

AMH 4930

Research Seminar: Slavery and Abolition

Professor Matthew Blake Strickland
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Class Time & Location

W 3-5 (9:35 – 12:35)
FLI 229

Office Hours

TR 10:30 – 11:30 (or by appointment)
FLI 020

Course Description

This research seminar explores slavery, abolition, and emancipation in North America from the colonial era to the end of the American Civil War. We will examine how slavery began in North America and the ways it expanded and became more linked to American society. These topics of slavery, abolition, and emancipation will be viewed through the lenses of religion, legal institutions, economics, racism, and war.

This is a reading and research seminar meant to conclude your major studies. It will show your ability to read analytically in primary and secondary sources. It will also require you to hone your research skills as you will produce an academic writing grounded in primary and secondary sources. As a research seminar, we will split our time between learning how to produce advanced, academic writings and exploring the topic of the course.

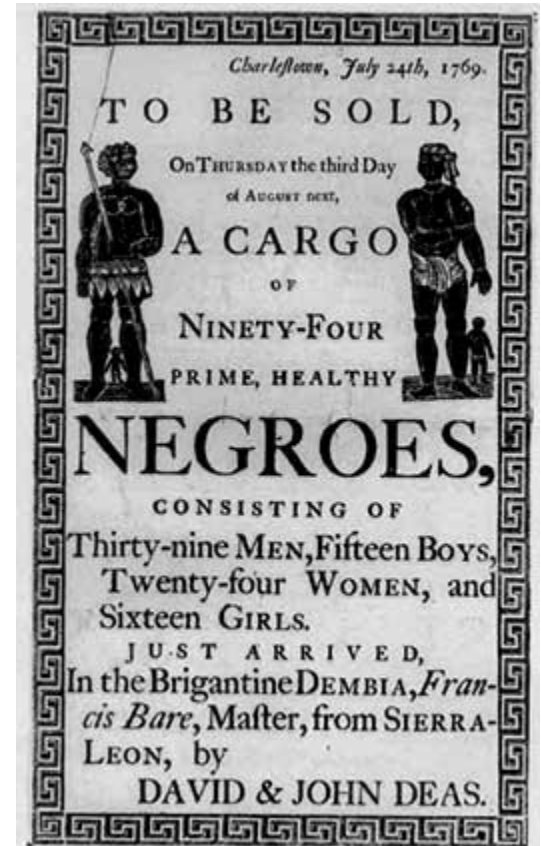
Course Objectives

With this course, students will:

1. Understand the expansion of African slavery into North America.
2. Examine the lived experiences of enslaved people living on plantations before and after the American Revolution.
3. Understand how slavery was opposed by religious groups and enslaved people themselves.
4. Examine the impact of the domestic slave trade on free and enslaved black populations in the U.S.
5. Analyze the actions of enslaved people to self-emancipation during the American Civil War.
6. Read and analyze a variety of scholarly works on slavery from the colonial period to the Civil War.
7. Read and analyze numerous primary sources written or communicated by enslaved people.
8. Practice writing about and researching the topic of slavery and abolition.
9. Make concise arguments in both written and oral form.
10. Think critically and analytically regarding historical people, events, and themes.

Required Texts

Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist*



Spring 2024

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*

Marcus Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*

Richard Bell, *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*

Kenneth S. Greenburg, *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*

Paul Finkelman, *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents*

David Williams, *I Freed Myself: African American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era*

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Grading Scale and Assignment Summary

Attendance/Participation	20%
Wkly Discussion Questions	10%
Book Review	10%
Research Assignments	60%

Grade Proportion	Grade Scale	Grade Value
Attendance/Participation: 200 points (20%)	940-1,000 = A	A = 4.0
Wkly Discussion Questions: 100 points (10%)	900-939 = A-	A- = 3.67
Book Review: 100 points (10%)	870-899 = B+	B+ = 3.33
Research Assignments: 600 points (60%)	840-869 = B	B = 3.00
	800-839 = B-	B- = 2.67
	770-799 = C+	C+ = 2.33
	740-769 = C	C = 2.00
	700-739 = C-	C- = 1.67
	670-699 = D+	D+ = 1.33
	640-669 = D	D = 1.00
	600-639 = D-	D- = 0.67
	0-599 = E	E = 0.00

Only course grades of C or better will satisfy Gordon Rule, general education, and college basic distribution credit.

Attendance/Participation: Because this is a research seminar that only meets once per week, you must attend every class. You must also be prepared to participate in the discussion. This course has a heavy reading load and completing the assignments and engaging in conversation is how you will be successful. Attendance will be recorded every meeting and your participation will be documented by the professor.

Weekly Discussion Questions: Every Tuesday by 11:59pm, you must submit discussion questions for that week's readings. The number of questions is contingent on the length of the reading. Shorter readings (articles/chapters) may only have five to seven questions while a longer book-length reading may have fifteen to twenty. It is important to keep in mind that discussion questions require analysis and allow for in-depth

conversation. Simple “yes-no” questions are not acceptable. Also note that submitting the weekly discussion questions does not contribute to your participation in the class.

Book Review: For any one of the weekly topics, you will sign up to write a book review and briefly present on that book. The book must be relevant for that class’s topic (i.e. if you present for the week of the American Revolution, then you must select a book related to slavery and the American Revolution). I recommend selecting a week that will help you complete your final research paper. You will use library resources to find an appropriate book. You may not use a resource we used in class. Your chosen book does not necessarily need to be vetted by the instructor. However, if you are unsure that your book fits the requirements, reach out and your instructor will happily provide feedback. After a book has been selected, you will write a book review that 1) examines the author’s main arguments, 2), shows how the author structures their narrative. and 3) analyzes the sources used. This paper must be 5-6 pages and follow standard formatting. You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. During our discussion, you will briefly (5 minutes) present your review of the book.

