

HIST099: Slavery in the American North

Prof. Cory Young, Fall 2019

Class: Tuesdays (C217) and Thursdays (C218), 9:30-10:45am, School of Continuing Studies

Office Hours: Tuesday, 11am-1pm or by appointment, Location TBD

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Image courtesy of the [New York Public Library](#).

Course Description: Students in this course will examine the establishment, operation, and eradication of slavery in the American North between colonization and civil war. As with all sections of HIST099, our topic of study, while vital in its own right, serves primarily as a setting for grappling with the historical method: how to formulate meaningful questions, to read complex sources, to identify competing perspectives, and to develop persuasive arguments like a historian. In our examination of northern slavery, we will necessarily engage in frank, often difficult discussions about settler colonialism, violence and exploitation, and racial segregation. At the same time, our readings and conversations will confront issues pertaining to the dignity of labor, the challenges of political organizing, the formation of Black communities, and freedom's promises. In all places, slavery and freedom coexisted in desperate tension.

Historical memory is a central theme of this course. Since the U.S. Civil War pitted a slaveholding south against a free soil north, it has become too easy to forget that slavery not only existed above the Mason-Dixon Line, but once thrived there. By learning to think as historians, which includes direct engagement with the archive of northern slavery, students will come to see that human bondage was not just a source of nineteenth-century political conflict, but a foundational pillar of the American project.

Learning Goals

Students will be able to...

- develop their skills [as historical thinkers](#)
- analyze and intelligently discuss a variety of historical sources, both primary and secondary
- advance historical arguments both orally and in writing
- identify formative episodes in the histories of slavery and of the American North
- define African American chattel slavery
- empathize with a diversity of historical actors
- draw meaningful connections between the past and the present

Classroom Requirements and Expectations

In order to pass, students must...

- come to class having engaged meaningfully with that week's readings
- prepare at least one sincere question and one thoughtful comment about that week's subject
- respect the right of their peers to ask questions, make comments, and express responses
- complete all assignments
- demonstrate growth

Grade Breakdown

- Attend office hours, 1%
 - This is only required once, but recommended regularly
- Participation, 25%
 - See classroom requirements and expectations
- Labs, 18%
- Midterm Essay, 20%
- Monograph Presentation, 10%
- Final Project, 25%
- Complete course evaluation, 1%
 - We will make time for this during the final exam period

Assignments

Students will be sorted into four groups—New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—and will become an expert on their locale over the course the semester. **This is contingent upon enrollment.**

- History Labs, 18%

- Each Thursday students will complete a lab assignment that focuses on some aspect of the historical method, six of which are graded. Lab reports must be submitted online before the start of class the following Tuesday. As each lab is different, we will discuss specifics in class.
- “The Newspaper Paper,” Midterm Essay, 20%
Due October 10
 - Students will compose a 1500-word essay (4-5 pages) on a single aspect of slavery in their locale using only an appropriate newspaper. The essay must analyze *at least* a ten-year period and focus on change over time. We will discuss online databases, DC’s local resources, and appropriate research questions as a class. ***Students must clear their topics with me by September 19.***
- “Reporting Gradual Abolition,” Monograph Presentation, 10%
Due October 24
 - In their regional groups, students will prepare and deliver a 10-minute presentation on a monograph pertaining to gradual abolition in their locale. This is essentially an oral book review, and should therefore aim to strike a balance between summary and critique. In other words, a successful presentation will not only answer “what does this book argue?” but also “how does this book argue it?”
- “Historical Commemoration Proposal,” Final Project, 25%
Rough draft due December 5, final draft due December 13
 - Students will draft a 2-3000-word proposal (7-10 pages) for a historical marker pertaining to the history of slavery in their locale. Potential topics include specific people or events, meaningful landmarks, and erased spaces. Although students are not required to actually submit their proposals to relevant authorities, their projects should be novel so that they could submit them should they choose to do so. In other words, do not propose something that already exists! The proposal consists of four sections: historical background, historical significance, marker location, and marker design. ***Students must clear their topics with me by November 5.***

Grading Policy

Student work that meets all expectations earns a B. This means that it advances an original argument, supports it with sufficient evidence, adheres to the conventions of scholarly writing, and contains minimal errors. A-level work meets all expectations, and excels in originality, sophistication, and style. C-level work is lacking in one or more of the basic categories of expectation (argument, evidence, conventions, accuracy), but demonstrates clear effort. Work that fails to demonstrate effort earns a D.

Late work loses one-third of a letter grade for each day that it is late. In other words, work that would have earned a B+ becomes a B, then a B-, etc. Of course, sometimes life gets in the way. Students who have a compelling reason for requesting an extension must clear it with me *at least three days* before the assignment is due. Emergencies are the exception to the rule.

