From Old South to New South

This seminar focuses on the construction and destruction of the South as a slave society. Understanding the nature of slavery as a social system will be the focus of the first half of the semester. The transition to a free labor society, beginning in the Civil War, and continuing into the post-Civil War South will be the primary line of inquiry during the second half of the semester. Special emphasis will be given to the struggles over the meaning of freedom in the New South and the emergence of a plantation economy based on sharecropping and tenant farming.

This course is based on readings and discussion. Several books are to be purchased in the bookstore. This is an intensive reading course that will expose students to the primary questions and historiography of the Old and New South. Upon completion of this course, students will have a command of the most important literature on the Old South and New South.

Attendance Policy:

Faithful attendance is essential. You are allowed one excused absence. If you miss more than one class, there will be a 5% reduction of your final grade for each absence. Beyond even this penalty, a student who neglects attendance and preparation risks failing the course.

Assignments:

You will be assigned to a group that will determine the completion of the assignments below. I will place you into a group on the first day of class and not before. Please do not request a group assignment. You will write two essays, one Book Review critique, and one Historiographical review during the course of the semester.

A. You will complete two Essays, one Book Review critique, and one Historiographical Assignment (25% of your final grade)

Essay (800 to 1,000 words; Due on Thursday by noon)

Group A January 19
Group B February 2
Group C March 2
Groups A, B, and C March 23
Book Review critique (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard by Wed at noon)

Group A   February 2
Group B   January 19
Group C   March 2

Historiographical review (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard by Wed at noon)

Group A   March 2
Group B   January 19
Group C   February 2

B. Discussion (Includes Discussion Threads on Blackboard and leading class discussion) (50% of your final grade)

This assessment will be based on three criteria:

1) This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Each week pairs of students will lead class discussion. The discussion leaders will meet as a team with me before they are scheduled to lead class. **Both discussion leaders must meet me on Wed afternoon before class. This is essential and the only day that I can meet.** In class, discussion leaders will ask questions about the common readings and how it relates to broader historiographic trends. They will not lecture to their fellow students.

2) Thorough preparation for this class is essential. All readings should be done before class. It is imperative that you have either handwritten or typed notes that outline the central questions and arguments of the assigned readings.

3) It is essential that you contribute to class on a consistent basis, that you intellectually engage with your peers, and that you are an active listener. In order to create an inviting environment for everyone to participate, please follow the guidelines:

- Be ready to explain the broader argument and sub-themes of the assigned material and how the various readings fit together or diverge.
- Instead of just criticizing a book, focus on understanding the contributions of the assigned readings and why they have had a lasting influence on the field.
- You should feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and support them with evidence. You should also be willing to change your mind and concede to others when they make persuasive, well-reasoned arguments. Please challenge each other in a polite and courteous manner.
• The success of a discussion depends on group interaction. Listen carefully and respond to your peers. There should be a dynamic give-and-take between the discussion leaders and the rest of the class. This can only happen if you elaborate upon the assertions of classmates or ask for clarification if you don’t understand. Simply answering the questions will not lead to vigorous debate, and the discussion leaders will end up giving a monologue.

• Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

III Final projects (25% of your final grade) Please select one project from below.

A. Interpretive Plan of Nat Turner’s National Historical Park (5 to 7 pages)

1) You will create a Long-Range Interpretive Plan for the newly created Nat Turner National Historical Park in Southampton, Virginia (This is a fictitious park). You will provide an intellectual and interpretive vision that identifies the key educational and experience goals for the visitor. You will also recommend the most effective, efficient, and practical ways to address those goals and issues. You must also identify the interpretive challenges that the story of Turner presents, particularly the mission statement to broadly interpret the experience of the American slave and the site-specific story of Nat Turner. As part of your interpretive strategy, it is required that your themes are rooted within the historiography of the Old South. The historiographical discussions should be largely confined to your notes. I will provide a mission statement, the format for the plan, and other specifics from which you can then construct your interpretive blueprint. Keep in mind that the objective of this assignment is to articulate clear interpretive objectives that have scholarly merit and that have accessibility to the public. For this assignment you will need to read Stephen Oates, Fire of Jubilee and The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents (Edited by Kenneth S. Greenberg). Both are very reasonable and can be purchased at the typical web outlets. You might also want to consult Scott French’s The Rebellious Slave: Nat Turner in American Memory.

