This course explores the history of the United States, from the Revolution to the late nineteenth century, through the relationship between slavery and politics. It explores:

- critical developments in slavery (as an economic and social institution) and in American political life;
- the institutional and cultural connections between politics and slavery, ranging from slavery's shaping impact on American regionalism and economic development to the ways "slavery" functioned as a metaphor and as point of reference for a wide range of political actors;
- how ideas of "freedom" in the U.S. took their shape from ideas about and experiences of slavery;
- slaves' and freedpeople's political ideologies and expressions.

This syllabus contains a schedule of common readings, writing assignments, and "absent historiographies"--important themes in the scholarship which, while not fully represented on the syllabus proper, are essential background for students of the period.

Common readings focus primarily on the United States, but the syllabus as a whole seeks to direct students' attention outward.

First, the syllabus reaches out to comparative histories of slavery and emancipation; to recent developments in the histories dubbed "Atlantic World" and "African Diaspora"; and to transnational approaches broadly. All of the works available for individual reports emerge from or have been strongly influenced by one or more of these historiographies. We also have several weeks of common readings drawn from this work.

Second, the syllabus is sprinkled with interventions by literary scholars, who have done so much important recent work on this period, particularly in African American history. A full engagement with the scholarship on this era must encompass not only the run of historical journals (including but not limited to The William and Mary Quarterly, The Journal of the Early Republic, The Journal of Southern History, Slavery & Abolition, JAH, AHR, and many more), but also the last decades of American Quarterly, American Literary History, and others.

Readings

Books for purchase (Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman):
Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*
Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*

Martha S. Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900*


Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860*

Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*

Eric Foner, *Reconstruction, 1863-1877: America's Unfinished Revolution*

Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*

Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*

Robert Levine, *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* [we will read much but not all of this work]

Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity* [an excellent overview for those without much background; small portions are assigned for this course]

The above books should also be on 3-hour reserve at the WHS circulation desk.

**Other readings available as follows:**

Articles are available via MADCAT and "FindIt," or JSTOR, Project Muse, History Cooperative etc., all via the E-Resources Gateway at [http://library.wisc.edu](http://library.wisc.edu)

Book chapters and excerpts are available via e-reserves for this course (accessible via MyUW or Learn@UW)

**Requirements**

This course requires you to read, to write, and to speak. The readings and writing assignments are described below; the requirement to speak is a less quantifiable but equally important part of your training as a working historian. I expect everyone to participate in each week's discussion, especially if you have not turned in a response or an individual report that week.

**Writing Assignments**

1) **Individual Reports:** Each student will choose one work from those listed under "reports" and produce a two-part paper.

   The first part should be a book review of no more than 700 words that addresses the book on its own terms, providing a description of its main arguments, method, and sources, and a brief assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. The point of such a review is to provide scholars from related fields with a summary of sufficient sophistication that they can determine whether or not this book will be useful or important to their work.

   The second part should be a reflection of 350-500 words addressing the work's relationship to the rest of the week's readings and, where relevant, prior readings from the course syllabus. This reflection should be couched as an argument or hypothesis about the implications of this work's arguments, methods, conclusions, or sources (or any combination of those) for work on U.S. slavery, emancipation, or politics. You may construe this assignment as broadly as you need to in order to make an interesting and sustainable argument.

   Individual reports are due no later than 8 p.m. on the Tuesday before class and must be submitted via the "discussion" link on learn@UW. Your fellow students and I will read these reports before coming to seminar on Wednesday.
Note: Books for individual reports have not been placed on reserve. Once you have chosen a book, you should immediately seek it out in the library system or elsewhere.

2) Responses to Readings: All students must post six response essays—synthetic reflections on one week's readings, drawing out common themes, juxtaposing arguments or methods, or making other connections among and between the assigned materials. These responses should be 250+ words in length (but in no case longer than 500 words). They must be posted to the discussion list no later than midnight before Wednesday's class, but they may be posted as early as you wish. The "discussion" list is an open forum, which means that you may (and are encouraged to) read other student's postings. You may respond to prior postings, but your response must have an argumentative core that makes sense whether or not one has read the other postings.

Note that two of these responses—for the seminar meetings on Sept. 9 and Nov. 18—are required of all students. You may submit responses for any other four weeks in addition to these two.

3) Final Essay: All students will write an end-of-term essay of approximately 1500 words (including notes), to be turned in via the learn@UW "dropbox" no later than 8 pm, Dec. 16. This essay should draw together the readings from three or more weeks of the syllabus (or the equivalent), possibly including a few additional texts drawn from relevant "absent" historiographies. You may think of the "responses" described above as trial runs for this paper, which should seek to make a comparatively broad claim or set of claims about a subset of the course readings. Your essay should identify a previously unarticulated but important theme or approach running through these works, challenge or modify an existing or emergent consensus or approach, or do some other, comparably significant intellectual work. You may engage the explicitly comparative or transnational works as much as you wish.

