

History 100.211
Spring Term, 2019
American Slavery: A Freshman Seminar

Instructor: Philip Morgan
Office: Gilman 370
Office Hours: M 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. and by appt.
Teaching Assistant: Nir Eydan neydan1@jhu.edu
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Meeting Time: Th 1:30-4:00 p.m.
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Course Requirements:

This seminar explores the history of American slavery, tracing developments over time and across space, probing the impact of this iniquitous and dynamic institution on societies and individuals, and examining a variety of sources that historians use to construct their narratives. Only freshmen may enroll. Students are required to attend all seminar meetings prepared to analyze and discuss the assigned reading and research, to write brief mini-essays (approximately 300 words each) weekly on the assigned reading, complete the weekly research assignments, and to write two papers (approximately 2,000 words each). Final grades will be determined by the quality of performance in seminar meetings and short weekly essays (34%) and in the papers (33% each).

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating hurts our community by undermining academic integrity, creating mistrust and fostering unfair competition. The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation and/or expulsion. Violations can include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments without permission, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery, falsification and lying. For more information, see the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board web site at <http://ethics.jhu.edu>.

Required Texts:

Davis, David Brion: *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) **ISBN-13:** 978-0195339444

Douglass, Frederick: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1995) [unabridged edition, originally publ. 1845] **ISBN-13:** 978-0486284996 [other editions possible]

Equiano, Olaudah: *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* ed. Vincent Carretta (New York: Penguin, 2003). **ISBN-13:** 978-0142437162 [other editions possible, but this is the best]

Jacobs, Harriet: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Mineola, N: Dover Publications, 2001) **ISBN-13:** 978-0486419312 [other editions possible]

Sparks, Randy J.: *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004) ISBN-13: 978-0674032057

[You can read the autobiographies of Douglass, Equiano, and Jacobs—along with many more—on the "North American Slave Narratives, Documenting the American South" website: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh>]

Seminar Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 31 Introduction

Goals, aims, requirements

Week 2: Feb. 7 Origins and Consequences

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 27-76

Week 3: Feb. 14 Africa

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 77-102

Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 31-54

Week 4: Feb. 21 Slave Trade

Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*, 1-81

Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, 55-61

Week 5: Feb. 28 Brazil, The Caribbean, North America

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 103-140

Week 6: Mar. 7 Atlantic Diaspora I

Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*, 82-147

Week 7: Mar. 14 Atlantic Diaspora II

Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 62-236

First Paper Due: Mar. 14 1:30 p.m.

Week 8 [Mar. 21 Spring Vacation]

Week 9: Mar. 28. American Revolution

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 141-156

Week 10: Apr. 4 Haitian Revolution

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 157-174

Week 11: Apr. 11 Nineteenth-Century Slavery I

Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 175-230, 268-296

Week 12: Apr. 18 Nineteenth-Century Slavery II

Douglass, *Narrative* . . (whole book)

Week 13: Apr. 25 Nineteenth-Century Slavery III

Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (whole book)

Week 14: May 2 Conclusion

What have we learned?

Final Paper Due No Later Than Th. May 9 at noon.

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Electronic reserves can be accessed as follows:

- from the course Blackboard site at <https://blackboard.jhu.edu/>; click on the **Ereserves** link from the left side pane. Or directly
- from the Ereserves website at <https://ares.library.jhu.edu/shib/> (expect to be prompted to enter JHED ID and password).

The weekly mini-essays that are reflections on the readings should be posted on Blackboard.
Posts are due by 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, i.e., 24 hours in advance of class.

In addition, here are some research assignments that you should explore and be ready to talk about in class.

The subject of the two papers, due **March 14** and **May 9**, are also given below.

Week 2: Feb. 7 Origins and Consequences

Look for a recent (i.e., the past year) newspaper article demonstrating the relevance of slavery to today's world. It could be about a museum, an educational institution, a scientific finding, an archaeological discovery, a travel destination, a novel, etc. Reflect on why slavery matters to us.

Week 3: Feb 14 Africa

Choose a relevant image from the website, **The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record**, <http://slaveryimages.org/search.html>. Send the primary source image that particularly interests you to me as a powerpoint slide. Be prepared to share, describe, and discuss it with the seminar. What does the image show? What doesn't it show? Who produced it? For whom was it produced? How can it be used as evidence? What sorts of historical questions does it raise?