Students reserve the right to appeal a grade, as professors are human beings who make mistakes. Any student wishing to do so must schedule an appointment with me, bring their original work with any comments, as well as a paragraph explaining why, specifically, they feel they should have earned a different grade.

Email Policy

Although I am quite good about responding to emails, I reserve the right to keep free my evenings and weekends, just as you reserve the right to yours. If you send me a message during ordinary business hours, I will make every effort to respond that day. If you send me a message during the evening, you may not receive a response until the next day. If you send me a message over the weekend, I guarantee a response Monday morning, although I might respond earlier. **Before sending any email, please check the syllabus or the assignment sheet. Twice. These aren't just for fun.**

Academic Honesty

As a Hoya, you have agreed to abide by the Georgetown University honor system, pledging the following: *"In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system: to be honest in every academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together."* In the context of this course, this means no plagiarism and no hostile antagonism. You can avoid these pitfalls by citing your sources in the [Chicago-Turabian style](#) and assuming that your peers question and comment in good faith. It is *always* acceptable to ask for clarification of a point.

Student Accommodations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Georgetown University policy, students who self-identify and provide sufficient documentation of a qualifying disability are entitled to receive reasonable academic accommodations. *All students* should familiarize themselves with the various forms of support available through Georgetown's [Academic Resource Center](#).

Course Readings

Students should obtain

- McManus, Edward J. *Black Bondage in the North*. 1973.

and ONE of the following:

(You will read the monograph **on your assigned locale. We'll chat more about this in class.**)

- Gellman, David N. *Emancipating New York: The Politics of Slavery and Freedom, 1777-1827*. 2006. (Ebook)
- Gigantino II, James J. *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865*. 2014. (Ebook)
- Nash, Gary B. and Jean R. Soderlund. *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath*. 1991. (Ebook)
- Melish, Joanne Pope. *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and 'Race' in New England, 1780-1860*. 1998. (Ebook)

Available online

- Archer, Richard. *Jim Crow North: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Antebellum New England*. 2017. (Ebook)
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. 1998. (Ebook)
- Berlin, Ira and Leslie Harris eds. *Slavery in New York*. 2005. (Canvas)
- Clark-Pujara, Christy. *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island*. 2016. (Ebook)
- Fitts, Robert K. "The Landscapes of Northern Bondage," *Historical Archaeology* 30:2 (1996), 54-73. (Lauinger)
- Finkenbine, Roy E. "Belinda's Petition: Reparations for Slavery in Revolutionary Massachusetts," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64:1 (January 2007), 95-104. (Lauinger)
- Gigantino II, James J. "Trading in Jersey Souls: New Jersey and the Interstate Slave Trade," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 77:3 (2010), 281-302. (Lauinger)
- Gronningsater, Sarah L. H. "'Expressly Recognized by Our Election Laws': Certificates of Freedom and the Multiple Fates of Black Citizenship in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly* 75:3 (July 2018), 465-506. (Lauinger)
- Hammond, John Craig. *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West*. 2007. (Canvas)
- Hartog, Hendrik. *The Trouble with Minna: A Case of Slavery and Emancipation in the Antebellum North*. 2018. (Ebook)
- Loughbridge, Nancy. "Chloe's Story," *Cumberland County History* 4:1 (Summer 1987), 31-6. (Canvas)
- Malcolm, Joyce Lee. *Peter's War: A New England Slave Boy and the American Revolution*. 2009. (Ebook)
- Meaders, Daniel E. *Kidnappers in Philadelphia: Isaac Hopper's Tales of Oppression, 1780-1843*. Second Edition. 2009. (Google Books/Amazon preview)
- Nash, Gary B. "Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Domingans in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 65 (1998), 44-72 (Lauinger)
- Newell, Margaret Ellen. *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery*. 2012. (Ebook)
- O'Malley, Gregory E. *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807*. 2014. (Ebook)
- Olsavsky, Jesse. "Women, Vigilance Committees, and the Rise of Militant Abolitionism, 1835-1859," *Slavery & Abolition* 39:2, 357-382. (Lauinger)
- Rushforth, Brett. "'A Little Flesh We Offer You': The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60:4 (October 2003), 777-808. (Lauinger)
- Ross, Marc. *Slavery in the North: Forgetting History and Recovering Memory*. 2018. (Ebook)
- Shirk Jr., Willis L., "Testing the Limits of Tolerance: Blacks and the Social Order in Columbia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1851," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 60, 1993, 35-50. (Lauinger)
- Warren, Wendy. *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America*. 2016. (Ebook)

