

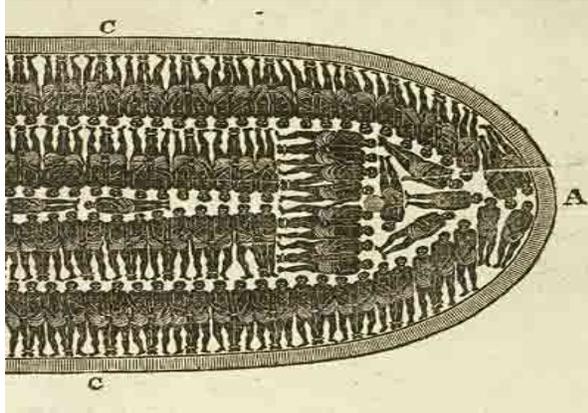
AMH 393I, Slavery and Memory

Fall 2021, MWF 5 (11:45 – 12:35)

Keene-Flint 117

Prof. Jon Sensbach, Dept. of History, jsensbach@ufl.edu

Office hours: W 1 – 3:30 p.m. and by appointment, either in-person or by Zoom



“The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it; history is literally present in all that we do.”

James Baldwin

Detail, *Slave Ship Brookes*, 1788

This year, Congress passed into law a new national holiday, Juneteenth, commemorating the end of slavery in 1865. At the same time, state legislatures, including Florida's, are passing new restrictions on the teaching of slavery and race in schools and other public institutions. These seemingly opposed legislative maneuvers are the latest flashpoints for national discussion about the role of slavery and racism in American history and their lingering impact on a host of social issues—economic inequality, policing, incarceration, housing, health care, education, and more. This course will examine the ways slavery and emancipation are remembered and debated in popular culture, politics, and national consciousness. Topics include the representation of slavery in museums, art, literature, film, advertising, memorials, and education. We will examine the ways Black Americans have thought of themselves in relation to slavery and emancipation. While focusing on the United States, the course will also give comparative attention to the experience of other nations shaped by the transatlantic slave trade and current efforts to achieve truth and reconciliation around issues of race.



Hank Willis Thomas, *Raise Up*, 2014

Though predominantly a history course, methodologies from art history, literature and material culture studies will combine to give an interdisciplinary quality to the class. After devoting the first two-thirds of the semester to studying representations of slavery in public and private memory, we will shift our attention in the final third to developing individual projects, which will count 50% of your grade. **Note:** Please be aware that, because the study of slavery and its aftermath is rooted in one of the most violent and traumatic aspects of American history, some of the texts and images we will consider reflect graphic scenes of brutality and suffering, sometimes in the extreme, endured by Africans and their descendants. They may evoke a range of sharp emotional responses in viewers, as was often their intent. We will seek to consider these images with sensitivity and understanding.

### Required texts:

Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning With Slavery Across America* (New York: Little, Brown, 2021).

Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* (New York: Random, 2021).

### Requirements:

The course will emphasize engagement with course readings and visual sources, research, writing and class participation rather than test-taking. Consequently, there will be no midterm or final exam. In addition to **two 4-page reaction papers** on assigned readings (assignments to be posted in Canvas), the main assignment will be a **final research paper of approx. 10-12 pages**, which should include some kind of visual illustrative content; in some cases, the paper may accompany a more formal visual presentation of some kind, whether powerpoint, poster, photographic essay, video, or other format. Team research projects are encouraged. Students will give a 10-minute presentation at the end of the semester on their project as part of their participation.

Students will be expected to attend class regularly and to keep up with reading assignments. There is an **attendance policy**: everyone is allowed two absences regardless of the reason; no excuse or physician's note is needed (except for a missed deadline). 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).

**Attribution of written work.** In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is plagiarism and is unacceptable. Please review the University's honesty policy at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>.

Your final evaluation will be based on this scale:

Final project	50%
4-page reaction paper (Sept. 24)	20%
4-page reaction paper (Oct. 22)	20%
Class participation	10%

On a 10-pt scale, 93-100 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-87 = B, and so on.

**Technology in the classroom.** While the use of iPads or other devices is permitted to take notes, study images or follow slide shows, texting, email, Facebook, surfing, shopping, stock-trading, poker-playing, e-harmonizing and all other purposes unrelated to class are prohibited.

**Disability accommodation.** Students with disabilities requesting accommodation should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor as early as possible in the semester.

