

# SLAVERY IN AMERICA

HIST 6332

University of Texas at Dallas

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9:45pm  
JO 5.412

Fall 2021  
Aug 23 – Dec 7  
Mondays, 7:00pm –  
JO 4.112

## Course Description

Harriet Jacobs wrote in 1860, "No pen can give an adequate description of the all-pervading corruption produced by slavery." Despite this impossibility, studying slavery is essential if we want to understand the world we live in today. This material is difficult and sometimes even demoralizing, but in the endurance, resistance, and ultimate liberation of the enslaved, we also find some of the most inspiring and meaningful stories that history can offer. This course explores the creation and eventual destruction of chattel slavery in the United States and the Atlantic World. But the destruction of chattel slavery did not mean the end of human bondage. We will also explore how slavery continued and transformed since emancipation.

It is the goal of this class to prepare you for a career as a researcher, teacher, archivist, or curator. Graduate courses in history often ignore the fact that most historians are not primarily researchers, but rather teachers, curators, or interpreters. This course attempts to reflect the diversity of careers in history through differentiated assessment. Students will be encouraged to select the final assessment that is most relevant to their professional ambitions, whether it is a research paper, teaching portfolio, primary source anthology, or museum exhibit.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Students will evaluate key arguments in the historiography of American slavery.
2. Students will produce original research, teaching portfolio, primary source anthology, or museum exhibit.
3. Students will demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills.

## Grading

### Assignments

Participation	20%
Reflection papers	30%
Final project	50%

### Grading Scale

100-93	A
92- 90	A-
89-88	B+
87-83	B
82-80	B-
79-78	C+
77-70	C
69-	F

## **Technology**

All electronic communication must take place through official UT Dallas email accounts. Our course will rely on eLearning. If you experience any issues with your UT Dallas account, contact the UT Dallas Information Resources Help Desk: [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu) or call 972-883-2911. UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The services include a toll free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service. Please use this link to access the UTD eLearning Support Center: <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearninghelp>.

## **AccessAbility Services**

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable disability-related accommodations and/or services for students with documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required (see <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess>).

## **Academic Honesty**

Graduate students in history must meet the professional standards of our discipline. Academic dishonesty has devastating effects on the careers of historians. Academic dishonesty includes, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and collaboration/collusion. Consequences for academic dishonesty will include an automatic failing grade for the class as well as additional discipline to be administered by the university.

**Other university policies and procedures relevant to this course can be found at:**  
**<http://catalog.utdallas.edu/2013/graduate/policies/appendices/appendix1>**

## **\* Descriptions and timelines may change at Professor Wright's discretion** **Description of Assignments**

### **Participation**

Attendance is required. Please arrive on time. This is a discussion-based seminar and requires all participants to share ideas and respond constructively to one another. Students who have not completed the weekly readings and assignment should not attend class.

All students will lead a one-hour teaching activity during the semester. Half of your participation grade (10% of your total grade) will be given based on your leadership during this activity.

### **Book Profiles and Book Reviews**

Prior to each class session, students will write book profiles that summarize, analyze, and, evaluate the shared reading for the week. Over the course of the semester the weekly assignment will shift from book profiles to book reviews. The book profiles will range from 1,200-2,000 words in length, and the book reviews will range from 500-700 words. The book profile template is included in the last page of this syllabus and on eLearning. You may skip one book profile and one book review.

### **Final Assignment**

This course attempts to reflect the diversity of careers in history through differentiated assessment. Students will be encouraged to select the final assessment that is most relevant to their professional ambitions, whether it is a research paper, teaching portfolio, primary source anthology, or museum exhibit. More details on all will be provided in class.

Research Paper – Article length (6,000-8,000 words) piece of original research. Word count does not include footnotes.

Teaching Portfolio – 10,000-word teaching portfolio including the following: teaching philosophy, historiographical summary, lesson plans, lecture outlines, primary source anthology, sample assessments, textbook analyses, and more.

Archive anthology – Annotated anthology of archival collections and/or documents. This anthology will also include a brief essay describing relevant archives and resources, as well as an assessment of what the archive contains and lacks.

Museum exhibit – Create a digital exhibit on a specific topic relevant to the course, as well as a proposal for a physical corollary to the exhibit. Students will be encouraged to contact local museums, libraries, or archives to consider partnering with them for this assignment.

## Course Schedule

Week 1 – August 23

What is Slavery?

- Required: Joseph C. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (Yale, 2009). [Available online through McDermott Library.](#)

Week 2 – August 30

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

- Required: Jennifer Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Duke, 2021).

Recommended:

- Anne Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Beacon, 2006).
- Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to America* (Harvard, 2008).
- Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (Penguin, 2008).
- [Hugh Thomas](#), *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440 – 1870* (Simon & Schuster, 1999).
- John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800, second edition* (Cambridge, 1998).

Week 3 – September 6

LABOR DAY – NO CLASS

Week 4 – September 13

Slavery and the Making of the United States

- Required: Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Routledge: 2015). [Available online through McDermott Library.](#)

Recommended:

- Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* (Oxford, 2011).
- Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty* (Beacon Press, 2007).
- Gary B. Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Harvard, 2006).
- Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (HarperCollins, 2006).
- [David Waldstreicher](#), *Slavery's Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (Hill and Wang, 2010).

Week 5 – September 20

Gender and Slavery

- Required: Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh : Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Penn, 2020). [Available online through McDermott Library.](#)

Recommended:

- [Elizabeth Fox-Genovese](#), *Within the Plantation Household* (North Carolina, 1988).
- Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (UNC, 2004).
- [Jennifer L. Morgan](#), *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Penn, 2004).
- Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (North Carolina, 2004).
- Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge, 2008).

Week 6 – September 27

Resistance and Rebellion

- Vanessa Holden, *Surviving Southampton: African Resistance in Nat Turner's Community* (Illinois, 2021).

Recommended:

- David F. Allmendinger, *Nat Turner and the Rising in Southampton County* (Johns Hopkins, 2014).
- Patrick Breen, *The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood* (Oxford, 2016).
- Christopher Tomlins, *In the Matter of Nat Turner: A Speculative History* (Princeton, 2020).
- Randolph Ferguson Scully, *Religion and the Making of Nat Turner's Virginia* (Virginia 2008).
- Kyle Baker, *Nat Turner* (Abrams: 2008).

Week 7 – October 4

Slavery and Capitalism

- Required: Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Harvard, 2013). [Available online from McDermott Library.](#)

Recommended:

- [Sven Beckert](#), *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Knopf, 2014).



Final drafts of papers and projects due on the date of the final exam

## Book Profile

Title

Author

Author's biography

*What is their position? How/when/where were they trained? What else have they written?*

Historical question(s)

*What question(s) is this study trying to solve?*

Argument(s)

*What is/are the author's argument(s)?*

Key historiography

*What other studies have addressed this/these questions?*

Historiographical intervention(s)

*How does this study change our understanding of the past?*

Evidence

*What sources did the author use? What sources did they not use?*

Methodology

*How does this historian interpret evidence?*

Outline

*How does the author unfold their narrative?*

Most important passage

*If you had to sum up this book in a quoted sentence or two, what passage would you use?*

Best piece of evidence

*What piece of evidence was the most convincing?*

Weaknesses of argument

*What weaknesses of logic or evidence could you detect?*

Quality of prose

*How would you assess the quality of the prose? Can you give an example of a particularly artful or awkward sentence?*

Opportunities for future research

*What questions are left unanswered, and/or what new questions are posed? How could this historian's methodology be adapted to historical questions that you would like to explore?*