

## **AFR374D (30347)/ANT324L (31141): Archaeology and History of Slavery in North America**

FALL 2011

TTh 11-12:30; SAC 4.118

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Office hours: Tues 12:30-1:30 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, 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 vehicles through which they formulated and carried out these acts. By considering a variety of case studies from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, covering diverse regions and plantation economies, 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. Plantation economies: 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., 17<sup>th</sup>-century Chesapeake, Spanish Florida, 19<sup>th</sup>-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) Three in-class group exercises (5 pts. each) = 15 points
- (2) Journal entries (5 pts. each) = 25 points
- (3) Minute papers (2 pts. each) = 20 points *There will be no partial credit for these.*
- (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 all three 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 and 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 200-250 words **unless stated otherwise**.

### Minute papers

Minute papers are akin to pop quizzes. During or after a lecture or class discussion, you will be asked to answer a question based on that day’s lecture/discussion. Your responses should be brief (3 sentences), but to the point. Minute papers are an assessment tool. If I note problem areas in terms of students’ comprehension, if there is a clear indication that a debate needs more discussion time, or if there are significant observations that should be shared, I will spend a few minutes at the beginning of the next class to address them. Examples of the kinds of questions you will have to answer include:

- What did you perceive to be the major purpose or objective of today’s class?
- Would you agree or disagree with this statement: . . .? Why?
- In your opinion, what was the most useful idea discussed in today’s class?

### 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 5 narratives and 3 scholarly readings to address it, and then writing an essay based upon your interpretation of the sources. Your essay should be around 1,500 words (about 3 single-spaced pages using 12-point font). There will be two group exercises using narratives that will help you to understand how to read and analyze them.

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 6. The abstracts will allow me to determine 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 4 points will be deducted from your wiki assignment for failure to turn this in.**

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

### Discussions

In addition to the course requirements, there are days set aside for discussions. We will use this time to ensure 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.

**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.
3. Jennifer Morgan, “Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery,” University of Pennsylvania Press, 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/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

## Course Schedule

Key to assigned readings: “TBA” = to be announced, “Berlin,” “Morgan,” 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			
8/30	Introduction to class.	Berlin: Prologue.	
<b>INTRO TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATIONS OF AMERICAN SLAVERY</b>			
Week 2			
9/4	DISCUSSION: African diaspora archaeology	Fennell.	
9/6	DISCUSSION: Identity formation, African diaspora	Gomez; Mintz and Price.	
<b>THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE</b>			
Week 3			
9/11	The Middle Passage	O. Equiano + Kiple and Higgins.	
9/13	Video	Berlin: Ch 1 + Morgan: Intro, Ch 1.	
<b>THE CHESAPEAKE</b>			
Week 4			
9/18	Video	Berlin: Ch 2 + Morgan: Ch 2.	
9/20	The emergence of race and slavery in Virginia	Epperson + Morgan: Ch 3.	
Week 5			
9/25	Gender and culture (lecture and discussion)	Morgan: Ch 4.	Journal due.
9/27	Life and labor on tobacco plantations	Heath and Bennett + Morgan: Ch 5.	
Week 6			
10/2	Black women’s resistance	B. Stevenson + Morgan: Ch 6, Epilogue	Journal due.
10/4	DISCUSSION		
Week 7			
10/9	No class.		
10/11	Group Exercise 1: interpreting primary source materials.	VA historical documents.	REMINDER: bring historical documents posted on Blackboard to class.
<b>THE WPA EX-SLAVE NARRATIVES</b>			
Week 8			
10/16	Intro to the ex-slave narratives; <b>wiki tutorial.</b>	J.W. Davidson and M.H. Lytle.	Since the wiki project is required, try to be here.
10/18	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>

<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>			
DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
Week 9			
10/23	SC plantations	Leland Ferguson.	
10/25	Creole culture	Leland Ferguson	Journal due.
Week 10			
10/30	DISCUSSION		
<b>CHALLENGING THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY</b>			
11/1	Video	Berlin: Ch 3.	
Week 11			
11/6	Resistance and uprising	James Sidbury + William L. Rose (editor).	DUE: Abstracts for wiki project.
11/8	UGRR and Abolition	Frederick Douglass	Journal due.
Week 12			
11/13	DISCUSSION		
<b>THE LOWER SOUTH AND THE INTERSTATE SLAVE TRADE</b>			
11/15	Louisiana	Berlin: Ch 4.	
Week 13			
11/20	The Cotton Belt	Reading TBA.	Journal due.
11/22	THANKSGIVING		
Week 14			
11/27	Group Exercise 3: women in the WPA ex-slave narratives.	Selections from the Library of Congress.	Please read the narratives <i>before class and bring them to class.</i>
<b>EMANCIPATION</b>			
11/29	Video	Berlin: Epilogue.	
Week 15			
12/4	Archaeology of Texas freedmen	Boyd, Franklin, and Myers.	
12/6	DISCUSSION		
<b>Dec. 10</b>			<b>DUE: wiki projects.</b>