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 and the internet. These readings will be 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.

Electronic Devices: The use of laptops, tablets, cellular phones, or any other type of electronic device is prohibited during class.

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.

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

¹ http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/
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.

**Final Grade Composition**

- Participation 10%
- Assignments 15%
- 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.

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 exam on October 10 and one final exam on December 10.

Papers: Students are required to write two papers based on assigned readings, the first due on September 20 and the second due on November 29. All sources in the papers should be properly cited according to the guidelines laid out in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is available on-line.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1 (August 20, 22): African Myths and Realities**

Tuesday: Introduction

Thursday: (Mis)Conceptions of Africa

**Week 2 (August 27, 29): The Creation of the Atlantic World**

Tuesday: West Africa and the Development of Early Commerce
Thursday: The Rise of the Plantation Complex
Readings: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, pp. 72-97 on blackboard (Part III)

**Week 3 (September 3, 5): The Atlantic Slave Trade**

Tuesday: Capture and Enslavement

Thursday: The Middle Passage and Destinations
Readings: Excerpts from Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa* on blackboard

**Week 4 (September 10, 12): Early North American Slave Societies**

Tuesday: 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

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

**Week 5 (September 17, 19): Maturation of the Plantation Complex**

Tuesday: 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

Thursday: North and Louisiana
Reading: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 177-217

*First paper due at the beginning of class.*

**Week 6 (September 24, 26): Slavery and Freedom in the Age of Revolution**

Tuesday: A War for Liberty?

Thursday: The Haitian Revolution
Readings: Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, pp. 7-42 on blackboard

**Week 7 (October 1, 3): The Aftermath of Independence**

Tuesday: “All Men are Created Equal”

Thursday: Constitutional Debates over Slavery

**Week 8 (October 8, 10): Creating the Cotton Kingdom**

Tuesday: Expanding the Borders of Slavery
Readings: Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, pp. 111-135 on blackboard

Thursday: Mid-Term Exam

**Week 9 (October 15, 17): Internal Slave Trade**

Tuesday: Class Cancelled – Fall Break

Thursday: The Internal Slave Trade
Readings: Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life*, pp. 245-274 on blackboard; Excerpts from Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, or Life of an American Slave*, on blackboard

**Week 10 (October 22, 24): Life on the Plantation**

Tuesday: 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

Thursday: Plantation Labor

**Week 11 (October 29, 31): Life in Town**

Tuesday: Free Blacks and Free People of Color

Thursday: 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 5, 7): The Controversy over Slavery

Tuesday: Abolitionism

Thursday: The Political Crisis of the 1850s

Week 13 (November 12, 14): Civil War and Emancipation

Tuesday: The End of Compromise
Readings: W. E. B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America, pp. 55-84 on blackboard

Thursday: Black Soldiers in Blue

Week 14 (November 19, 21): The Rise of Reconstruction

Tuesday: Rehearsals for Reconstruction
Readings: Eric Foner, Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction, pp. 76-106 on blackboard

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

Week 15 (November 26, 28): The Fall of Reconstruction

Tuesday: 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

*Second paper due at the beginning of class.*

Thursday: Class Cancelled – Thanksgiving Holiday

**Final Exam:** Tuesday, December 10, 12:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.