

**University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History**

History 227
The Slave's Cause:
Abolition in United States History
Course Canvas

<https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/355883>

Online, Asynchronous: 6 Weeks
Monday, June 19 - Sunday July 30, 2023
3 Credits

Instructor Jesse Gant

Ph.D. Candidate

Dept. of History, UW-Madison

gant2@wisc.edu

Zoom: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/5183606186?pwd=ZjZvRXRMREhXTWhGcHdsUEhBd1R2dz09>

Pass: FD6tuv

Office Hours:

Mondays, 9-10 a.m.

Wednesdays, 9-10 a.m.

Or, by appointment

[Sign Up Sheet](#)

**I.
Description**

About History 227:

The Slave's Cause

History 227 is designed as a three-credit, online, asynchronous, and intermediate-level undergraduate history course. It satisfies the goals of both the University of Wisconsin-Madison History Department Major, and the University's Ethnic Studies General Education Requirement (ESR). This syllabus and its "digital companion" will be hosted on the course's Canvas page and are available to you 24/7. Please read this document and its accompanying Canvas "Digital Syllabus" module carefully! Any question easily answered by reading the course syllabus may go unanswered in email.

This course invites you to explore the history of the antislavery movement in the United States. We will approach this vast topic through the movement's most radical and perhaps most enduring community, the "abolitionists." Our focus will be on the movement's evolutions or processes across roughly eight decades, the 1780s to the 1860s. Our weekly or bi-weekly units will be arranged around a set of themes: the movement's origin (Unit 1), character (Unit 2), means and ends (or, the movement's tactics and strategies; Unit 3), and, finally, its legacies (Unit 4). During the final unit, you will be encouraged to investigate the many meanings abolition still holds to this day.

Regular and Substantive Interaction

It is an expectation History 227 will require 135 total hours of investment in terms of learning activities. As History 227 is a six-week online course, this means students will be asked to accomplish work they would typically accomplish along a more traditional timeline (a standard 15-week semester). It will be

important, then, for you to invest approximately 22.5 hours per week in the class. Here are the major expectations on your side of this investment:

- Viewing required lectures and materials online (Canvas and Zoom)
- Readings and all materials hosted on Canvas (Canvas)
- Examinations 3x (“Practice,” Midterm and Final) (Canvas)
- Discussion Boards 3x (Canvas)

My input in the class week-to-week, meanwhile, will involve:

- Providing direct instruction
- Assessing or providing feedback on your written work
- Providing information and responding to questions about the content of the class or policies
- Facilitating discussions on the Group Discussion board
- Providing opportunities for interaction 2 hours per week (office hours) and, if necessary, by additional appointment
- Monitoring student engagement and success on a weekly basis

A Reading and Writing-Intensive Course

History is a college discipline that requires a fair amount of reading and writing, and this can sometimes take non-majors by surprise. Given the many pages of weekly readings you will be asked to complete, it will be vital to carve out time for reading and taking notes, so that you can make the transition to writing up your ideas effectively. All of our three graded essays will be carefully designed to ensure you’re engaging closely with the readings. Please talk with me if you have any concerns.

II. Learning Outcomes

By the end of History 227, students will be able to:

- Identify, locate, and describe several of the American antislavery movement’s key leaders, institutions, communities, political visions, strategies, tactics, and turning points.
- Discuss and describe the many different lived experiences that constituted life within the “antislavery movement” in the United States
- Solve interpretive problems by offering good, debatable historical claims backed by primary and secondary source evidence, and assembled from a wide range of historical materials
- Compare and contrast the ways antislavery historians have analyzed and evaluated the available historical evidence on a common topic or problem
- Generate new understandings of the antislavery movement in writing

III. Readings

Except for an inexpensive and widely available title you will need to either buy or check out from a local library (Kate Masur’s *Until Justice Be Done*), History 227 will be assembled from readings made available online through our course canvas page. Please note that Kate Masur’s book is relatively new, widely available, and should be easy to claim from the campus bookstore, a nearby library, or through

interlibrary loan. As of late May 2023, the book was listed on Amazon for less than \$30. If you prefer to spend locally, [A Room of One's Own](#) in Madison can surely order it for you.

- Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. [E-Book](#). [Selections]
- Kate Masur, *Until Justice Be Done: America's First Civil Rights Movement, From the Revolution to Reconstruction*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2021.

If this is your first history class, or among the first classes you have taken in the humanities, a few additional titles and resources may be recommended depending on your situation. Please talk with me early in the semester if this is one of your first history classes or if you've never taken an intermediate-level course in the humanities.

Canvas Resources

Each week, the course canvas pages will also feature an additional pool of required readings that will further introduce a range of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Please be sure you also complete these readings week-to-week, as specified by the "Canvas" readings in the course schedule (see Section 7, "Course Schedule," below).

