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Spring 2009  
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History 224-01:  
Slavery, Emancipation, and Reconstruction

Old Main 002

T/Th 9:40 – 11:10 AM

What does it mean to engage “Slavery, Emancipation, and Reconstruction” within a specifically *historical* framework? First and foremost, this means that we must be attentive to *change over time*. How did slavery begin? How did it change as the economy, society, and polity developed? How did it change as the “colonies” became “the United States” and shifted geographically from the upper south to the southwest? We must also be attentive to *context*. How did the growing of tobacco shape slavery (and, of course, slavery shape the growing of tobacco)? How did the growing of rice, cotton, or sugar cane shape life differently? And what roles were played by the trans-atlantic slave trade over the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the domestic slave trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? How were slaves’ lives shaped by the system within which they lived? And how did they create *agency* for themselves in constructing families, communities, cultures, and, ultimately, resistance? How did these experiences shape the possibilities and limits of freedom in the post-civil war period?

We will also be attentive to the *historiography* of slavery, emancipation, and reconstruction. How did historians change the questions they asked, the sources they pursued, and the arguments they constructed as they engaged this important element of our country’s history? This subject has generated some of the most impassioned, insightful, and best written scholarship of any subject in U.S. history. We will be reading books which have won the Pulitzer Prize, as well as other accolades in the scholarly world. We will be interested in how historians’ own present shaped the concerns they brought to their study of the past, and how their understanding of the past might change their – and our – engagement with our own present.

This will not be an easy course, despite the high quality of the readings. The reading load is admittedly heavy. Much of the material will be difficult to engage, to understand how our own lives have been shaped by this painful history, let alone how our country’s history has been shaped (Barack Obama’s election aside). While I will lecture from time to time, most of our in-class work will rest on discussions, so it is imperative that you come to class, faithfully, having done the reading, questions in hand, prepared to participate in our conversations. I will try to email you a set of reading guidelines and possible discussion questions well before each class meeting. I also invite, encourage, your use of class email to raise ideas or pose questions in anticipation of class sessions. We will have some difficult discussions, and it is important that we work from the readings, that we remain present for each other, and that we respect each other’s feelings and grant each other an assumption of sincerity. Your class participation is critical to all of us getting as much as possible out of this course.

Your grades will depend on two major papers (25% each), a book review (15%), a report/assessment of the American Studies Conference (10%), and your class participation (25%).

The following books are available for purchase at the college bookstore. They should also be available on reserve at the Library:

Rediker, THE SLAVE SHIP  
Gomez, EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS  
Morgan, AMERICAN SLAVERY, AMERICAN FREEDOM  
Wood, BLACK MAJORITY  
Berlin, MANY THOUSANDS GONE  
Hartman, SCENES OF SUBJECTION  
Johnson, SOUL BY SOUL  
Blight, RACE AND REUNION  
Hahn, A NATION UNDER OUR FEET

Daily syllabus (subject to change)

T 1/27 Intro to the Course. Discussion of January reading and films. These included Saidiya Hartman, *LOSE YOUR MOTHER*; Charles Johnson, *THE MIDDLE PASSAGE*; Edward P. Jones, *THE KNOWN WORLD*; Toni Morrison, *BELOVED*; Toni Morrison, *A MERCY*. Films: *Sankofa*; *Amistad*; *Amazing Grace*; *Nightjohn*; *Glory*; *Africans in America*

The Slave Trade and the Middle Passage

Th 1/29 Capitalism, Mercantilism, Slavery and Commerce  
Read: THE SLAVE SHIP, Introduction, 1 & 2  
Walter Johnson, "On Agency" (email)

T 2/3 Capitalism, Mercantilism, Slavery and Commerce  
Read: THE SLAVE SHIP, 3 – 8

Th 2/5 Capitalism, Mercantilism, Slavery and Commerce  
Read: THE SLAVE SHIP, 9, 10, & Epilogue

T 2/10 The Slave Trade, Ethnic Diversity, and Settlement  
Read: EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS, 1 – 6

Th 2/12 Making an African American Culture  
Read: EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS, 7

T 2/17 Making an African American Culture  
Read: EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS, 8 – 10

Two Case Studies: Regional Patterns in the Development of Slavery

- Th 2/19 Colonialism, Mercantilism, and Tobacco in the Upper South  
Read: AMERICAN SLAVERY, AMERICAN FREEDOM, 1 – 6
- \*\* Friday 2/20 – Saturday 2/20: American Studies Conference:  
“Whiteness in the Age of Obama”
- T 2/24 Resistance, Repression, and Racism in the Making of Slavery  
Read: AMERICAN SLAVERY, AMERICAN FREEDOM, 7 – 14  
\*\*Hand in paper on American Studies Conference
- Th 2/26 Rebellion, Reform, Racism, and Social Control in the Making of Slavery  
Read: AMERICAN SLAVERY, AMERICAN FREEDOM, 15 – 18  
\*\*Hand out paper topic #1, due 3/12
- T 3/3 Rice, Cotton, and the Coastlands: The Africanization of America  
Read: BLACK MAJORITY, Prologue, I – VI
- Th 3/5 Resistance, Racism, Repression, and Social Control in the Making of Slavery  
Read: BLACK MAJORITY, VII – IX
- T 3/10 Resistance, Rebellion, Racism and Reform in the Making of Slavery  
Read: BLACK MAJORITY, X – XII
- Th 3/12 Discussion: The Paths to a Slave Society  
\*\*Hand in paper #1
- 3/14 – 3/22 Spring Break  
Read: MANY THOUSANDS GONE

Looking at Slavery Historically: Change Over Time

- T 3/24 From A Society With Slaves to A Slave Society  
Read: MANY THOUSANDS GONE, Prologue, 1 – 8  
\*\*Hand out book review assignment, due 4/7
- Th 3/26 The Possibilities – and Limits – to Freedom  
Read: MANY THOUSANDS GONE, 9 -12 and Epilogue

Slavery, Race, Racism, and Everyday Life

- T 3/31 Terror and Engagement  
Read: SCENES OF SUBJECTION, Intro, 1 – 3

Th 4/2 Possibilities of Freedom? The Freedom of Possibilities?  
Read: SCENES OF SUBJECTION

T 4/7 Discussion: Slavery and the Intimate  
\*\*Book reviews due

Th 4/9 Slavery, Commodification, and Capitalism  
Read: SOUL BY SOUL, Intro, 1- 3

T 4/14 Slavery, Commodification, and Capitalism  
Read: SOUL BY SOUL, 4 – 7 and Epilogue

Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Possibilities of Freedom

Th 4/16 The Coming of the War  
Read: RACE AND REUNION, Prologue, 1 – 3

T 4/21 War and Reconstruction: Experience and Memory  
Read: RACE AND REUNION, 4 – 6

Th 4/23 Resistance, Rebellion, Reconstruction and Memory  
Read: RACE AND REUNION, 9 – 10 and Epilogue  
\*\*Hand out final paper assignments, due 5/11

T 4/28 The Struggle for Freedom: Possibilities and Limits  
Read: A NATION UNDER OUR FEET, Prologue, 1 – 3

Th 4/30 The Struggle for Freedom: Possibilities and Limits  
Read: A NATION UNDER OUR FEET, 4 – 6

T 5/5 The Struggle for Freedom: Possibilities and Limits  
Read: A NATION UNDER OUR FEET, 7 – 9 and Epilogue

Th 5/7 Final discussion (optional) Time to be Announced

M 5/11 \*\*Final papers due 10AM