

History 367

Slavery in the United States

Brigham Young University
Fall 2015

Section 1 – MWF 1:00–1:50 p.m., 3016 JKB

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 p.m.; Wednesdays 11-12; and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will examine what I take to be the most important themes and developments in the history of slavery in the United States, from its uncertain origins in the 17th century to its temporary demise in the 19th (give or take a few centuries on either end). Our course readings feature some of the best work done recently by historians of American slavery. The lectures will examine the “main story” of American slavery, and many of the readings address specific people and places within that larger story. Much of our discussion will focus on how this attention to individual cases illuminates (or does not illuminate) the mainstream of this history.

Required Readings (all should be on sale at the bookstore):

Michael Guasco, Slaves and Englishmen: Human Bondage in the Early Modern Atlantic World (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014)

Mark M. Smith, ed., Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt (University of South Carolina Press, 2005)

Richard Dunn, A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life and Labor in Jamaica and Virginia (Harvard University Press, 2014)

Patrick Rael, Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777-1865 (University of Georgia Press, 2015)

Douglas A. Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II, reprint edition (Anchor, 2009)

Assignment and Grading Breakdown (for exam and due dates see class schedule below):

Class participation	7%
Reading Responses	18%
Midterm Exam #1	15%
Midterm Exam #2	16%
Research paper and such things (see below)	25%
Final exam	19%

Class Participation

This part of your grade is based on your attention to lectures and especially your contribution to our discussions of the assigned readings. The discussions will be an important part of the class and you all bear a responsibility to make them work. We will discuss the core issues involved in the readings rather than the details, so you should read for argument more than detail.

I will grade your participation by looking at its general pattern across the semester. Thus more than one or two absences will hurt this grade, for if you are not in class you obviously cannot participate. What you say will matter at least as much as how much you talk. And I will evaluate participation based on more than what you say; for instance, perfect or near-perfect attendance and full engagement in the class (taking good notes, etc.) will earn the quiet student who makes no or very few comments or questions in class a B+ for participation.

Technology Social Contract: Whereas, in the 21st century, actually paying attention 100% of the time in class has for some people become a feat of ratiocination too herculean to be expected; but Whereas, that is not true for me in my class, not only because digital distractions kill your attention and are rude to my ownself, but also because they distract innocent souls around you; Therefore Resolved that:

- 1) I have a zero tolerance policy on digital distractions in the classroom, whether handheld or laptop;
- 2) To take this class is to agree to solotask rather than multitask; to agree to be unavailable to your Twitter followers, those you follow on Twitter, your Facebook friends, your Instagram peeps, et al, for 50 minutes every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. (If you are worried this outrageous lack of availability will alienate all your virtual friends, you can make me the bad cop and tell them That Mean Old Professor Mason [TMOPM] is making you pay attention in class);
- 3) Those who stay registered in this class have agreed to this social contract;
- 4) Infractions will be punished by me having to stop class and call you out on violating this agreement. I have no wish to actually have to enforce this, so if I have to do so I can predict that my tone will fall into the “reproving betimes with sharpness” category, probably moved on more by irritation at derailing all of our time in class rather than by any higher Spirit. So let’s not even go there.

In-Class Reading Responses

These will be on some but not all of the days we have readings due. I will post the questions on Learning Suite in advance, and you will submit your responses there as well. All responses are to be **300-500 words** (give or take – roughly 1-2 pages, in other words). Every assignment is due **one hour before the beginning of class** on those days. Responses received later that same day lose half the available credit. After that day any response turned in will earn zero credit. All told, these will add up to 13 different responses, worth 1.5% of your total course grade individually. I will drop your lowest score (hence the total of 18% of your course grade).

Exams

The exams will feature essays of various lengths. You will take the midterms in the Testing Center and the final in our usual classroom. The final will feature a comprehensive essay as well as non-comprehensive shorter essays.

There will be only one makeup time for the midterms. If you miss one and have an excuse, you are welcome to make it up on Wed., Dec. 9, time and place TBA. If this ends up applying to you, we need to be in contact about the specific time and place and logistics.

Research papers and other such things

1) **GROUP PRESENTATION AND LESSON PLAN**: Teaching majors are required to do this option and other majors should probably not; I could be convinced to let Teaching majors out and others in, but one must make a good case. I hope to settle on who is in this group (capped at 4 members) during the first few days of class. The assignments relative to this option are:

A. **Create a video presentation of no more than 15 minutes in length** presenting key aspects of the topic in question. The group will show this video in class on the day specified below and **lead a class discussion** of the video and its related topics for 15 minutes (give or take). Both the video presentation and the discussion will work best if you successfully connect the subject matter to the main themes and questions of the course. Be creative with the video, and we will all thank you and you will have a better time producing it.

