

HIST/AFRS 2140

History of African Americans to 1865

Prof. Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College, Spring 2018

Meets: WM 11:30-1:00
Pickering Room (Hubbard Hall)
Office hours: MT2-4, by apt.

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This course examines the history of African Americans from the origins of slavery in America through the death of slavery during the Civil War. How could anyone (let alone the Founding Fathers) have traded human beings as chattel? How did African-descended people in America come to be both part of and yet perpetually marginalized in America? What does this say about the nature of American democracy and the mythologies of American history? How much agency did African Americans have in crafting their own experience, and what does this say about the nature of both their oppression and their resistance? In what ways have African Americans contributed to the formation of American society? We will be concerned not simply with the important task of re-inserting the African-American past into our national historical narrative. We will also be interested in understanding the depths to which American society has been predicated on the intersections of race, economy, and society. Throughout, we will try to work by listening to the neglected voices of African Americans themselves as we attempt to better understand the complex part of the nation's past.

LEVEL: This course is a 2000-level lecture course, intended for majors and non-majors, of every class standing. It is a moderately difficult course, requiring frequent reading and writing. Students who have not had a previous history course at Bowdoin may wish to speak with me early in the semester during office hours.

COURSE WEBSITE: The material for this course may be found online through Blackboard. You will find a copy of this syllabus, many readings, and class handouts. Note that the online version of the syllabus is always the most up to date. You will also find my website <http://academic.bowdoin.edu/faculty/P/prael/> useful. It links to guides on writing, plagiarism, and other matters crucial to your success in history courses.

BOOKS: These books can be found at the campus book store. Other readings will be made available via Blackboard, either under "Readings" or through links in the syllabus.

Turner, Nat. *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996. ISBN: 0312112076. \$9.99.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. David Blight, ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993. ISBN: 0312075316. \$9.99.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 3rd edition. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2001. ISBN 0312274664. \$7.99. A short, concise guide for history undergraduates.

ASSIGNMENTS

Secondary analysis (two papers @ 20% each, for 40%): For this assignment, you will prepare short papers on the readings assigned for class. I will discuss what I'm looking for early on in the semester.

WPA Slave narrative project (20%): In this project, we will explore the voluminous collection of slave narratives gathered in the 1930s. You will pick a topic and mine the narratives to write about it.

Weekly posts (10%): Each week, send an email to the entire class (hist2140@bowdoin.edu) that reflects on what we've discussed in class. You may take issue with an argument made in class, comment on a reading, or anything else that substantively reflects on your coursework. Generally speaking, a post should be at least 100 words. I will award you one point for each substantive post per week, up to a total of ten points.

Attendance and participation (10%): Your thoughtful participation in both lecture and discussion is a significant part of your course work. Please make sure that you have read the assigned readings before each class and are prepared to discuss them. While I know it is sometimes difficult or frightening to participate in class discussions, it is also necessary. Please keep your comments relevant, and consider others when speaking.

Final (20%): Take-home essay exam. This will be due at the end of the period scheduled for our final exam (though you may submit it before that). It will be handed out on the last day of class, and cover the entire period the course covers.

All assignments must be submitted to pass this class.

COURSE CONTRACT

- Students are responsible for any missed class material due to absences, including especially assignments due. If you must be absent, rely on friends in class for notes.
- On papers, always number and staple all pages; email me a copy of your paper as a backup.
- Please do not leave the room during the class session.
- Please do not bring food to class.
- Please do not bring notepads and laptops to class. Mobile phones should be turned off and kept away.
- We will “knock” at the end of class, to acknowledge our mutual effort.

Paper re-writes: I encourage you to re-write your papers with a generous re-write policy. A re-write is a significant re-working of the paper which responds to my critiques of the original paper regarding organization, argument, and evidence. It is not sufficient to, for instance, simply correct grammatical mistakes or errors in punctuation. If you re-write a paper, your grade for the assignment may or may not go up, but it will not go down. I will accept re-writes for any paper up to the last regular class meeting, but not after. Re-written papers will receive the same late penalty (if any) applied to the original paper. You must submit any originals with your re-write. Grading re-writes must be my lowest grading priority; please give me plenty of time. (Note that because of this policy I do not grant any extensions on paper due dates.)

A note on academic honesty: Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper citations — when using the work of another scholar. Be familiar with Bowdoin's [honor code](#), Bowdoin's [general guidelines](#) for proper citation

and attribution of sources (we use [Chicago/Turabian style](#) in History), and any guidelines provided specifically for this course (see Blackboard > Library/Research). [Plagiarism](#), whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.

