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Office hours: Fridays, 1-3pm or by appointment

**African American History to 1865**  
**History 235/Africana Studies 311, Section 01, Fall 2014**  
**Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00- 3:20 pm**  
**229 Blair Hall**

This course explores the history of African-descended people in the United States from their first arrival in the North American colonies through the end of slavery during the U.S. Civil War. We will investigate the ways African Americans fashioned new worlds and cultures while living under the enormous constraints of slavery and discrimination. Struggles for freedom, full citizenship, and alternative political visions, and the role of such struggles in shaping African Americans' identification with each other as a people, will be a focus throughout. We will also treat differences of class and gender within African American communities. Course materials will include both primary and secondary sources, and as we examine these sources we will consider various methods for discovering and interpreting the history of people whose voices are not always easily found in the historical record.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Attendance:** The quality of our experience in this class will depend on the presence and contribution of all its members. Thus attendance at every class is required. If you must miss a class due to illness or a personal emergency, you must inform me by email before the class that will be missed.

**Participation:** Your contributions to our class discussions are a central part of this course. You will be graded on the quality of those contributions (both in class and on Blackboard).

**Reading:** You are expected to read closely the materials assigned for the course.

**Weekly Blackboard commentary:**

Each week (with the exception of Weeks 1 and 8), you are required to post commentary on the assigned readings on the Discussion Board on the course Blackboard site. This commentary should identify the key arguments made in the assigned material and share questions or offer ideas that stem from the reading. If you would like ALSO to comment on past readings (in light of what you have just learned from the current reading), you are welcome to do so.

The writing in your commentaries will be assessed for its content more than its form. However, if form interferes with a reader's ability to understand your points, I will offer suggestions for improvement.

Commentaries are due on Wednesdays before noon, except for Week 13, when commentaries are due on Monday at noon.

**Mid-term paper:** For Week 8 (due Monday, October 20), a 5-7 -page paper comparing and contrasting the narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs is due at the beginning of class. For your analysis of these primary sources, you can draw on what you have learned thus far about relevant histories from the secondary sources we have read for the class. If you do draw on an argument, point, or example from

a secondary source, you are required to provide a full citation for that source. As you formulate your argument, it would be wise to choose one or two topics or themes around which to organize your comparison. This is a formal writing assignment, and thus you should spend more time editing and revising your writing for this assignment than you would for your weekly commentary.

**Take-home final exam:** A final take-home exam including two short and one long essay questions (students will be given a choice of questions to answer) will cover course material from throughout the term. Final exams will be **due by 2pm on December 17**.

### **GRADING:**

Participation (class discussion and Blackboard commentary): 50%

Mid-term Paper: 25%

Take-home Final Exam: 25%

### **RESOURCES:**

The History Department offers a special resource for students taking history courses who want some additional assistance with history writing and research. The History Writing Resources Center in James Blair 347 is staffed by advanced graduate students who are very familiar with all of the types of history papers. If you would like some help writing a history paper or doing historical research, feel free to make an appointment at the HWRC by calling 221-3756, e-mailing [Write1@wm.edu](mailto:Write1@wm.edu), or going to [www.wm.edu/hwrc](http://www.wm.edu/hwrc). The web site also offers information on hours of operation (M-F 9-5), what to bring for your first consultation, and many helpful handouts and links that will assist you with your history writing.

### **CLASS ROOM GROUND RULES:**

**Academic Integrity:** All assignments submitted for this course must be your own original work. When you draw on material from work written by others, whether or not you quote it directly, you must cite the source appropriately. If you are not certain how or when to cite sources, please make an appointment to see me in office hours to go over it. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be investigated fully, in accordance with the College of William and Mary's honor code.

**Electronic devices:** Laptop computers and electronic readers may be used in class ONLY for accessing course reading material or taking notes. For safety, cell phones may be on but must be set on "vibrate" or silent mode. There is no emailing, texting, playing games, or answering phones during class except in the case of an emergency. Violation of this policy will lead to the loss of the privilege of using electronic devices in class.

### **READINGS:**

The following books are available for purchase at the William and Mary Bookstore. They are also on reserve at Swem Library. Other required readings listed below are available as pdf files on our Blackboard site.

- Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Ira Berlin, Joseph Reidy, and Leslie Rowland, eds. *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998.
- Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*. University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Classic Slave Narratives*. New American Library, 1987.
- Leslie Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*. University of Chicago Press, 2003
- Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South*. University of North Carolina Press, 2013
- James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Harvard University Press, 2008.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

### **Week 1, Why African American history?**

Wednesday, August 27: introduction and course overview

### **Week 2, From Africans to African Americans: The Middle Passage**

Monday, September 1: Film in class, "Africans in America: The Terrible Transformation" (PBS)

Wednesday, September 3: Reading discussion

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*, introduction and chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7 (pp. 1-9, 65-152, 182-207)

### **Week 3: African-American societies and cultures in colonial and early America**

Monday, September 8: Atlantic Creoles

Wednesday, September 10: Reading discussion

Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, prologue, introduction to part 1, and chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-76)

### **Week 4: The ambiguous world of colonial slavery and the invention of race**

Monday, September 15: Race, sex, and marriage in colonial America

Martha Hodes, "Marriage: Nell Butler and Charles," chapter 2 in *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 19-38 (Bb)

Statutes on slave descent, race, and marriage from Virginia and Maryland (Bb)

Wednesday, September 17: Reading discussion  
 Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, Part 2, introduction and chapters 5-6 (pp. 93-176)

**Week 5: The first emancipation: the end of slavery in the North in the Age of Revolution**

Monday, September 22: The American Revolution and gradual emancipation

Wednesday, September 24: Reading discussion  
 Leslie Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*  
 introduction and chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-95)

**Week 6: The meaning of “Africa”: diasporic identities and early African colonization efforts**

Monday, September 29: Reading discussion  
 James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* introduction and chapters 3-4 (pp. 3-16, 67-130)

Wednesday, October 1: Reading discussion  
 James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic*, chapters 5-7 (pp. 131-202)

**Week 7: The everyday world of plantation slavery: domination, negotiation, resistance**

Monday, October 6: Film in class: “The Last Supper” (“*La Ultima Cena*”), Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, director (1976)

Wednesday, October 8: Reading discussion  
 Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (Pantheon Books: 1974), pp. 3-7 (Bb)  
 Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, introduction and chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-92)

**Monday, October 13, Fall Break, no class**

**Wednesday, October 15, no class: begin reading for next week and work on papers**

**Week 8: Narratives of enslavement and resistance**

**Mid-term papers due at the beginning of class (no Blackboard commentaries due this week)**

Monday, October 20: Reading discussion  
 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Classic Slave Narratives*

Wednesday, October 22: Reading discussion

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *The Classic Slave Narratives*

**Week 9: African Americans and slavery in the Native American South**

Monday, October 27: Expansion of slavery and “Indian Removal”

Wednesday, October 29: Reading discussion

Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South*, introduction, chapters 1-3, conclusion (pp. 1-100, 153-54)

**Week 10: Armed resistance to slavery**

Monday, November 3: Film in class: “Nat Turner, A Troublesome Property,” Charles Burnett, director (2003)

Wednesday, November 5: Slave rebellions and reading discussion

Kenneth Greenberg, ed. *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents* (Bedford Books, 1996) Introduction and “The Confession of Nat Turner,” pp. 1-58 (Bb)

**Week 11: Abolitionist activism and the coming of the Civil War**

Monday, November 10: David Walker’s *Appeal* and organized abolitionism

Wednesday, November 12: Reading discussion

Leslie Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* chapters 4, 6, 7, and 9 (pp. 96-133, 170-246, 263-88)

**Week 12: Dismantling Slavery: African Americans during the Civil War I**

Monday, November 17: The process of emancipation in the context of war

Wednesday, November 19: Reading discussion

Ira Berlin, et al, eds. *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War*, (New Press, 1993), selections (Bb)

Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, chapter 5 and postscript (pp.117-141)

**Monday, November 24: No class: view film at evening showing, time and place to be determined, of “Glory,” Edward Zwick, Director, 1989**

**Wednesday, November 27: Thanksgiving break, no class**

**Week 13: Freedom’s Soldiers: African Americans in the Civil War II**

**\*\*Note: Blackboard commentaries due on Monday this week\*\***

Monday, December 1: Reading discussion

*Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* (New York:  
Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998)

Wednesday, December 3: Conclusions