The most basic preparation for doing this video is to read the following:

- Alan Galloway, The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717 (Yale University Press, 2002), Introduction and Chapter 11
- Christina Snyder, Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America (Harvard University Press, 2010), all

Every member of the group should do all the reading in preparation for this video, for two basic reasons. First, the work involved here is meant to be roughly equal to those who do a research paper, so dividing up the reading amongst the group is weak sauce from that point of view. Second, your individual lesson plans need to show evidence of having engaged with and profited from all the relevant reading.

I will grade you for this exercise based on how well you contribute to producing the presentation and discussion. You will also help in grading by rating the contributions of every member of your group. **This activity will take place in class on Oct. 5, and will comprise 10% of your total course grade.**

B. Create a detailed lesson plan for how you would teach the subject matter involved if you had more like 50-60 minutes rather than 20-25. Specify what educational level you are tailoring these lesson plans for, and of course make them appropriate for that grade level. Good lesson plans show evidence of original thinking about content and pedagogy, rather than simply reiterating the group's outline for your presentation and discussion in our class. They are also detailed and specific enough to show how thoroughly the teacher has thought through the plan (e.g. specifying what particular video clip you might show or quote you might use to make a point is far better than "quote here" or "clip here") – in other words, the more specific the outline, the better. **The lesson plan will comprise 15% of your total course grade. It is due October 13.**

2) **RESEARCH PAPER**: This should require less description as you have likely done its like before, researching a particular question (that's better than just researching "a topic") from a variety of relevant sources both primary and secondary. The assignments relative to this option are:

A. A prospectus for your paper. The prospectus should lay out your question (not just a topic), then discuss how the sources proposed in the bibliography will help you answer that question. You do not need to provide even a tentative answer – just the question and how you propose to answer it. The prospectus is to be **no shorter than 2 and no longer than 3 pages, not including the (required) bibliography** with full cites of the sources involved. A note on sources: I am very skeptical of secondary sources from the internet. Past students have been overly reliant on these sources, which are by definition unreliable.

The prospectus will be due Sept. 26. It will comprise 5% of your total course grade.

B. The final paper, which is to be **9-12 pages**. It must include either a bibliography (which would not be included in the page count) or full cites the first time you cite every source (short cites throughout are acceptable if you have a bibliography).

This paper will be due Oct. 27. It will comprise 20% of your total course grade.

Here is a list of databases at BYU's library website (lib.byu.edu) that relate to slavery; one or more of these could be invaluable to you in your research:

19th Century U.S. Newspaper Digital Archive; African American Music Reference; American Civil War Letters and Diaries; American Civil War Research Database; American Memory: Historical collections of the National Digital Library; American Song; Sabin Americana Digital Archive; Slavery and Anti-Slavery; Slavery, Abolition and Social Justice, 1490-2007

There are of course a multitude of other primary source collections online; some that I would recommend you investigate include:

<http://atlanticslaverydebate.berkeley.edu>

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>

On all writing assignments, felicity and especially clarity of style matter, along with the logic and force of your argumentation. I will consider the quality of the writing as part of the grade. (See the writing hints at the end of this syllabus for what is expected.) Staying within the page limit also matters; in doing so, you must use normal sized fonts and normal (1-inch) margins, and you are to double-space.

Turning in all the written assignments on time is important: *the late penalty for each is one half-grade per day late*. You will turn in all papers on Learning Suite; they are due at 11:59:59 p.m. on the days indicated.

Emailing me outlines or drafts is highly recommended in the weeks leading up to the paper's due date. (I will not read drafts sent within one week of the due date, however.) You will likely do much better if you do this.

Academic Honesty:

BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are responsible not only to adhere to the Honor Code requirement to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be

honest. If you have any questions about these standards, and even if you don't think you do, I suggest you read the Academic Honesty Policy available at <http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2011-2012ucat/GeneralInfo/AcademicHonesty.php>

If I detect academic dishonesty on any written assignment or exam, the offender will face a range of sanctions ranging from a zero on the assignment to failing the course.