IV. Assignments and Grading

Graded Assignments

Attendance and Participation	20
Discussion Board Posts (3x, 10 pts each)	30
Practice Essay Week 1	10
Midterm Essay, Due Sunday, July 9 to Canvas	15
Final Exam Essay, Due Sunday, July 30 to Canvas	25

Total **100 points**

Grading Scale

A	93-100
AB	88-92.9
B	83-87.9
BC	78-82.9
C	70-77.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

Assignment Descriptions

Because of our condensed, six-week online schedule, late work cannot be accepted in History 227.

Attendance and Participation

Your progress in the attendance and participation category will be measured in a few ways. The easiest way to achieve full points is to:

- Read and know this syllabus and its accompanying "Digital Syllabus" module on Canvas

- Log into Canvas routinely to stay up to date on course announcements, news, communications, and assignments.
- Engage the materials posted on Canvas Unit-to-Unit, and week-to-week.
- Keep up to date with communications. Try your best, for example, to answer emails within 24 hours or less of receipt. Complete any required supplemental tasks, including course entrance (Week 1) and exit surveys (Week 4).
- Have questions and ask them. Schedule and attend time in office hours. Use the discussion boards.
- Consult the “Attendance and Participation” grading rubric hosted on the “Digital Syllabus” canvas module.

Discussion Board Posts

Each History 227 student will be asked to compose a brief, original contribution (usually no more than 250-500 words) to the course discussion board during the weeks we are not writing up essays (that’s weeks 2, 4, and 5). Your posts will be made public, and your answers will be designed to provide a bank of resources to the students in the preparation for their exams. Be sure to watch Canvas and course schedule as the three required posts together constitute 30% of your total course grade.

Discussion Post #	Due	Week
1	Sunday, July 2, 11:59 p.m.	2
2	Sunday, July 16, 11:59 p.m.	4
3	Sunday, July 23, 11:59 p.m.	5

Essays

You will also write three essays during this course, worth a cumulative total of 50 points (or 50% of the total grade). The first essay, our “practice” essay, will be due in Week 1 and will be graded pass/fail, while the second and third essays will operate as our midterm and final exams. Please use the feedback you get on Exam 1 to make improvements on Exam 2 (and Exam 3) in turn.

Essay	Due	Week
Practice Essay (Week 1)	Sunday, June 25, 11:59 p.m.	1
Midterm Essay	Sunday, July 9, 11:59 p.m.	3
Final Exam Essay	Sunday, July 30, 11:59 p.m.	6

Practice Essay

This 3-5 page, double-spaced essay will be graded pass/fail in Week 1. A passing essay under normal course conditions will earn a full 10 points. A very weak essay (not a passing essay under normal course conditions but attempted and turned in on time) will earn 5 points. Finally, nothing turned in or completed will earn an automatic “0.”

Midterm Essay

The first major assignment is the midterm essay due to Canvas on Sunday, July 9. The essay will ask you to write 3-5 pages, double-spaced, on a question you will use your course readings and Canvas materials to answer.

Final Exam Essay

The second major assignment is the final exam essay, due to Canvas on Sunday, July 30. The essay will ask you to write 3-5 pages and you will use your course readings and Canvas materials to answer.

V. Course-Specific Policies and Statements

Credit Hours

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement. Look to budget roughly 22.5 hours of your time per week.

Time Zone

This class will take place in the Central Time Zone (Madison). All times for Canvas and on the syllabus reference whatever time it is in Madison, Wisconsin. This means that assignments turned in at 11:59 pm CST in California will be late and not accepted; those turned in at 11:59 pm CST in New York will be early. Anything done in Appleton, Chicago, Janesville or Waukesha by 11:59 pm CST will, of course, be right on time. Wherever you're working this summer, please know your time zone and be aware of what the corresponding time in Madison is! This is especially important for any of you who might be working internationally...

Late Policy

Under no circumstances can late work be accepted late. The syllabus is designed to give everyone plenty of time to prepare and complete assignments on time. And since we have a tight six-week schedule, it is imperative that I get your work on time to provide you with timely feedback.

Course Canvas

I highly recommend that you print and keep a copy of this syllabus (as paper *and* in PDF!) in a folder along with your course readings and notebook. Also make sure that you read its accompanying "Digital Syllabus" module on Canvas. Though this document will operate as our official course contract, the Digital Syllabus on Canvas will be designed to feature a bit more depth, as I can use links and other resources to augment some of the key information I'm offering here. Keeping a paper and PDF copy handy, meanwhile, allows both easy access and the ability to jot down notes.

Contacting the Course Instructor

Please contact me in email with your questions or ideas anytime. I'm here to help, and I know this topic well!

