

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, one paper, 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 Canvas and the internet. These readings will be listed under Files on Canvas 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 Canvas.

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

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory. The door will close ten minutes after class starts. After ten minutes, students will no longer be admitted to the class and will be considered absent. Each student is allowed two absences. After two unexcused absences, students 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. After ten absences, students will receive an automatic F.

Late Assignments: All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. Unless otherwise specified on the syllabus, papers are due in class 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: one-third of a grade per day. No assignments will be accepted one week after the due date. If a student leaves a paper in the professor's mailbox, it is the student's responsibility to check that the professor has received the paper.

Plagiarism: The University defines plagiarism as "representing the words, thoughts or ideas 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

¹ <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/violations-and-sanctions/plagiarism/>

will be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

Final Grade Composition

- Participation 10%
- Assignments 20%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%
- Paper 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 7 and one final exam on December 7.

Papers: Students are required to write an eight- to ten-page paper based on assigned readings and lectures, due on November 7. 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 17, 19): Introduction

Tuesday: Introduction

Thursday: (Mis)Conceptions of Africa

Readings: Lydia Polgreen, "Ghana's Uneasy Embrace of Slavery's Diaspora," *New York Times*, December 27, 2005 on the [internet](#)

Week 2 (August 24, 26): The Creation of the Atlantic World

Tuesday: West Africa and the Development of Early Commerce

Readings: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, pp. 13-71 on Canvas (Part I and Part II)

Thursday: The Rise of the Plantation Complex

Reading: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, pp. 72-97 on Canvas (Part III)

Week 3 (August 31, September 2): The Atlantic Slave Trade

Tuesday: Capture and Enslavement

Readings: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, pp. 98-127 on Canvas (Part IV)

Thursday: The Middle Passage and Destinations

Readings: Contemporary Views of Slaving and Slavers on Canvas

Week 4 (September 7, 9): 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 Canvas; *New Netherlands Petition*, 1661 on Canvas

Thursday: Lowcountry and Louisiana

Reading: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 64-92

Week 5 (September 14, 16): Maturation of the Plantation Complex

Tuesday: Chesapeake and Lowcountry

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

Thursday: North and Louisiana

Reading: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 177-217

Week 6 (September 21, 23): Slavery and Freedom in the Age of Revolution

Tuesday: A War for Liberty?

Readings: Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, "The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, and the Atlantic Working Class in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Sept. 1990), pp. 225-252 on Canvas; Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution*, pp. 1-18 on Canvas; "Slaves' Petitions For Freedom, 1773-1779" on Canvas; Henry Louis Gates, "Native Sons of Liberty," *New York Times*, Aug. 6, 2006 on Canvas

Thursday: The Haitian Revolution

Reading: Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, pp. 7-42 on Canvas

Week 7 (September 28, September 30): The Aftermath of Independence

Tuesday: "All Men are Created Equal"

Readings: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 217-289; "Negroes' Protest Against Taxation Without Representation, 1780" on Canvas

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

Week 8 (October 5, 7): American Paradox

Tuesday: Slavery and Freedom in the Nascent Nation
Reading: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, pp. 325-365

Thursday: Mid-Term Exam

Week 9 (October 12, 14): Fall Break

Tuesday: No Class – Fall Break

Thursday: No Class – Fall Break

Week 10 (October 19, 21): Creating the Cotton Kingdom

Tuesday: Expanding the Borders of Slavery
Readings: Watson Jennison, *Cultivating Race: The Expansion of Slavery in Georgia, 1750-1860*, pp. 157-188 on Canvas

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

Week 11 (October 26, 28): Life in Town

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
Readings: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, chapter X; *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, chapters VIII-XVII; Steven Miller, “Plantation Labor Organization and Slave Life on the Cotton Frontier: The Alabama-Mississippi Black Belt, 1815-1840,” in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, eds. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, pp. 155-69 on Canvas

Week 12 (November 2, 4): Life in Town

Tuesday: 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 XVIII-XXVIII

Thursday: Free Blacks

Readings: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, chapters XXIX-XLI; Shane White, "'It Was a Proud Day': African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834," *Journal of American History* (June 1994), pp. 13-50 on Canvas

Paper due at noon on Friday, November 7

Week 13 (November 9, 11): The Controversy over Slavery

Tuesday: Abolitionism

Readings: Timothy Patrick McCarthy, "'To Plead Our Own Cause': Black Print Culture and the Origins of American Abolitionism," in *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, eds. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, pp. 114-144 on Canvas; David Walker, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, Article I and Article IV on the [internet](#)

Thursday: The Political Crisis of the 1850s

Readings: Hannah Geffert, "Regional Black Involvement in John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry," in *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, eds. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, pp. 165-182 on Canvas; "Harper's Ferry Editorials," 1859 on Canvas

Week 14 (November 16, 18): The Civil War and Emancipation

Tuesday: The End of Compromise

Reading: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, pp. 55-84 on Canvas

Thursday: Black Soldiers in Blue

Reading: Joseph T. Glatthaar, "Black Glory: The African-American Role in Union Victory," in *Why the Confederacy Lost*, ed. Gabor Boritt, pp. 135-162 on Canvas

Week 15 (November 23, 25): A New Beginning?

Tuesday: Presidential Reconstruction

Reading: Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*, pp. 127-149 on Canvas

Thursday: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 16 (November 30): The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction

Tuesday: A Failed Revolution

Reading: Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*, pp. 189-213 on Canvas

Final Exam on Tuesday, December 7, noon to 3:00 p.m.

Required UNCG syllabus language
Approved by Faculty Senate on July 29, 2021

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact [OARS](#) (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.