HIS 301: Race and Slavery
Course Syllabus

Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, twelve million Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas. This class explores how one strand of this diaspora developed in what would eventually become the United States. We will examine how people of African descent struggled against their bondage to reconstitute their lives. We will also analyze how the African American identity, born in bondage, changed with the rise and fall of slavery in the United States.

Course Requirements: The requirements for this course include assigned readings for each class, periodic assignments and quizzes on the assigned readings, two papers, and two exams.

Assigned Readings: There are two books assigned for this class: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (1998) and Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (2000). Both books can be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional readings are on blackboard, e-reserves, and the internet. These readings will be linked to the syllabus on Blackboard and listed under Course Documents on Blackboard as they become available. The assigned reading list may undergo minor changes, including the addition of primary source readings; students should be sure to consult the most current version of the syllabus on Blackboard under Course Information.

Attendance and Late Policy: You are allowed two unexcused absences. After two unexcused absences, you will receive a zero for participation for that day. The instructor will excuse absences with a doctor’s note or legitimate documentation of other emergencies. In addition, students will be dropped from the class for excessive absences. Assignments submitted in class are due at the beginning of the class period. Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment. No assignments will be accepted one week after the due date. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy.

Final Grade Composition
- Participation 15%
- In-class Assignments 10%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 25%
- Papers (2x15%) 30%
Participation: Participation in discussion is mandatory. **Students should be prepared to discuss the readings on the day that they are assigned.** Attendance alone is not sufficient for full participation credit.

In-class Assignments: Students will be given brief in-class and take-home writing and research assignments based on the assigned readings. Students will also be periodically quizzed on readings and lectures.

Exams: There will be two exams in this class: one midterm on October 21 and one final exam on December 14.

Papers: Students are required to write two papers based on assigned readings, the first due on September 23 and the second due on November 11.

**Plagiarism Policy:** The University defines plagiarism as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."¹ (See the University's Academic Integrity Policies for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, internet sites, etc.) used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a zero and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Week 1 (August 24, 26): African Myths and Realities**

Monday: Introduction

Wednesday: (Mis)Conceptions of Africa

**Week 2 (August 31, September 2): The Creation of the Atlantic World**

Monday: West Africa and the Development of Early Commerce

Wednesday: The Rise of the Plantation Complex
Readings: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, pp. 72-97 on blackboard

**Week 3 (September 7, 9): The Atlantic Slave Trade**

¹ [http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/](http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/)
Monday: Labor Day Holiday

Wednesday: The Middle Passage and Destinations

**Week 4 (September 14, 16): Early North American Slave Societies**

Monday: Chesapeake and New England
Readings: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 1-63; *Testimony from Virginia Court Records* (1681) on blackboard; *New Netherlands Petition, 1661* on blackboard

Wednesday: Lowcountry and Louisiana
Readings: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 64-92

**Week 5 (September 21, 23): Maturation of the Plantation Complex**

Monday: Chesapeake and Lowcountry
Readings: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 93-176; *Virginia Slave Code* (1705) on blackboard; *The Stono Rebellion in South Carolina, 1739* on blackboard

Wednesday: North and Louisiana

*First paper due at the beginning of class.*

**Week 6 (September 28, September 30): Slavery and Freedom in the Age of Revolution**

Monday: A War for Liberty?

Wednesday: The Haitian Revolution
Week 7 (October 5, 7): The Aftermath of Independence

Monday: “All Men are Created Equal”

Wednesday: Constitutional Debates over Slavery
Readings: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 290-324

Week 8 (October 12, 14): Creating the Cotton Kingdom

Monday: Class Cancelled – Fall Break

Wednesday: Western Expansion
Readings: Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, pp. 111-135 on blackboard

Week 9 (October 19, 21): Internal Slave Trade

Monday: The Internal Slave Trade
Readings: Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life*, pp. 245-274 on blackboard

Wednesday: Mid-Term Exam

Week 10 (October 26, 28): Life on the Plantation

Monday: The “‘Quarters”
Readings: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, chapters I-IX; *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, chapters I-VII

Wednesday: Plantation Labor

Week 11 (November 2, 4): Life in Town

Monday: Free Blacks and Free People of Color

Wednesday: Urban Slavery
Readings: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, chapter XI and Appendix; *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, chapters XV-XXI

**Week 12 (November 9, 11): The Controversy over Slavery**

Monday: Abolitionism  

Wednesday: The Political Crisis of the 1850s  

*Second paper due at the beginning of class.*

**Week 13 (November 16, 18): Descent to War**

Monday: The End of Compromise  
Readings: TBA

Wednesday: Life Behind the Lines  

**Week 14 (November 23, 25): From a War for Union to a War for Freedom**

Monday: Black Soldiers in Blue  

Wednesday: Class Cancelled – Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 15 (November 30, December 2): The Rise of Reconstruction**

Monday: Rehearsals for Reconstruction  

Wednesday: Radical Reconstruction  
Readings: Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South*, pp. 216-264 on blackboard

**Week 16 (December 7): The Fall of Reconstruction**
Monday: A Failed Revolution
Readings: Martha Hodes, “The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War,” in *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender, and Race since the Civil War*, pp. 59-74 on blackboard

Final Exam: Monday, December 14, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.