Any emails you send between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday, will be promptly answered, as I will strive to offer replies within 24 hours of their receipt. The only exception to this rule will be the weekends or overnight. If you write to me, for example, at 5:45 pm on a Friday afternoon, there is a good chance you will not see a reply until the following Monday morning. The same goes for an email sent at 11 p.m. during the week. Do not expect a reply until after 9 a.m. when I get a chance to log in and read it.

This will have some bearing on your questions about assignments. Any emails sent over the weekend about the exams or other assignments will not be answered, for example, until *after they are due*. Ideally, then, use the window of days early in the business week (Monday to Wednesday, ideally) to ask the questions you have, so that you're guaranteed a response by Thursday or Friday.

Another good strategy for getting my attention (though my replies may be slower) is through the course discussion board. I will be constantly monitoring the board for questions, and the great advantage with it is that responses become "public," viewable to everyone in the class. Especially for big or commonly held questions, it can be a great tool for soliciting clarity while also minimizing the need for one-on-one communications.

Office Hours

Probably the best way to contact me is through Zoom and in Office Hours. Each week, you can sign up for either a 15-minute or 30-minute session with me using this sign-up sheet. I welcome either individual appointments, partner appointments, or small group appointments (no more than 5 at a time, please). There are no bad questions to ask in office hours, and I am here to help with whatever you need.

Subject to Change

Everything in this syllabus, within reason, is subject to change. I will make every intent to announce all changes and use course announcements with plenty of advance notice.

VI. University Additional Information

Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully reviews and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full teaching and learning [data transparency statement](#).

Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

View [more information about FERPA](#).

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in courses may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, students are not authorized to record lectures without permission unless they are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability who has an approved accommodation that includes recording. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities, with the exception of sharing copies of personal notes as a notetaker through the McBurney Disability Resource Center. Students are otherwise prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary [sanctions](#) include, but are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform

faculty of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. University Health Services can help with these or other issues you may experience. Help is always available. You can learn about free, confidential mental health services available to you; call 608-265-6600 (option 2) or visit uhs.wisc.edu.

VII.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Recommended Course weekly operations at at Glance*

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Weekends
Read/engage Canvas materials (posted at 9 a.m.) Office Hours 9-10 a.m. 4 hours	Reading and Notes Discussion Boards (if applicable) 4 hours	Reading and Notes Discussion Boards (if applicable) Office Hours 9-10 a.m. 4 hours	Assignment Research Outlining and Drafting 4 hours	Assignment Drafting 4 hours	Revisions and Fine-Polishing; Submissions <i>All work is due on Sunday nights at 11:59 pm CST</i> 2.5 hours

*This table outlines a *recommended schedule* for you to follow each week. As this is an online and a-synchronous class, there are many you might schedule your week, and of course your schedule may differ. Just remember that all work is due at 11:59 p.m. at the end of each week.

**Unit 1
Origins**

Week 1

How did the antislavery movement originate?

Monday, June 19-Sunday June 25

9 a.m. Monday morning to 11:59 p.m. Sunday night

Readings

- Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 34-96 (Chapters 2-3).
- Masur, *Until Justice Be Done*, 1-82.
- Canvas Unit 1/Week 1 Readings and Support Pages

Assignments

Regular Attendance and Participation

Course Entrance Survey

Week 1 Practice Essay

Post the essay as a Word document to Canvas by 11:59 p.m., Sunday June 25

**Unit 2
Character**

Weeks 2-3

Was abolition a radical or reform movement?

Monday, June 26-Sunday, July 9

Weeks 2-3

Readings

- Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 195-227, 266-298 (Chapters 7, 9).
- Masur, *Until Justice Be Done*, 83-224.
- Canvas Unit 2

Assignments

Regular Attendance and Participation

Discussion Board Post #1

Due by Sunday, July 2, 11:59 p.m.

Midterm Essay Due Sunday July 9, 11:59 p.m.

**Unit 3
Means and Ends**

Week 4

What tactics and strategies did activists use?

What were they up against?

Monday, July 10-Sunday, July 16

Week 4

Readings

- Choose any of the two chapters between Chapters 11-16 of Sinha
- Masur, *Until Justice Be Done*, 225-302.
- Canvas Unit 3

Assignments

Attendance and Participation

Discussion Board Post #2

Due Sunday, July 16, 11:59 p.m.

**Unit 4
Legacies**

Weeks 5-6

How does the abolitionist movement endure?

Monday, July 17 – Sunday, July 30

Weeks 5-6

Readings

- Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 586-592.
- Masur, *Until Justice Be Done*, 303-357.
- Canvas Unit 4

Assignments

Attendance and Participation

Course Exit Survey

Discussion Board Post #3

Due by Sunday, July 23, 11:59 p.m.

Final Exam Essay Due Sunday, July 30, 11:59 p.m.