

AFR374D (30235)/ANT324L (30990): Archaeology and History of Slavery in North America

FALL 2011

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Office hours: Tues 12:30-1:30, Weds 12-1, and by appt.

Course Description:

This course is a comparative survey of the institution of slavery on the American mainland from the colonial through the antebellum periods. An interdisciplinary perspective will be employed through readings, exercises, lectures and discussions related to the archaeology and history of slavery. We will begin with discussions of some of the key issues and questions that scholars of American slavery have addressed over time, and consider a few of the theories concerning identity formation and enslaved Africans. Following lectures/discussions focus on the development of plantation societies, particularly among the English, and later, the Americans. While plantation economies will be covered, the emphasis will be on issues related to society and culture from the viewpoint of enslaved Africans and blacks. Further, rather than view slavery as a dominant institution, the class will consider the ways in which those in bondage covertly and overtly resisted their enslavement. Their social and cultural practices, it will be argued, were crucial in carrying out these acts. By considering a variety of case studies from the 17th to the 19th centuries, covering diverse regions and locales, we can study the development of race-based slavery, understand its role in the transformation of American society and culture, and recognize the diversity of experiences that shaped, and were shaped by, this institution.

Topics to be covered include the following:

- I. Race and gender
- II. Life within the enslaved community
 - A. Cultural practices (for example, foodways, landscapes, religion, and craft production).
 - B. Social institutions (for example, families, slave quarter communities, and marriage practices).
- III. Relationships between slaveowners and the enslaved.
- IV. Plantations: cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco.
- V. Institution of slavery: legal codes, planter ideologies, relationship to race and racism.
- VI. Labor diversity within the system of slavery: urban vs. rural, artisans and skilled labor, field labor, domestic work.
- VII. Opposition and resistance: slave uprisings, abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, maroonage, runaways, etc.
- VIII. Interpreting historical sources related to slavery.

Course Goals:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:

- Compare and contrast the diversity of plantation systems by considering the following factors: settlement patterns, built environments, labor forces, and planting/processing techniques involved in sugar, rice, cotton, and tobacco agriculture.
- Discuss the diversity of experiences of enslaved blacks and Africans with regard to different socio-historical contexts (e.g., 17th-century Chesapeake, Spanish Florida, 19th-century Louisiana, etc.).
- Critically analyze the role of gender in shaping the experiences of enslaved individuals.
- Demonstrate how enslaved groups actively participated in the creation of cultural practices and social institutions.

- Assess the various strategies of resistance used by both the free and the enslaved to challenge the system of slavery.
- Possess some basic knowledge on how to use primary historical documents and material culture to interpret the lifeways, experiences, and perspectives of slaveowners and the enslaved.

Course Requirements: Final grades will be based on the percentage of points scored out of a possible “100”. The total points possible are divided as follows:

- (1) Two in-class group exercises (5 pts. each) = 10 points
- (2) Journal entries (4 pts. each) = 40 points
- (3) Discussion (5 pts. each) = 10 points
- (4) Wiki project = 40 points

Group exercises

You must arrive on time to class in order to receive full credit for completing each group assignment. The handouts needed for both will be posted on Blackboard. Please print these out (bring the handouts to class), read them over and be prepared to start the assignment at the beginning of class.

Journals

The “Journal” tool in Blackboard has been set up. I will post the questions and/or issues that you should address for each entry on Blackboard (under Announcements), and announce them in class (or via email).

The journals will help me to evaluate and keep track of your progress over the semester in comprehending course content and in meeting course goals. Focus on the readings when journaling. The main things that I am looking for when grading (but you don’t have to incorporate all 3 for each entry) are: comprehension of the author’s objectives and your ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his/her arguments, your ability to relate the reading to the day’s topic(s) and contextualize it more broadly within the major course goals, and, importantly, how well you address the issue/question assigned for each entry using specific evidence from the reading(s). Please feel free to provide your reflections on how well you’re doing in the course. Your journals will only be viewable by you and I. Due dates for journal entries are listed in the schedule below; you must complete your entry **by 11am on the due date or it will be considered late**. Each entry should be around 250 words.

Discussions

Goal: To provide a forum for class discussion of course materials as a means of ensuring that students are well-versed on the subject matters to date before moving forward. This is an opportunity to engage in friendly debate, ask questions that still linger for you, and to try and grasp how specific readings, etc. relate to broader course goals.

You will be assigned two discussion dates; there are six altogether. You are required to coordinate with your co-discussants (you can email one another via Blackboard) in completing the following:

- 1) Each co-discussant must come up with 2 questions/topics/debates related to the readings, video, and to a lesser extent, the lectures assigned to your group. These should be grouped by themes (e.g., plantation labor, resistance to slavery, women’s experiences, cultural production, etc.). Please do not recycle questions assigned for journal entries. Your questions should be aimed towards generating a productive class discussion, so don’t make them too easy. Feel free to post questions that you yourself don’t know the answer to!
- 2) One student will be responsible for putting together a handout of the above and forwarding the document to me via email by 9am on the day of the discussion. I will bring copies to hand out in class. *Please be sure that the name of each student who contributed to the assignment is listed on the handout.* This is the document that I’ll use for grading.

Finally: you must be present on the days that you are assigned or you will receive no credit even if you contributed to this assignment.