Grading
Participation in discussion: 30%
Individual report: 15%
6 responses @ 5%: 30%
Final essay: 25%
Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Note that readings are assigned for our first meeting on Sept. 2. These will be available before late August via the learn@UW "content" link and/or library e-reserves for this course.

Sept 2: Starting Points
readings
Ira Berlin, Generations of Captivity, 3-19
Walter Johnson, "On Agency," Journal of Social History 37 (Fall 2003), 113-124

absent historiography: African slave trade, colonial North American slavery

Sept 9: Slavery, the American Revolution, and African American Radicalism
readings
F. Nwabuez Okoye, "Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries," WMQ 37:1 (Jan., 1980), pp. 4-28
Manisha Sinha, "To "cast just obliquy" on Oppressors: Black Radicalism in the Age of Revolution," WMQ. January 2007, 149-160?

reports
Cassandra Pybus, Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty

absent historiography: early national religious transformations ("Second Great Awakening"); New France and British North America; "Republicanism"

Writing
Reading these articles with care, and exploring their references to (and quarrels with) one another, what conclusions can you offer about the evolution of scholarship on the relationship between the American Revolution, slavery, and African Americans?

Sept 16: Revolutionary Slaves
readings
Eugene Genovese, From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World

**reports**
David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*
Laurent DuBois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*

**absent historiography:** Vesey conspiracy and Turner revolt; American marronage, Seminole Wars

**Sept 23: Slavery and Freedom in the Making "North" and "South"**

**readings**
Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and 'Race' in New England, 1780-1860, 1-10*
Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity, 102-111, 230-244*
Barbara J. Fields, "Conscript Slaves: The Problem of Free Blacks in a Dual System," ch. 4 of *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland in the Nineteenth Century, 63-89*

**reports**
Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*
Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*

**absent historiography:** Indian slavery and Indian slaveholding; New Spain and Mexico; free blacks in the early republic

**Sept 30: Slave Culture, Hegemony, and Authority**

**readings**
Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*
Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration, 1-61*

**reports**

**absent historiography:** Stanley Elkins, John Blassingame, Deborah Gray White, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, James Oakes
Oct 7: The Emergence of African American Politics
readings
Shane White, "It was a Proud Day': African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834" JAH 81 (June 1994), 13-50
John Wood Sweet, Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 353-397
Martha Jones, All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900, 1-117
Robert S. Levine, Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity, 1-143

reports
James Sidbury, Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic
Jeffrey Kerr-Ritchie, Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World

absent historiography: Paul Gilroy; Wilson Moses

Oct 14: Varieties of Northern Antislavery
readings
Leonard L. Richards, The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860
Paul Goodman, Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality; xiii-64

reports
Thomas Holt, The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938
Christopher L. Brown, Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism
Thomas Bender et al., The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation

absent historiography: evolution of abolitionism; Free Soil and the Republican party; black emigration movements; fugitives and antislavery militancy in the 1840 and 1850s

Oct 21: Conjuring Blackness
readings
Eric Lott, Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class, 3-37

absent historiography: immigration and nativism

Oct 28: Proslavery Politics
Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery
Stephanie McCurry, "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," JAH 78 (March 1992), 1245-1264
reports
Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835*
Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*

**absent historiography:** Antebellum Southern class politics; origins and political history of Secession; “Honor”; Antebellum Southern intellectual history; "race science" and scientific racism; free blacks in slave societies

**Nov 4: Slavery, Slaves, and Civil War**

**readings**
Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War*
Hahn, *Nation*, 62-115

**reports**
Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*
Matthew Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation*

**absent historiography:** Wartime Republicans and Democrats; Confederate politics of slavery

**Nov 11: America's Unfinished Revolution**

**readings**
Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*

**report**
Demetrius L. Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South*
Kim Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition Sao Paolo and Salvador*

**absent historiography:** state political studies of Reconstruction; Union slave states

**Nov 18: Black Political Struggles in the South**

**readings**
3 Steven Hahn, *Nation*, 116-363
§ Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom"

**report**
Dylan Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth Century South*
James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa*

**absent historiography:** labor and commodity histories of Reconstruction

**response:** How successfully does Hahn's analysis of Reconstruction modify or challenge Foner's?

**Nov. 25 – No Class Meeting**
Dec 2: Emancipation and the "Woman Question"

readings
Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*
Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900*, 119-208

report
Pamela Scully and Diana Paton, eds., *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*

absent historiography: the "rape-lynch" complex and "social equality"

Dec, 9: Postemancipation Societies in International Perspective

readings
Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, introduction
Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot, "Atlantic and Pacific Crossings: Race, Empire, and 'the Labor Problem' in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Radical History Review* 2005 (91), 40-61

reports
Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*
Rebecca Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery*

absent historiography: convict lease and convict labor; legal segregation and disfranchisement; Populism and white supremacy