summarize it in a single sentence without looking at your introduction? If not, you need to clarify it some more.
- Have you answered the question? If you've decided to focus on only one part of a question, have you justified that decision in the paper?
- Read the paper aloud. You'd be amazed at how many little mistakes you'll catch and how much this will improve your writing. I should never be the first person to read your paper, nor should I ever be grading the first draft of a paper. Get a friend to read it. Go to the writing center and have an instructor there review it. Put the paper away for a while and then come back to it; time and distance will give you a fresh perspective on it.