

AMH 3674 – Slavery and Abolition

Spring 2020

T 5-6 (11:45 – 1:40), R 6 (12:50 – 1:40)


Anderson 021

Prof. Jon Sensbach, Dept. of History

Office: 233 Keene-Flint, hours TR 9:30 – 11 and by appointment

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This class will examine the history of slavery and abolition in colonial America, the U.S., and the broader Atlantic world through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Beginning with the rise of the Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century, the course will examine systems of slavery in the American colonies, the search for freedom during the age of revolution, the rise of the abolition movement, slave rebellions, the Civil War and the end of slavery, and the uneasy transition to freedom. Through a combination of primary and secondary documents, we will focus on African Americans' active responses to racial oppression and their attempts to gain and consolidate freedom in America. We will conclude with an examination of the legacies of slavery in American history and the ways its contested memory shapes modern America.



RUN away from the subscriber
in *Albemarle*, a Mulatto slave called *Sandy*,
about 35 years of age, his stature is rather low,
inclining to corpulence, and his complexion light;
he is a shoemaker by trade, in which he uses his
left hand principally, can do coarse carpenters
work, and is something of a horse jockey; he is
greatly addicted to drink, and when drunk is info-
lent and disorderly, in his conversation he swears
much, and in his behaviour is artful and knavish. He took with
him a white horse, much scarred with traces, of which it is ex-
pected he will endeavour to dispose; he also carried his shoe-
makers tools, and will probably endeavour to get employment that
way. Whoever conveys the said slave to me, in *Albemarle*, shall
have 40 s. reward, if taken up within the county, 4 l. if elsewhere
within the colony, and 10 l. if in any other colony, from
THOMAS JEFFERSON.

These required books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore in Reitz Union or may be acquired from your favorite internet bookseller:

Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, eds., *To Make Our World Anew, Vol. 1: A History of African Americans to 1880* (Oxford, 2000).

Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Beacon, 2017).

David Cecelski, *The Fire of Freedom: Abraham Galloway and the Slaves' Civil War* (North Carolina, 2015).

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (Atria, 2017).

Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist* (Beacon, 2017).

These readings will be supplemented occasionally with additional sources available online or by handouts. A rich storehouse of images from this website www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/page/welcome supplies a corresponding visual analogue to the many written primary and secondary sources available for study.

Requirements

1. One five-page paper due **Jan. 30** on a pre-assigned set of questions.
2. Three book quizzes on pre-assigned questions (**Feb. 20, March 19, and April 9**).
3. Examinations. There will be one mid-term and a final exam, both consisting of a combination of essay and identification questions.
4. Class attendance and participation. Students will be expected to attend class regularly and to keep up with reading assignments, which average about 75 pages per week. Everyone is allowed two absences regardless of the reason; no excuse or physician's note is needed (except for a missed exam). Each subsequent absence, however, will result in a drop of half a letter grade in the final average for the term (students who are forced to miss more classes because of serious or chronic medical problems or family emergencies should consult with the instructor). The course will be lecture-based approximately two-thirds of the time, but there will also be a number of class discussions in which students should participate based on course readings. No digital devices in class, please.

Your final grade (based on a 10-point scale) will be determined as follows:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Midterm | 20% |
| 1 5-p paper | 20% |
| 3 quizzes | 30% (10% eac.) |
| Final | 30% |

Schedule

Week 1. Jan. 7-9. Introduction: American Slavery and the Memory Wars

Reading: Alex Tizon, "My Family's Slave," *The Atlantic*, June 2017.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/06/lolas-story/524490/>

Week 2. Jan. 14-16. Africa and the Atlantic World

Reading: Colin Palmer, "The First Passage," chap. 1 in *World Anew*

Week 3. Jan. 21-23. The "Terrible Transformation": Africans in Early America

Reading: Peter Wood, "Strange New Land," chap. 2 in *World Anew*

Week 4. Jan. 28-30. Cultures in Exile; First Stirrings of Antislavery

Reading:

Rediker, *Benjamin Lay*

Germantown Friends' Petition Against Slavery (1688)

Samuel Sewall, "The Selling of Joseph" (1700)

5-page paper on these readings due Jan. 30

Week 5. Feb. 4-6. Era of the American Revolution

Reading:

Daniel Littlefield, "Revolutionary Citizens," chap. 3 in *World Anew*

Thomas Jefferson, selections from *Notes on the State of Virginia*

Benjamin Banneker's reply to Jefferson

Week 6. Feb. 11-13. Slavery and Freedom in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions

Reading:

Ada Ferrer, "Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (2012), 40-66.

Venture Smith, "A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa"

Week 7. Feb. 18-20. After the Revolution

Reading: Dunbar, *Never Caught*; **quiz on *Never Caught* Feb. 20**

Week 8. Feb. 25-27. **Midterm Tue., Feb. 25**

Spring Break March 2-7

Week 10. March 10-12. The Second Middle Passage

Reading:

Deborah Gray White, "Let My People Go," chap. 4 in *World Anew*.

Stephanie Yuhl, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Centering the Domestic Slave Trade in American Public History," *Journal of Southern History* 79, no. 3 (2013), 593-624.

Week 11. March 17-19. World of the Slave Labor Camps

Reading:

Harriet Jacobs, Solomon Northrup and George Fitzhugh extracts (*American Yawp*)

Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* – **quiz on Price March 19**

Week 12. March 24-26. Resistance and Transatlantic Abolition

Reading:

Nat Turner, “Confessions of Nat Turner” (1831)

Henry Highland Garnet, “Address to the Slaves of the United States”

Week 13. March 31 – April 2. War for Self-Emancipation

Reading:

Noralee Frankel, “Breaking the Chains,” 227-35 in *World Anew*

Cecelski, *Abraham Galloway* – **quiz on Galloway April 9**

Week 14. April 7-9. Uneasy Freedom

Reading: Frankel, “Breaking the Chains,” 236-80 in *World Anew*

Week 15. April 14-16. Afterlives of Slavery: Confrontation and Avoidance in American Public Memory

Reading:

Ira Berlin, “American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 4 (2004), 1251-68.

Jane McFadden, “Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum: ‘From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration,’” *Journal of American History* 106, no. 3 (2019), 703-08.

Brown, Escoto-Garcia, Paul, and Peltier, “Slavery and the University of Florida: African Americans, Seminoles and the Origins of Higher Education in Florida,” (University of Florida, 2019).

Week 16. April 21. Conclusions

Final Exam: Thursday, May 1, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.