Offensive materials disclaimer: Views expressed in the material we will cover do not reflect my own personal opinions. The academic enterprise invites vibrant class discussion, which balances critical thinking with mutual respect. Students are expected to take responsibility for their experience in this course by examining their own reactions to material they consider offensive. At all times, our priority will be critical engagement with scholarly material. By continuing with this course, you are agreeing to be held academically accountable for all required materials in the syllabus, regardless of your own personal reactions to it. Students who are unwilling to critically engage such material are encouraged to drop this course at their discretion.

Disabilities: Students who have documented learning disabilities with the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs may be entitled to various accommodations. Feel free to initiate with me any conversation over accommodations.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

- This schedule is liable to change to suit class needs. The online syllabus always offers the most recent version of the syllabus.
- Print out any electronically assigned readings and bring them to class. I strongly urge you to highlight your reading, writing notes in the margins, etc. It is always wise to keep an online journal (Word document) of your thinkings for each course you take.
- Complete readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them.
- We will not discuss each reading with the same degree of rigor. I will do my best to let you know when to make special efforts with your reading. You are, however, responsible for all the assigned material, whether or not we discuss it in class.

1/22 and 1/24: No class – read ahead!

1/29 Introductions

"Manumission of Manuel de Gerrit, the giant, and ten other negroes, with their wives, from slavery" ([online](#)).
"Court Ruling on Anthony Johnson and His Servant (1655)" ([online](#)).

1/31 The origins of race and slavery

Oscar and Mary F. Handlin, "Origins of the Southern Labor System," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 7, no. 2 (April 1950), 199-222. ([Jstor](#))

Carl N. Degler, "Slavery and the Genesis of American Race Prejudice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 1 (October 1959), 49-66. ([Jstor](#))

2/5 Defining race, defining slavery

Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford U.P., 1974), chs. 1-2. (Blackboard)

John Lok, "Voyage to Guinea" (1554), in Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries: The Principal Navigations*,

Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, vol. 7 (London, 1824). (Blackboard)

2/7 Trans-Atlantic perspectives

Winthrop D. Jordan, "American Chiaroscuro: The Status and Definition of Mulattoes in the British Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 19, no. 2 (April 1962), 183-200. ([Jstor](#))

Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard, 2003), ch. 1 "Charter Generations" (Blackboard)

2/12 Colonial perspectives I

Russell R. Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," *Southern Studies* 16 (Winter 1977), 355-90. (Blackboard)

"An act concerning Servants and Slaves (1705)," [online](#).

2/14 Colonial perspectives II

John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1101-13. ([Jstor](#))

Philip D. Morgan, "Three Planters and Their Slaves: Perspectives on Virginia, South Carolina, and Jamaica, 1750-1790," in *Race and Family in the Colonial South*, eds. Winthrop D. Jordan and Sheila L. Skemp (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1987). (Blackboard)

2/19 Slavery and freedom in the age of the Revolution I

Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," *Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June 1972), 5-29. ([Jstor](#))

"Does 'All Men Are Created Equal' Apply to Slaves? Calls for Abolition, 1773-1783" ([online](#)).

2/21 Slavery and freedom in the age of the Revolution II

Phillis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon documents. (Blackboard)

Selections from William C. Nell, *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (1855). (Blackboard)

"Four Petitions Against Slavery (1773 to 1777)" ([online](#)).

"Boston King Chooses Freedom and the Loyalists during the War for Independence" ([online](#)).

2/26 Slavery and freedom in the age of the Revolution III

Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Constitutional Convention: Making a Covenant with Death," in *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*, Richard Beeman, et al, eds. (Chapel Hill: Omohundro/University of North Carolina Press, 1987): 188-225 ([online](#)).

Thomas Jefferson on slavery (Blackboard).

2/28 The expansion of slavery

John Craig Hammond, "Slavery, Settlement, and Empire: The Expansion and Growth of Slavery in the Interior of the North American Continent, 1770-1820," *Journal of the Early Republic* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2012), 175-206 ([Jstor](#)).

Joshua D. Rothman, "The Slave Bubble," *Slate* (July 9, 2015), [online](#).

Adam Rothman, "Django Unchained's Bloody Real History in Mississippi," *Daily Beast* (February 24, 2013), [online](#).

3/5 Slavery, capitalism, and commodification

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1999), ch. 3
“Making a World Out of Slaves” (Blackboard).

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic, 2015), ch. 7 (Blackboard).

“Measuring Slavery in 2016 Dollars” ([online](#))

3/7 The WPA Slave Narrative Project

James West Davidson and Mark H. Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000), ch. 7. (Blackboard)

Donna J. Spindel, "Assessing Memory: Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives Reconsidered," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27 (1996): 247-61. ([Jstor](#))

Documentary film: "Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives" (HBO, 2013). ([YouTube](#))

WPA slave narrative assignment handed out today.

3/26 Slavery: religion

Jarena Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee* (Philadelphia, 1849), selections (Blackboard).