Week 4: Feb. 21 Slave Trade

Go to the website, <http://www.slavevoyages.org>.

Here are some illustrative questions that you should be able to answer:

- a) What was the major region of embarkation in Africa between 1650 and 1800?
- b) Which Caribbean island received the most slaves in the eighteenth century?
- c) What percentage of slaves disembarking in the slave trade went to North America?

- d) What percentage of slaves disembarking in the Americas came after 1807?
- e) Which nation brought the most slaves to the Americas in the 17th century?
- f) Which nation brought the most slaves to the Americas in the 18th century?
- g) What percentage of slaves aboard slaving voyages were women?
- h) What was the mean length of an eighteenth- century slaving voyage?
- i) What surprised you the most about any query of your own that you posed?
- j) You might reflect on an image from last week's website and how it relates to this statistical information.

Week 5: Feb. 28 Brazil, The Caribbean, North America

You should be thinking about how slave life varied in these places.

- i) Choose an image from Brazil, the Caribbean, and North America that suggests differences.
- ii) Read these extracts from Brazil: Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil*, 55-61, 63-71, 79-86, 111-124, 133-34, 154-178, 362-377 and summarize your reflections on Brazilian slavery.

Week 6: Mar. 7 Atlantic Diaspora I

John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 5-8, 213-225, 248-250, 254-267, 306-338, 682-686

Week 7: Mar. 14 Atlantic Diaspora II

Runaway slave advertisements placed in newspapers:

Jamaica 18th-century: <http://aquila.usm.edu/drs/index.2.html>

: also available at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00021144/00001>

Maryland, Colonial: Lathan A. Windley, ed., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790, Volume 2, Maryland* [scanned pages available electronically]

Maryland, Revolutionary: <http://teaching.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000000/000101/html>

North Carolina, 1751-1799: <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS>

Saint Domingue, 1766-1790: <http://www.marronage.info/en/accueil.php>

Virginia, 1736-1798: http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/browse/browse_main.php

Under construction: <http://freedomonthemove.org> [just take a look]

Read 20 advertisements from the 18th century. What conclusions can you draw?

If you want to visualize the spread of slavery in the US, 1790-1860, take a look at:

<http://lincolnmullen.com/projects/slavery/> and <http://lincolnmullen.com/blog/the-spread-of-american-slavery/>

FIRST PAPER, MAR 14: Did American slavery vary spatially in significant ways?

Week 8: SPRING VACATION

Week 9: Mar. 28 American Revolution

Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution*, 91-116, 133-158, 167-201

Week 10: Apr. 4 Haitian Revolution

David Geggus, *The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History*, 3-9, 17-20, 33-35, 59-65, 75-86, 120-131, 153-157, 160-164, 179-180, 186-191, 203-205

Week 11: Apr. 11 Nineteenth-Century Slavery I

You should be thinking about how slavery changed from the 18th to the 19th century.

- i) Choose 2 images, one from the 18th century, and the other from the 19th century that illustrates a difference.
- ii) Read these extracts. John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 8-18, 27-29, 90-91, 178-198 and think about how they are different from 18th-century personal accounts

Week 12: Apr. 18 Nineteenth-Century Slavery II

Runaway slave advertisements placed in newspapers:

Arkansas, 1820-1865: <http://aquila.usm.edu/drs/index.2.html>

Jamaica 19th-century: <http://aquila.usm.edu/drs/index.2.html>
: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00021144/00001>

Louisiana, 1836-1865: <http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/p16313coll80>

Maryland, 1830-1865: <http://slavery2.msa.maryland.gov/pages/Search.aspx?id=AR7-14>

Mississippi, 1800-1860: <http://aquila.usm.edu/drs/index.2.html>

North Carolina, 1800-1860: <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS>

Virginia, 1800-1803: http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/browse/browse_main.php

Read 20 advertisements from the 19th century. What conclusions can you draw? How different are they from their 18th-century counterparts.

Week 13: Apr. 25 Nineteenth-Century Slavery III

How did slavery differ for men and women? Apart from Harriet Jacobs, you should read Claire C. Robertson, "Africa into the Americas? Slavery and Women, the Family and the Gender Division of Labor," in *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 3-40 [available electronically]

Week 14: May 2 Conclusion

Making amends? Think of pro/con arguments

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations" (*The Atlantic*, May 2014):

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

FINAL PAPER, NOON, Th. MAY 9: Did American slavery vary temporally in significant ways?