**Honor:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Recording lectures:** Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

## Schedule

**Week 1.** Aug. 23-27. Introduction: From July 4 to Juneteenth

Annette Gordon-Reed, "Growing Up With Juneteenth," *New Yorker*, Jun 19, 2020.

Michelle Norris, "Germany Faced Its Horrible Past. Can the U.S. Do the Same?" *Washington Post*, June 3, 2021.

**Week 2.** Aug. 30 – Sept. 1 (instructor absence Sept. 3). History Wars: The 1619 Project

Reading:

Nicole Hannah-Jones, "Introduction" to 1619 Project, *New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2019.

"We Respond to the Historians Who Critiqued the 1619 Project," *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 2019.

Adam Serwer, "The Fight Over the 1619 Project is Not About the Facts," *The Atlantic*, Dec. 23, 2019.

**Week 3.** Sept. 8-10. (Labor Day Sept. 6, no class). Education Wars

Reading:

Carol Sheriff, "Virginia's Embattled Textbooks: Lessons Learned (and Not) from the Centennial Era," *Civil War History* 58:1 (March 2012). 37-74.

"The Moral Panic Over CRT is Coming for a N.C. Teacher of the Year," *Mother Jones*, July 4, 2021.

Simon Romero, "Texas Pushes to Obscure the State's History of Slavery and Racism," *NYT*, May 20, 2021.

Michael Harriot, "We Found the Textbooks of Senators Who Oppose the 1619 Project and Suddenly Everything Makes Sense," *The Root*, May 6, 2021.

**Week 4.** Sept. 13-17. Slavery's History in the Public Eye

Reading:

Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, pp. 1-117.

**Week 5.** Sept. 20-24. Public Eye, Part 2

Reading:

Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, 118-293.

**4-p. reflection papers on *How the Word is Passed* due Fri., Sept. 24.**

**Week 6.** Sept. 27-29 (instructor absence Oct. 1). Monument Wars

Reading:

Renée Ater, "Slavery and Its Memory in Public Monuments," *American Art* 24 (Spring 2010), 20-23.

Renée Ater, "The Power of Remembrance" - <https://www.reneeater.com/on-monuments-log/2018/4/26/the-power-of-remembrance-1>

"Confederate Statues Were Never Really About Preserving History," *FiveThirtyEight*, July 8, 2020.

Jane McFadden, "Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration," *Journal of American History* 106:3 (2019), 703-08.

**Week 7.** Oct. 4-6. (Homecoming Fri. Oct. 8, no class). Slavery and Freedom in Art, Photography and Memory

Reading: TBA

**Week 8.** Oct. 11-15. Thinking About Term Projects

Individual conferences with instructor to discuss ideas

**Week 9.** Oct. 18-22. Enslavement in Family Memory

"Two Women Researched Slavery in their Family. They Didn't See the Same Story," *Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2021.

Kim Severson, "Her Family Owned Slaves. How Can She Make Amends?" *NYT*, July 4, 2021.

Miles, *All That She Carried*

**4-p. paper on *All That She Carried*, due Oct. 22.**

**Week 10.** Oct. 25-29. Slavery and Race in American Popular Culture

**Reading:**

David Blight, "The Birth of a Genre: Slavery on Film" <http://common-place.org/book/the-birth-of-a-genre-slavery-on-film/>

Kara Brown, "I'm So Damn Tired of Slave Movies," <https://jezebel.com/im-so-damn-tired-of-slave-movies-1755250873>

**Week 11.** Nov. 1-3 (instructor absence Nov. 5). Slavery and the Universities

Reading: Ahmad Brown, Gabriella Paul, Javier Escoto-Garcia, and Morgan Peltier, "Slavery and the University of Florida: African Americans, Seminoles and the Origins of Higher Education in Florida," *Alpata*, 16 (20210), 1-31.

**Week 12.** Nov. 8-12. Reparations?

Reading:

Nikole Hannah-Jones, "What Is Owed: It's Time for Reparations," *NYT*, Jun 24, 2020.

"The Case For—and Against—Reparations," *Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2019.

Charles Forsdick, "Compensating for the Past: Debating Reparations for Slavery in Contemporary France," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, Sept. 1, 2015.

**Week 13.** Nov. 15-19. Research week.

Followup individual meeting with instructor

**Week 14.** Nov. 22. (Thanksgiving Thurs. Nov. 25).

**Week 15.** Nov. 29 - Dec. 3. Individual work on projects.

10-min. class presentation of project.

**Week 16.** Dec. 6-8. Work on projects; class presentations continue.

**Final projects due Monday, Dec. 13.**