

AFR372F (30395)/ANT324L (31325): Archaeology and History of Slavery in North America

FALL 2013

TTh 9:30-11; SAC 4.174

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Office hours: TTh 11-noon 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 17th to the 19th 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.
- VIV. Lifeways following emancipation.

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, 18th-century SC, antebellum era, 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 people in the past.

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) Five in-class group exercises (5 pts. each) = 25 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 = 30 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 five 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 9:30am 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 1,200 words (about 2.5 single-spaced pages using 12-point font).

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.

A 100-150 word abstract of your project, stating your main question and listing your 3 scholarly reference works, is due on November 7. 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

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Course Schedule

NOTE: All readings are required.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
Week 1			
8/29	Introduction to class.	Berlin: Prologue.	
INTRO TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATIONS OF AMERICAN SLAVERY			
Week 2			
9/3	DISCUSSION: African diaspora archaeology	Fennell.	
9/5	DISCUSSION: Identity formation, African diaspora	Gomez; Mintz and Price.	
THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE			
Week 3			
9/10	The Middle Passage	O. Equiano + Kiple and Higgins.	
9/12	Video	Berlin: Ch 1 + Morgan: Intro, Ch 1.	
THE CHESAPEAKE			
Week 4			
9/17	Video	Berlin: Ch 2 + Morgan: Ch 2.	
9/19	The emergence of race and slavery in Virginia	Epperson + Morgan: Ch 3.	
Week 5			
9/24	Gender and culture (lecture and discussion)	Morgan: Ch 4.	Journal due.
9/26	Life and labor on tobacco plantations	Heath and Bennett + Morgan: Ch 5.	
Week 6			
10/1	Black women's resistance	B. Stevenson + Morgan: Ch 6, Epilogue	Journal due.
10/3	DISCUSSION		
Week 7			
10/8	Group Exercise 1: interpreting primary source materials.	VA historical documents.	REMINDER: bring historical documents posted on Blackboard to class.
THE WPA EX-SLAVE NARRATIVES			
10/10	Intro to the ex-slave narratives; wiki tutorial .	J.W. Davidson and M.H. Lytle.	
Week 8			
10/15	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>

SOUTH CAROLINA			
DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
10/17	SC plantations	Leland Ferguson.	
Week 9			
10/22	Creole culture	Leland Ferguson	Journal due.
10/24	Group Exercise 3		
CHALLENGING THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY			
Week 10			
10/29	Video	Berlin: Ch 3.	
10/31	Resistance and uprising	James Sidbury + William L. Rose (editor).	
Week 11			
11/5	UGRR and Abolition	Frederick Douglass; primary sources	Journal due.
11/7	Group Exercise 4		Abstract due.
THE LOWER SOUTH AND THE INTERSTATE SLAVE TRADE			
Week 12			
11/12	Louisiana; The Cotton Belt	Berlin: Ch 4.	
11/14	Texas; DISCUSSION	Campbell; WPA narratives	
EMANCIPATION			
Week 13			
11/19	Archaeology of Texas freedmen	Sitton and Conrad	Journal due.
11/21	Artifacts	Oral narratives, Antioch Colony	
Week 14			
11/26	Artifacts	Oral narratives, Antioch Colony	
11/28	THANKSGIVING		
Week 15			
12/3	Group Exercise 5		
12/5	DISCUSSION		
Dec. 6			DUE: wiki projects.