

History 502

Topics in African American History

Professor Schweningen

Examining America's great paradox--slavery in a land of liberty--the aim of this course is to discuss important issues involving race and slavery in American history. Beginning with West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade, we will consider slavery during the colonial and national periods, emphasizing the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War. We will ask, among other questions, how and why the "peculiar institution" began and endured for more than two centuries.

The required reading will come from three books: Donald Wright, African Americans in the Colonial Era (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson Publishers, 2000) [hereafter AACE]; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweningen, In Search of the Promised Land: A Slave Family in the Old South (New York: Oxford University press, 2006) [hereafter ISPL]; and John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans, eighth edition (New York: McGraw Will, 2000) [hereafter FSTF]. The schedule of assignments is listed below.

In addition to the required reading, graduate students should read be prepared to discuss each week two scholarly essays, articles, or book chapters relating to the week's assignment. Undergraduate students should read be prepared to discuss one scholarly essay, article, or book chapter relating to the week's assignment. This selected reading should be of your choice. Many articles can be found on line through Jackson Library's "Journal Finder"; others can be found in books and periodicals in Jackson Library. At each class session, students should be prepared to summarize briefly the arguments advanced in their outside reading.

Graduate students are required to write a fifteen-page paper analyzing the historiography of slavery; undergraduate students are required to write a five-page paper on some aspect of Sectionalism and the Coming of the Civil War. The papers are due May 4, 2009, and should include a bibliography. Appended to the papers should be a second bibliography of the selected essays, articles, or book chapters that you read during the semester, along with the title of the general subject for the week as listed on the Schedule of Assignments.

There will be a mid-term and a final examination. Both will include objective and essay questions. At least one question on the final exam will be comprehensive.

Attendance is required. Missing more than one class could result in the lowering of your final grade. One third of the final grade will be your outside reading and your paper, one third the midterm, one third the final.

My office is 2105 in the MHRA Building and my hours are Mondays 4:30_6:30, or by appointment.

Schedule of Assignments

First Week: January 26 Housekeeping matters

Lecture: Historians and African-American History

Second Week February 2

Lecture: West Africa

Reading Assignment: Chapter 1 AACE; Chapter 2, FSTF

Third Week February 9

Lecture: The Atlantic Slave Trade

Reading Assignment: Chapter 2 AACE; Chapter 3, FSTF

Fourth Week February 16

Lecture: Colonial America

Reading Assignment: Chapters 3 AACE; Chapter 4, FSTF

Fifth Week February 23

Lecture: Revolutionary America

Reading Assignment: Chapter 4 AACE; Chapter 5, FSTF

Sixth Week March 2

Lecture: Blacks in the New Republic

Reading Assignment: Chapter 6, FSTF

Seventh Week March 16 mid-term examination

Eighth Week March 23

Lecture: The Great Uprooting

Reading Assignment: Prologue, Chapter 1 ISPL; Chapter 7, FSTF

Ninth Week March 30

Lecture: The South's Peculiar Institution

Reading Assignment: Chapter 2, ISPL; Chapter 8, FSTF

Tenth Week April 6

Lecture: Slaves' Reaction to Bondage

Reading Assignment: Chapters 3, 4, ISPL

Eleventh Week April 13

Lecture: Free Blacks: North and South

Reading Assignment: Chapter 5, ISPL; Chapter 9, FSTF

Twelfth Week April 20

Lecture: Pan Africanism and Colonization

Reading Assignment: Chapter 10, FSTF, Chapter 6, ISPL

Thirteenth Week April 27 (papers and bibliographies due)

Lecture: The Sectional Conflict; Freedom!

Reading Assignment: Chapter 11, FSTF; Epilogue, ISPL

Fourteenth Week May 4 final examination