- Warren, Wendy. ““The Cause of Her Grief”: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England,” *Journal of American History* 93:4 (March 2007), 1031-1049. (Lauinger)
- White, Shane. ““It Was a Proud Day’: African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834,” *Journal of American History* 81:1 (June 1994), 13-50. (Lauinger)
- Zilversmit, Arthur. *First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North*. 1967. (Canvas)

Course Schedule

part 1: beginnings

Week 1, August 29, Frameworks and Overview

Skill: Introductions

- Thursday, August 29
 - Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, prologue
 - Ross, *Slavery in the North*, introduction
 - Explore www.slavenorth.com

Week 2, Settler Colonialism

Skill: Arguments and Historiography (graded)

- Tuesday, September 3
 - Shoemaker, “[A Typology of Colonialism](#)”
 - Warren, *New England Bound*, introduction and chapter 4
 - Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, introduction, chapters 1 and 3
- Thursday, September 5
 - Warren, ““The Cause of Her Grief””
 - Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation*, preface, pages 3 through 11

Week 3, Native American Slavery

Skill: Primary Sources and Thesis Statements (graded)

- Tuesday, September 10
 - Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, chapters 7 through 9 and epilogue
- Thursday, September 12
 - Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You”

Week 4, The Slave Trade

Skill: Databases (graded)

- Tuesday, September 17
 - O'Malley, *Final Passages*, introduction and chapter 5
 - Gigantino II, "Trading in Jersey Souls"
- Thursday, September 19

Midterm essay topic due

 - Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work*, introduction and chapter 1

part ii: operations

Week 5, The Law

Skill: Navigating Archives

- Tuesday, September 24
 - McManus, *Black Bondage in the North*, chapters 1 through 6
- Thursday, September 26
 - Meet at the Library of Congress.

Week 6, Enslavement and Resistance

Skill: Secondary Sources (graded)

- Tuesday, October 1
 - Fitts, "The Landscapes of Northern Bondage"
 - White, "It Was a Proud Day"
 - Finkenbine, "Belinda's Petition"
 - Loughbridge, "Chloe's Story"
- Thursday, October 3
 - No reading due—look ahead to next week

Week 7, Revolution

Skill: Museums

- Tuesday, October 8
 - Malcolm, *Peter's War*
- Thursday, October 10

Midterm essay due in class

 - Stinnett, "[American Inheritance](#)"
 - Meet at the National Museum for African American History and Culture

part iii: eliminations

Week 8, Slave Narratives

Skill: Reading Images (graded)

- Tuesday, October 15
 - [*Life of James Mars, a Slave Born and Sold in Connecticut*](#)
- Thursday, October 17
 - Listen to “[In Search of Adeline Hensen](#)”

Week 9, The Triumph of Gradual Abolition

Skill: Constructing Feedback

- Tuesday, October 22
 - No reading due
- Thursday, October 24

Monograph presentations in class
students will present on one of the following:

 - Nash and Soderlund. *Freedom by Degrees*
 - Melish, *Disowning Slavery*
 - Gellman, *Emancipating New York*
 - Gigantino *The Ragged Road to Abolition*

Week 10, The Limits of Gradual Abolition

Skill: Empathy (graded)

- Tuesday, 29 October
 - Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion*, introduction, chapter 5 through epilogue
 - Nash, “Reverberations of Haiti in the American North”
- Thursday, 31 October
 - Pennsylvania State Senate [Committee Report](#) on the 1830 Census

part iv: endurance

Week 11, Freedom and Fugitivity

Skill: Mapping as Method

- Tuesday, November 5

Final project topic due

- Berlin and Harris eds., *Slavery in New York*, chapters 5 and 6
- Olsavsky, “Women, Vigilance Committees, and the Rise of Militant Abolitionism”
- Thursday, November 7
 - Meaders, *Kidnappers in Philadelphia*, introduction and browse three to five entries.

Week 12, Jim Crow North

Skill: Understanding Material Culture

- Tuesday, November 12
 - Archer, *Jim Crow North*, chapters 1 and 7
 - Shirk, Jr., “Testing the Limits of Tolerance”
- Thursday, November 14
 - Gronningsater, “Expressly Recognized by Our Election Laws”

Week 13, Emancipation

Skill: Fiction and Film

- Tuesday, November 19
 - Hartog, *The Trouble with Minna*
- Thursday, November 21
 - 6 July 1827 and 13 July 1827 issues of *Freedom's Journal*
 - Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave*, Chs. 16 and 17

Happy Thanksgiving! No class this week. Make sure you thank Lincoln.

Week 14, Memory

Skill: Peer Review

- Tuesday, December 3
 - Ross, *Slavery in the North*, chapters 1, 7 and 8, and epilogue
- Thursday, December 5
 - [*Report of the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation to the President of Georgetown University*](#)
 - Course Evaluations

Final Project due December 13 at 5pm.