B. Race, Ideology, and Southern History (5 to 7 pages)

1) Please read Barbara Fields’ essay “Ideology and Race in American History” in Kousser and McPherson, Region Race and Reconstruction (I will put this essay on Blackboard). Fields is very specific about the uses and misuses of race as a category of analysis. Use her article as the point of departure to explore how Southern historians (our readings during the course of the semester) have conceptualized and analyzed race as a force in history. Please integrate Fields’s ideas into your analysis. I do not want to read a summary of her argument, followed by a summary of various books. In thinking about our readings, you should reflect on how historians have explored racial ideas and identities as a way to understand the material reality of slavery and the post bellum South. Identify the work of historians that especially appealed to you when dealing with this complicated issue. Whose scholarly endeavors were less satisfying and why?

C. Witnessing a Revolution in Land and Labor
1) Reflect on the nature of the Old South and its transformation from a slave society to a political economy based on free labor. Please consider the cultural ideas, gender roles, racial ideas, social and class relationships that helped define the South before and after the Civil War. In the end, you should construct a broad interpretive analysis of the Old and New South (based on our readings) that considers the degree of change wrought by the Civil War. Once you have created a broad interpretive framework, you must turn to the observations of Frederick Law Olmstead (The Cotton Kingdom) and John T. Trowbridge (The Desolate South). Integrate their observations into your analytical narrative. How do the these travel accounts compare to your ideas about the South?

Required Readings:

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese Within the Plantation Household
Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll
Ira Berlin Generations of Captivity
Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond
MaurieD. McInnis, The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston
Charles Bolton, Poor Whites of the Antebellum South
Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism
Eugene Genovese, A Consuming Fire
Lawrence Powell, New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction
Steven Hahn, A Nation Under our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration
William Link, The Paradox of Southern Progressivism
Mark Smith, Listening to Nineteenth Century-America
Fitz Brundage, The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory

*Marks articles on electronic reserve or Blackboard

Slavery in the American South
January 12

Discuss: Ira Berlin, Generations of Captivity

We will concern ourselves with the process of the South becoming a modern slave society. The generational approach of Berlin will push us to think broadly about the historical experiences of all classes and races. By the end of the book, you should be able to explain why the following occurred “In 1800 few American slaves grew cotton, few resided in the Deep South, and most did not identify with Christianity---no matter how latitudinous the definitions of Christian belief. Yet in 1865, when with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution black people completed their wartime exodus from slavery, all of these elements were in place. Most slaves grew cotton, resided in the Deep South, and professed Christianity” There is no written assignment for January 12

The Slave Experience
January 19

Discuss: *Brenda Stevenson, “Distress and Discord in Virginia Slave Families, 1830-1860,” in Blesser's In Joy and in Sorrow; *Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “Dignity, Deception, and Identity in the Male Slave Experience,” in The Shaping of Southern Culture; Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, Book 1 (pt. 1) and Book 3 (pt. 2)


Essay (800 to 1,000 words): Based upon your readings for January 12 and 19, how should we understand the exchange of power between master and slave? In your interpretation of the master-slave relationship, please incorporate all of the assigned readings. Please explain where you agree or dissent from the various scholars. This is not a book review. I want this paper to be an interpretive piece that reflects your ideas and how they intersect or dissent with the interpretations of other scholars.

Book Review Critique (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard): Please critique two reviews of Roll, Jordan, Roll (Give the full citation for the reviews on your post). In what ways do the reviewers buttress or dispute your interpretations of Genovese?

Historiographical Assignment (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard): Pick a book from the suggested readings list (for either January 12 or 19) and explain the historiographical relationship with Roll, Jordan, Roll. You can look at books published before Genovese to understand how he drew or departed from previous interpretations.