Final Research Project: The end result of this class is a robust research project based on primary and secondary research in the topics of slavery, abolition, and emancipation in North America and/or the United States. It should have a clear thesis and numerous sources to support any claims. Work on this paper will proceed in stages over the course of the semester. All of these research-related assignments will total to 600 points (60%) of your final grade.

Prospectus (150 points; 15%): This is basically where you tell your audience (your professor) what you will do in your final research paper. You may not have all the answers yet, but it provides a guideline for how your research will potentially appear in its final form. Your prospectus will address three questions: what, why, and how. **What** is the history that you are proposing to explore, and **what** is the context? **What** are you claiming? **Why** is this topic important? **Why** is it necessary for you to explore this topic? Have other scholars not paid particular attention to this topic? Are there gaps in our understanding? **How** are you going to prove your claims? **How** are you going to organize and present your information? Are there primary sources that will help you? **How** will you access those documents? Are there any challenges in obtaining or analyzing these documents?

The prospectus should be 1000 words using standard formatting. The bibliography is excluded from this word count. You must have at least eight secondary sources; there is no minimum for primary sources at this stage.

Primary Source Analysis (150 points; 15%): This is an assignment to help you begin analyzing primary sources. Your final project will require you to use primary sources to prove your claims. This short assignment is an important first step in that direction and will help you begin thinking about **how** to evaluate a source. You must find five primary sources to be used in your final paper and write an analysis of those sources. You must put the documents into conversation with each other. By using all of these documents together, what do you learn about your topic? How do these documents complement each other? How do these documents contradict each other (if at all)? What impact does “time period” have on understanding the content of a document? Which document(s) do you find most “reliable,” and why?

Presentation (50 points; 5%): Each student will present their research in one of the last two class meetings. These presentations will be about ten minutes followed by a brief Q-and-A session. Your presentation should address your research question, why you chose that topic, evidence you used, and your final conclusions.

Final Paper (250 points; 25%): Your final paper will be grounded in primary and secondary research on the topic you chose. It should be 15 to 20 pages in length plus a bibliography. Your citations and bibliography should conform to the style we discuss from Rampolla's *Pocket Guide*. Your paper will be evaluated on its argument, evidence, grammar, style, and use of sources. You should use no fewer than ten secondary sources and ten primary sources. The paper should conform to the standard formatting requirements. A digital copy must be submitted on Canvas and a hard copy must be turned in for grading.

*Standard Formatting: Times New Roman; 1-inch margins on all sides; 12-point font; double-spaced; no extra indentions or line spacings beyond what is appropriate in writing mechanics.

Most assignments will be submitted as a hard copy for grading and on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Specific requirements will be addressed for each assignment.

Course Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Attendance:

In order to ensure success in this course, it is imperative that you attend all class meetings. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. Without showing up to class, you cannot fully participate.

Tardiness:

Come to class on time. Tardiness causes unnecessary distractions for the teacher and for students attempting to engage with the course. While it may be unavoidable sometimes, no student should be late a majority of the class. I understand this is a large campus. However, you must develop a schedule that is logistically possible (i.e. that which allows you to move quickly from one place to another).

Participation:

For the purposes of this class, participation means you are **actively** contributing to the discussion. This could include probing questions, insights regarding readings, or making connections across multiple weeks in the course. All of these involve communicating to me and the rest of the class that you are prepared and engaged with the lectures and/or material.

Late Work:

All assignments should be turned in by the due date. The instructor may accept late work for a ten-point deduction for every day the assignment is late. However, it is not guaranteed that the instructor will accept late work. It is the student's responsibility to communicate problems or concerns with the instructor.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. It is the failure to properly cite and give credit when you use the ideas, words, phrases, or arguments of other people in your writing assignments. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." For more information regarding the Honor Code, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will

receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Objectivity and Classroom Respect:

People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content which may include images, texts, data, or theories from many fields. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, ideas and opinions-including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas.

Course Schedule

*This schedule may change.

W 1/10 Course Introduction	- Access the syllabus on Canvas
W 1/17 Early Opposition to Slavery	- Rampolla, ch. 3 - Marcus Rediker, <i>The Fearless Benjamin Lay</i> [all]
W 1/24 Library Trip	Meet in Library West 211. Go up the stairs, and the room will be to the left of the reference desk. We will also visit Special Collections.
W 1/31 Slavery in the Era of the American Revolution	- Rampolla, ch. 5 - Erica Armstrong Dunbar, <i>Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge</i>
W 2/7 Abolition & the Slave Trade	- Rampolla, ch. 6 - Marcus Rediker, <i>The Amistad Rebellion</i> [all]
W 2/14 The Domestic Slave Trade	- Rampolla, ch. 7 - Richard Bell, <i>Stolen</i> [all] DUE: Prospectus
W 2/21 Individual Meetings	No Class You must meet with the professor for a one-on-one meeting this week.
W 2/28 Narrating Slave Experiences	- Frederick Douglass, <i>My Bondage and My Freedom</i> [Canvas]
W 3/6 Resistance	- Greenburg, <i>Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory</i> [all]
W 3/13 Spring Break	No Class
W 3/20 Legal Principles of Enslavement	- Paul Finkelman, <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents</i> [all] DUE: Primary Source Analysis
W 3/27 Self-Emancipation During the American Civil War	- David Williams, <i>I Freed Myself</i> [all]

W 4/3
Independent Research No Class
Use this time to work on your project.

W 4/10
Independent Research No Class
Use this time to work on your project.

W 4/17
Presentation Select students will present their research project.

W 4/24
Presentation Select students will present their research project.

Due: Final Research Paper by 11:59pm on Canvas