

HS 343: Slavery and Abolition
Fall 2015/MWF 12 pm

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Office hours 1-3 pm MWRF

This course traces the rise and fall of plantation slavery in the western hemisphere from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. It does not focus on slavery in the United States/British mainland colonies, which until the 19th century was a very small and insignificant part of the plantation economy of the Americas. Instead, we will examine the growth of the plantation complex, the workings of the slave trade, relations between European purchasers and African suppliers, the experiences of enslaved people, and the gradual process of emancipation that lasted for about a century, from the late 18th until the late 19th century. This course is categorized as “issues in social justice” in the core curriculum because of its focus on plantation slavery, the racism that supported it, and the movement for its abolition (as well as for examining slavery and human trafficking in the contemporary world).

Course learning goals: Through this course, you will

1. Learn the important developments in the development of slavery, and its demise, in the western hemisphere from about 1500-1880, and also in our world;
2. Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
3. Understand issues of social justice pertaining to historical and contemporary slavery, and appreciate various frameworks for wrestling with the ethical dilemmas surrounding slavery;
4. Appreciate the global dimensions of old and new slavery;
5. Develop critical thinking skills;
6. Work as leaders and collaborators.

This course is an “issues in social justice” class in the integrative core curriculum and satisfies several University and social justice learning goals. So when you finish the course, you will:

- Acquire knowledge about the human experience, particularly as it applies to issues of social justice, as evaluated via exams, quizzes, and essays;
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze multiple forms of expression such as oral, written, digital, or visual, as evaluated by essays and examinations;
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem or intellectual question, as evaluated by presentations and examinations;
- Understand and respect human and cultural differences, as evaluated by the debate;
- Understand and promote social justice, as evaluated by essays, the debate, and presentation.

To see where these learning goals line up with the assessment measures listed below, see the table at the end of this syllabus.

Assessment measures:

1. Slave Trade research essay/presentation (15%)
2. *Twelve Years a Slave* essay (15%)
3. Debate on remedies for slavery (15%)
4. Quizzes (15%)

5. Midterm exam, October 16 (15%)
 6. Final exam, Wednesday, December 16, 1 pm (15%)
 7. Class participation (10%)
1. Slave Trade essay (due October 9). This is a collaborative task in which you will work with a team of 3-4 people to research and write an essay, and present an oral report, on the transatlantic slave trade. You will use a single source: the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (www.slavevoyages.org), which contains data on over 35,000 individual slave trading voyages. More detailed instructions and a grading rubric will follow.
 2. *Twelve Years a Slave* essay (due Nov. 13). In 2013, director Steve McQueen's film *Twelve Years a Slave* won the academy award for best picture. The film is based on an important memoir of the same title by Solomon Northup, a New Yorker kidnapped and sold into slavery in the deep South. In this essay you will compare and contrast the written and cinematic versions of this memoir, with special attention to addressing how well a 21st century director adapted a 19th century text to the medium of film. Which medium is more effective as a portrayal of and indictment of slavery (you might find the book is more effective in some ways, the film in others)? How do the two forms of media work differently? Is McQueen's film seeking to accomplish the same social justice goals as Northup's book? And if they are different, how does that affect the choices a filmmaker makes in bringing this account to the screen? More detailed instructions and a grading rubric will follow.
 3. During the week of November 23 (the 23rd and 24th) we will hold a Lincoln-Douglass style debate on whether slaveholding societies, particularly the United States, ought to make restitution to the descendants of slaves for the legacy of slavery and racism. Basically the sides will be for/against, and they will be chosen at random. More details on this activity will be discussed on November 11.
 4. Quizzes: every day there's a reading assignment, the class will begin with a short quiz based on the content of the material. No makeups, and if you're late, you miss the quiz.
 5. Midterm exam, October 14. In-class, bluebook exam; short-answer essays plus an essay.
 6. Final exam, Wednesday, December 16, 1 pm. Same as #6. Not cumulative.
 7. Class participation is expected of every student in the class. Participation means active, informed, constructive oral engagement in the class. It does not mean attendance or what is sometimes called "active listening," whatever that means. It means you have to talk. Here is how participation is assessed on a class-by-class basis:
 - 4= active participation in class discussion (insightful comments or questions) throughout class
 - 3= active participation in class discussion
 - 2= regular attendance, active listening, sporadic contribution to class discussion
 - 1= hand is never up, little contribution to class discussion
 - 0= no participation or no constructive participation ("I agree with what he/she said.")

