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.


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 coursework. 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 conversion over accommodations.

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**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 thoughts 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

2/5 Defining race, defining slavery
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

2/12 Colonial perspectives I
"An act concerning Servants and Slaves (1705),” online.

2/14 Colonial perspectives II
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
"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

2/28 The expansion of slavery
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


“Measuring Slavery in 2016 Dollars” (online)

3/7 The WPA Slave Narrative Project


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

WPA slave narrative assignment handed out today.

3/26 Slavery: religion

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


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

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


4/9 Slavery: Control and resistance

“The Diary of Bennet H. Barrow, Louisiana Slaveowner” (online).

4/11 The Nat Turner Rebellion

4/16 Free Blacks in a Slave Society

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)

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
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).
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)

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).

5/9 Emancipation and Reconstruction
Proceedings of the National Convention of the Colored Men of America (Washington, 1869), selections. (Blackboard)