The Mind of the Master Class
January 26

Discuss: Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond


Southern Women
February 2

Discuss: Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household

Suggested Readings: Catherine Clinton, The Plantation Mistress; Laura Edwards, Scarlet Doesn’t Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era; Carol Blesser, ed., In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South; Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics; Deborah Gray White, Ar’n’t I a Woman; Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg; Elizabeth Varon, We Mean to be Counted; Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention; George Rable, Civil Wars; Bell Irvin Wiley, Confederate Women; Victoria Bynum, Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South; LeeAnn Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender

Essay (800 to 1,000 words) Based upon your reading of Faust’s James Henry Hammond and Fox-Genovese’s Within the Plantation Household, offer an interpretation as to what it meant to be a slaveholding man and woman in the Old South.

Book Review Critique (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard) Please critique two reviews of Within the Plantation Household.

Historiographical Assignment (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard) Pick a book from the suggested readings list and explain the historiographical relationship to either Within the Plantation Household or James Henry Hammond.
Southern Urban life
February 9

Discuss: Maurie D. McInnis, The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston

Suggested Readings: Lisa Tolbert, Constructing Townscapes: Space and Society in Antebellum Tennessee; Fred Bateman and Thomas Weiss, A Deplorable Scarcity: The Failure of Industrialization in the Slave Economy; David Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861; Leonard P. Curry, “Urbanization and Urbanism in the Old South: A Comparative View,” Journal of Southern History XL (February 1974); Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities; Steven Tripp, Yankee Town, Southern City

Blackboard Discussion: Two Threads (I would prefer that students engage both lines of discussion and that you offer more than one post for each thread)

1) In what ways does McInnis’s book assist museum professionals in thinking about ways to present slavery to a public audience?

2) Evaluate the methodology and the source material that McInnis employs. Does her inter-disciplinary approach offer you new ways to explore your own work?

Poor Whites and Yeomen Farmers
February 16


February 17: Optional meeting with Professor Gillespie at Wake Forest to discuss her article. We will meet Professor Gillespie at 1 p.m. Professor Gillespie has mentioned the following titles as work that informed her “To Harden

Comparing the North and South
February 23

Discuss: Mark Smith, Listening to Nineteenth-Century America


Blackboard Discussion Threads (I would prefer that students engage at least two lines of discussion and that you offer more than one post for each thread)

1) Is “sensory history” a legitimate approach to understand the past?

2) How could “sensory” history be employed in interpretive presentations (both static exhibits

3) Was the Old South different from the North and the rest of the bourgeois world?

The South at War
March 2


Written Assignment: Based upon the March 2 readings, explore the ideological, psychological, political, and class tensions that existed within the Confederacy. Did the war reveal irreconcilable contradictions in the make-up of the Old South? Your interpretive essay should integrate the work of Faust, Genovese, and Wyatt-Brown.

Book Review (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard): Please critique two reviews of Faust’s *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*. (Give the full citation for the reviews on your post). In what ways do the reviewers buttress or dispute your interpretations of Faust

Historiographical Assignment (350 to 500 words; Post on Blackboard): Pick a book from the suggested readings list and explain the historiographical relationship with any or all three of the readings for this week.

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Spring Break
March 9

Reconstruction
March 16


The New South
March 23


Written Assignment (750 to 1,000 words): Based upon your reading for March 16 and March 23, please make a case as to whether the New South was a revolutionary child of the Civil War or a clone of the Old South. Your interpretations should reference and incorporate both the continuity and discontinuity camps represented in your readings. (Groups A, B, and C will complete)
Black Protest in the Post-Civil War South
March 30

Discuss: Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*

**Blackboard Discussion Threads**

1) Is Hahn’s narrative of black political protest one of possibilities and hope or is it a story of predictable outcomes and despair?

**Southern Progressivism**
April 6

Discuss: William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*

No class
April 13 and April 20

Southern Identity and the Twentieth Century
April 27

Discuss: Fitz Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*

Final Papers Due on April 27.