Materials:

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

Benjamin Skinner, *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-Day Slavery* (Free Press, 2009).

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (Penguin Classics, 2012)

Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (Basic Books, 2002).

Some important & relevant online sources:

Anti-Slavery International: www.antislavery.org
 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: www.slavevoyages.org
 Historians Against Slavery: www.historiansagainstsavery.org
 The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record:
<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php>

Other: If you must be absent for reasons beyond your control (missing class is not discretionary), please inform me in advance. Missing more than three classes will result in a grade of FA (failure due to attendance) for the class. No cell phones or laptops, please. If you must take a call for emergencies, please do so outside, and the expectation is that you will not return unless you have a very, very good reason. You may also tell me in advance if you are expecting a call that necessitates answering. Don't be habitually late. I don't care about drinks or snacks or what you wear, so long as all the important stuff is covered up.

Late submissions: All written work that is submitted after the due date & time (always class time [1 pm] on the designated day, unless otherwise noted), will receive an immediate one-grade point penalty (a B essay becomes a C essay), and additional grade point penalties for each subsequent day late, with the clock turning over at 12 am.

Course calendar:

M Aug. 31: Class introduction

W Sept. 2: slavery and human rights

F Sept. 4: Lecture: Ancient slavery and modern slavery

M Sept. 7: Labor Day. No classes.

W Sept. 9: Lecture: Africa and the development of the slave trade

F Sept. 11: *The Diligent*, 1-117

M Sept. 14: discussion of the slave trade essay specs & the website.

W Sept. 16: Lecture: sugar and slavery

F Sept. 18: *The Diligent*, 119-264

M Sept. 21: Lecture: the captives perspective, from capture through seasoning

W Sept. 23: workshop on history writing and presentations

F Sept. 25: *The Diligent*, 265-330

M Sept. 28: Lecture: Slavery in British North America

W Sept 30: *The Diligent*, 331-410

F Oct. 2: *The Diligent*, wrapup discussion.

M Oct. 5: presentations, day one.

W Oct. 7: presentations, day two

F Oct. 9: **Essays due, 1 pm via email. No class (I'm out of town).**

M Oct. 12: midterm exam review

W Oct. 14: **midterm exam**

F Oct. 16: **Fall break. No class.**

M Oct. 19: Lecture: slavery in a revolutionary era.

W Oct. 21: Lecture: slavery & cotton the 19th century USA

F Oct 23: *Twelve Years a Slave*, to p. 105.

M Oct. 26: Screening of *Twelve Years a Slave*, part one.

W Oct. 28: Screening of *Twelve Years a Slave*, part two.

F Oct. 30: Final screening; finish *Twelve Years a Slave* book, discussion.

M Nov. 2: discussion of the narrative & the film *Twelve Years a Slave* (quiz on second half of book)

W Nov. 4: Lecture: the antislavery movement in Britain and the USA

F Nov. 6: *King Leopold's Ghost*, to p. 100

M Nov. 9: Lecture: the Civil War and Reconstruction in the USA

W Nov. 11: Lecture: slavery after the abolition of slavery

F Nov. 13: *King Leopold's Ghost*, to p. 181

M Nov. 16: Lecture: The "scramble" for Africa

W Nov. 18: *King Leopold's Ghost*, to p. 252

F Nov. 20: *King Leopold's Ghost*, to end; discussion of final debate.

M Nov. 23: discussion of debate materials.

T Nov. 24 (Tuesday, but Friday classes meet): debate materials and the Confederate flag

W and F, Nov. 25, 27: **Thanksgiving break. No class.**

M Nov. 30: *Crimes so Monstrous*, to p. 201

W Dec. 2: *Crimes so Monstrous*, 203-252

F Dec. 4: *Crimes so Monstrous*, 253-298

M Dec. 7: debate, day one

W Dec. 9: debate, day two

F Dec. 11: final exam review

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1 pm: **final examination.**

University policies and legal stuff:

Policy on Documentation and Accommodation of Disabilities:

In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability (learning, psychological, sensory, physical, or medical) you may be eligible to request accommodations from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). To make a request for accommodations, please contact SSD Director Allison West at (216) 397-4967 or visit the SSD office, located in Room 7A, on the garden (lower) level of the Administration Building. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive so it is best to register with SSD at the beginning of each semester. Only those accommodations approved by SSD will be recognized by your instructors. Please contact SSD if you have further questions.