Wiki project

Your major project for this class is to create a wiki page based on interpretations of a selection of ex-slave narratives from the Federal Writer's Project. You are responsible for coming up with a research question on life during antebellum slavery, choosing a minimum of 7 narratives and 3 scholarly readings to address it, and then writing an essay based upon your interpretation of the sources. Your essay should be between 1,700 to 2,000 words (about 3.5-4 single-spaced pages).

Do not use the narratives assigned to our class for this project. As for articles/books, you can use one from class, but you are expected to conduct research for this paper in finding appropriate source materials.

You will be given a tutorial on working with Dupral wikis, which are very user friendly. The wiki editor allows you to incorporate hyperlinks, images, sound bites, etc., into your text. Be creative in constructing your wiki page by using these features since part of your grade will be based upon your resourcefulness in finding relevant media to integrate into your essay. There are ample sources on the web that can be used.

A 100-150 word abstract of your project, stating your main question and listing your 3 scholarly reference works, is due on November 1. The abstracts will allow me to assess whether or not you have a suitable question and supporting references. You may be asked to revise your topic or find alternate readings. Note: Abstracts will not be graded, but 6 points will be deducted from your wiki assignment for failure to turn this in.

A handout with more specifics will be made available in October. If you prefer to get started on this assignment sooner, there are plenty of books at the PCL containing the ex-slave narratives, or you can simply go to: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

Policy on late assignments: A late assignment will only be accepted with prior approval from the instructor. In this case, only a one-week extension of the deadline will be granted and 50% of the points possible will be deducted from the final assignment grade.

Grading Scale:

90 – 100 = A
80 – 89 = B
70 – 79 = C
60 – 69 = D
59 and below = F

Required Texts available at the UT Co-op:

1. Ira Berlin, "Generations in Captivity," 2003. This book is also available electronically via UTnetcat.
2. Leland Ferguson, "Uncommon Ground", ([1992]2004).

Blackboard: Grades, announcements, readings, and assignment handouts are all accessible through Blackboard (<http://courses.utexas.edu>).

Academic Integrity:

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the Dean of Students. If anyone is caught falsifying excuses in order to make-up a required assignment, plagiarizing (this includes not citing references for an assignment), etc., the possible consequences include an automatic failure in this class or even dismissal from this university. Please refer to the Student Judicial Services web site for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>

Course Schedule

Key to assigned readings: “TBA” = to be announced, “Berlin” and “Ferguson” = required texts by authors; all other readings will be posted on Blackboard. NOTE: All readings are required.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
Week 1			
8/25	Introduction to class.	Berlin: Prologue.	
INTRO TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATIONS OF AMERICAN SLAVERY			
Week 2			
8/30	DISCUSSION: African diaspora archaeology	Fennell.	
9/1	DISCUSSION: Identity formation, African diaspora	Gomez; Mintz and Price.	Journal due.
THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE			
Week 3			
9/6	The Middle Passage	O. Equiano + Kiple and Higgins.	
9/8	Video	Berlin: Ch 1.	Journal due.
SPANISH FLORIDA			
Week 4			
9/13	People of African descent in Florida	Deagan and Landers; Weik.	Journal due.
THE CHESAPEAKE			
9/15	Video	Berlin: Ch 2.	
Week 5			
9/20	The emergence of race and slavery in Virginia	Epperson; TBA.	Journal due.
9/22	Life and labor on tobacco plantations	TBA.	
Week 6			
9/27	Gender dynamics	TBA.	Journal due.
9/29	DISCUSSION		
Week 7			
10/4	Group Exercise 1: interpreting primary source materials.	VA historical documents.	REMINDER: bring historical documents posted on Blackboard to class.
THE WPA EX-SLAVE NARRATIVES			
10/6	Intro to the ex-slave narratives	J.W. Davidson and M.H. Lytle.	
Week 8			
10/11	Group Exercise 2: interpreting the WPA ex-slave narratives.	Selections from the Library of Congress.	Please read the WPA ex-slave narratives <i>before class and bring them to class.</i>
10/13	Creating wiki pages.		This is a required end-of-term assignment; try to be here.

SOUTH CAROLINA			
Week 9			
10/18	SC plantations	Leland Ferguson.	
10/20	Creole culture	Leland Ferguson	
Week 10			
10/25	DISCUSSION		Journal due.
CHALLENGING THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY			
10/27	Video	Berlin: Ch 3.	Journal due.
Week 11			
11/1	Resistance and uprising	James Sidbury + William L. Rose (editor).	DUE: Abstracts for wiki project.
11/3	Everyday acts of resistance	Leone; TBA.	Journal due.
Week 12			
11/8	NO CLASS.		
11/10	DISCUSSION	James Scott.	
THE LOWER SOUTH AND THE INTERSTATE SLAVE TRADE			
Week 13			
11/15	Louisiana	Berlin: Ch 4.	Journal due.
11/17	The Cotton Belt	TBA.	Journal due.
EMANCIPATION			
Week 14			
11/22	Video	Berlin: Epilogue.	
11/24	THANKSGIVING		
Week 15			
11/29	Archaeology of Texas freedmen	Boyd, Franklin, and Myers.	Guest lecture: Nedra Lee, PhD Candidate, Anthropology
12/1	DISCUSSION		
12/2			DUE: wiki projects.