E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*

Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., "Religion, Society and Culture in the Old South: A Comparative View," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October 1974), 399-416. ([Jstor](#))

William Courtland Johnson, "'A Delusive Clothing': Christian Conversion in the Antebellum Slave Community," *Journal of Negro History* 82, no. 3 (Summer 1997), 295-311. ([Jstor](#))

3/28 Slavery: family

E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (New York: Dryden Press, 1948), selections (Blackboard).

Herbert Gutman, "Family Life," in *Slavery and American Society*, 3rd. ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), 161-66. (Blackboard)

Marie Jenkins Schwartz, "Family Life in the Slave Quarters: Survival Strategies," *OAH Magazine of History* 15, no 4 (Summer 2001). ([Online](#))

4/2 Slavery: women

Linda Brent [Harriet Jacobs], *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Boston, 1861), selections. (Blackboard)

Jacqueline Jones, "My Mother Was Much of a Woman: Black Women, Work, and the Family under Slavery," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1982), 235-69 ([Jstor](#))

4/4 The slave community:

Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), selection. (Blackboard)

Peter Kolchin, "Reevaluating the Antebellum Slave Community: A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of American History* 70, no. 3 (December 1983), 579-601. ([Jstor](#))

Jeff Forret, "Conflict and the 'Slave Community': Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 3 (August 2008), 551-88 ([Jstor](#)).

4/9 Slavery: Control and resistance

"The Diary of Bennet H. Barrow, Louisiana Slaveowner" ([online](#)).

Eugene Genovese, "On Paternalism," in *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage,

1974), 3-7. (Blackboard)

Slavery and American Society, 3rd. ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), 13-17. (Blackboard)

Drew G. Faust, "Slave Management," in *Slavery and American Society*, 3rd. ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), 237-47. (Blackboard)

4/11 The Nat Turner Rebellion

Nat Turner, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed. (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996). (Focus on the *Confession* itself, then the introductory essay. The document is [available online](#), but I prefer you to have the Bedford edition.)

Recommended film to view on own time: *Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property* (San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel, 2002).

4/16 Free Blacks in a Slave Society

Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), selections. (Blackboard)

David L. Lightner and Alexander M. Ragan, "Were African American Slaveholders Benevolent or Exploitative? A Quantitative Approach," *Journal of Southern History* 71, no. 3 (August 2005), 535-58. ([Jstor](#))

4/18 Black life in the North

Emma Jones Lapsansky, "'Since They Got Those Separate Churches': Afro-Americans and Racism in Jacksonian Philadelphia," *American Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1980), 54-78. ([Jstor](#))

James O. Horton, "Shades of Color: The Mulatto in Three Antebellum Northern Communities," *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), ch. 6. (Blackboard)

4/23 Black activists, white abolitionists

Maria Stewart, *Meditations from the Pen of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart* (Washington, 1879), selections. (Blackboard)

Henry Highland Garnet, "An Address to the Slaves" (1843), and related documents. (Blackboard)

Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of Colored People (Pittsburgh, 1854). (Blackboard)

James Oakes, "The Political Significance of Slave Resistance," *History Workshop* 22 (1986), 89-107. (Blackboard)

4/25 The slave narrative

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, David Blight, ed. (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993).

4/27: WPA Slave narrative project due

4/30 The coming of the Civil War

J. Sella Martin, "Address by J. Sella Martin," December 2, 1859 ([online](#)).

H. Ford Douglas, "'I Do Not Believe in That Antislavery of Abraham Lincoln,'" *The Liberator*, July 13, 1860. (Blackboard)

Frederick Douglass, "NEMESIS," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY), May 1861 (Blackboard).

5/2 Lincoln and the slaves

Kate Masur, "The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal," *Civil War History* 56, no. 2 (June 2010), 117-44. ([Muse](#))

Allen Guelzo and Patrick Rael, "Slavery and Emancipation," *Claremont Review of Books*" (June 27, 2016), [online](#).

5/7 Black agency during the Civil War

General Benjamin Butler to General Winfield Scott, 27 May 1861 ([online](#)).

Missouri Black Soldier to His Daughters, and to the Owner of One of the Daughters, 3 September 1864 ([online](#)).

Armstead L. Robinson, "In the Shadow of Old John Brown: Insurrection Anxiety and Confederate Mobilization, 1861-1863," *Journal of Negro History* 65, no. 4 (Autumn 1980), 279-97. ([Jstor](#))

5/9 Emancipation and Reconstruction

Proceedings of the National Convention of the Colored Men of America (Washington, 1869), selections. (Blackboard)
Leon F. Litwack, "'Blues Falling down Like Hail': The Ordeal of Black Freedom," in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America: Essays in Honor of Kenneth M. Stampp*, Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish, eds. (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 109-27. (Blackboard)