Policy on Academic Honesty:

For the full JCU policy on academic honesty, see the 2015-2017 [Undergraduate Bulletin](#), pp. 110-112. Academic honesty, expected of every student, is essential to the process of education and to upholding high ethical standards. Cheating, including plagiarism, inappropriate use of technology, or any other kind of unethical behavior, may subject the student to severe academic penalties, including dismissal. All work submitted for evaluation in a course, including tests, term papers, and computer programs, must represent only the work of the student unless indicated otherwise. Material taken from the work of others must be acknowledged. Materials submitted to fulfill requirements in one course may not be submitted in another course without prior approval of the instructor(s). Concerns about the propriety of obtaining outside assistance and acknowledging sources should be addressed to the instructor of the course before the work commences and as necessary as the work proceeds. Students who plagiarize materials will receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment.

Mutual Respect:

John Carroll University is committed to fostering ethical and moral values that are consistent with Jesuit and Catholic traditions. Among the central values of the University are the inherent dignities of every individual as well as the right of each person to hold and to express his or her viewpoint. When these views conflict it is the obligation of members of the community to respect other perspectives.

The University welcomes students, faculty, staff, and visitors from diverse backgrounds and it works to ensure that they will find the University environment free of discriminatory conduct. It is unacceptable and a violation of University policy to harass, abuse, or discriminate against any person because of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. In other words, don't be a jerk. Treat each other with respect. Disagreement is expected, just do so in a civil way.

Bias:

As a member of the JCU community, you have an obligation to take an active role in fostering an appreciation for diversity and inclusion and sending the message that bias-related acts will not be tolerated. Please report incidents of bias, whether intentional or unintentional, against any person on the basis of an actual or perceived aspect of their identity, including actions that occur in classrooms, to the Bias Response Team. The Bias Incident Reporting Form is accessible at <http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/>. Questions about bias can be directed to any member of the Bias Response Team:

Terry Mills, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Chief Diversity Officer (tmills@jcu.edu); Danielle Carter, Director, Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion, 216.397.1505; and Bud Stuppy, Director of Human Resources, 216.397.1905.

Appendix: Alignment between Learning goals and assessment measures:

Quizzes and final and midterm exams:

- Learn the important developments in the development of slavery, and its demise, in the western hemisphere from about 1500-1880, and also in our world;
- Appreciate the global dimensions of old and new slavery;
- Develop critical thinking skills.

Twelve Years a Slave Essay:

- Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
- Understand issues of social justice pertaining to historical and contemporary slavery, and appreciate various frameworks for wrestling with the ethical dilemmas surrounding slavery;
- Develop critical thinking skills;
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze multiple forms of expression such as oral, written, digital, or visual;
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem or intellectual question.

Slave trade database research essay:

- Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
- Develop critical thinking skills;
- Work as leaders and collaborators.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze multiple forms of expression such as oral, written, digital, or visual;

- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem or intellectual question.

Debate on remedies for slavery and racism:

- Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
- Understand issues of social justice pertaining to historical and contemporary slavery, and appreciate various frameworks for wrestling with the ethical dilemmas surrounding slavery;
- Develop critical thinking skills;
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem or intellectual question;
- Understand and respect human and cultural differences;
- Understand and promote social justice..

Contemporary slavery presentation:

- Learn the important developments in the development of slavery, and its demise, in the western hemisphere from about 1500-1880, and also in our world;
- Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
- Understand issues of social justice pertaining to historical and contemporary slavery, and appreciate various frameworks for wrestling with the ethical dilemmas surrounding slavery;
- Appreciate the global dimensions of old and new slavery;
- Work as leaders and collaborators.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem or intellectual question, as evaluated by presentations and examinations;
- Understand and respect human and cultural differences;
- Understand and promote social justice.

Class Participation:

- Improve your skills in written and oral communication;
- Understand and respect human and cultural differences.