Other Disclaimers:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or <http://www.ethicspoint.com>; or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Schedule of Classes and Readings (which can change at any time – stay posted):

Week 1:

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|---------|--|
| Aug. 31 | Introduction |
| Sept. 2 | The Atlantic Plantation Complex |
| Sept. 4 | Early English thought on slavery
READ by 9/4: Guasco, <u>Slaves and Englishmen</u> , 1-79 |

Week 2:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Sept. 7 | NO CLASS – Labor Day holiday |
| Sept. 9 | Early English encounters with slavery and race
READ by 9/9: Guasco, <u>Slaves and Englishmen</u> , 80-154 |
| Sept. 11 | The beginnings of slavery in Anglo-America
READ by 9/11: Guasco, <u>Slaves and Englishmen</u> , 155-233 |

Week 3:

- Sept. 14 Servitude and slavery in the early Chesapeake, continued
- Sept. 16 Slavery in the early Northern colonies
- Sept. 18 The rise of slavery in the Lowcountry

Week 4:

- Sept. 21 and 23 From societies with slaves to slave societies
 READ by 9/23: Dunn, Tale of Two, 1-105
- Sept. 25 NO CLASS – work on prospectus

**** Research Paper Prospectus DUE 9/26 ****

Week 5:

- Sept. 28 The Atlantic slave trade to North America and associated issues
- Sept. 30 The Stono Rebellion, Part I
 READ by 9/30: Smith, Stono, xi-29
- Oct. 2 Stono Part II
 READ by 10/2: Smith, Stono, 30-124

Week 6:

- Oct. 5 **GROUP PRESENTATION:** The Indian slave trade
 Slavery in Indian Country
- Oct. 7 Slavery and antislavery in the 18th-century Northern colonies
- Oct. 9 NO CLASS – Midterm #1

**** MIDTERM #1: Take in Testing Center Oct. 8, 9, or 10 (checking Testing Center website for hours) ****

Week 7:

- Oct. 12 Slavery and the American Revolution
 READ by 10/12: Rael, Eighty-Eight, xv-61

**** Teaching Group Lesson Plan DUE 10/13 ****

Oct. 14 Slavery and the American Revolution, continued
READ by 10/14: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 62-69

Oct. 16 Slavery and the Constitution
READ by 10/16: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 69-87

Week 8:

Oct. 19 Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic, Interpretation 1

Oct. 21 SPEAR, Interpretation 2
READ by 10/21: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 91-113

Oct. 23 The expansion of slavery and its political impact

Week 9:

Oct. 26 The Missouri Crisis
READ by 10/26: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 113-125

**** RESEARCH PAPER DUE 10/27 ****

Oct. 28 and 30 Slave life in the early nineteenth century
READ by 10/28: Dunn, Tale of Two, 106-180
READ by 10/30: Dunn, Tale of Two, 181-270

Weeks 10 and 11:

Nov. 2 and 4 The expansion of slavery and its human impact
READ by 11/2: Dunn, Tale of Two, 271-322
READ by 11/4: Dunn, Tale of Two, 323-367

Nov. 6 and 9 Nineteenth-century slave resistance
READ by 11/6: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 126-159
READ by 11/9: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 163-183

Nov. 11 The antebellum politics of slavery, part I
READ by 11/11: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 183-191

Nov. 13 NO CLASS – Midterm #2

**** MIDTERM #2: Take in the Testing Center Nov. 12, 13, or 14 ****

Week 12:

Nov. 16 and 18 TAPOS continued
 READ by 11/16: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 191-209
 READ by 11/18: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 209-235

Nov. 20 The Election of 1860 and Secession
 READ by 11/23: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 239-251

Week 13:

Nov. 23 The Civil War part 1
 READ by 11/23: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 251-267

Nov. 24-27 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving holiday

Week 14:

Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 The Civil War and Emancipation, continued
 READ by 11/30: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 267-279
 READ by 12/2: Dunn, Tale of Two, 368-410

Dec. 4 The aftermath, part 1
 READ by 12/4: Rael, Eighty-Eight, 280-329

Week 15:

Dec. 7 and 9 Slavery since emancipation
 READ by 12/7: Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name, 1-296
 READ by 12/9: Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name, 299-403

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 16, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m

HELPFUL WRITING HINTS

Clarity and felicity of expression are things that I, your gentle reader, value highly. I know “this is not an English course, blah, blah,” but still, let me stress this point. Writing skills are among those I hope you all will hone in this course, so I hope you’ll take these tips to heart. The **WRITING CENTER** (<http://english.byu.edu/writingcenter/>) can often also help with these and other matters, and you could benefit from showing them a draft before you turn it in. Be assured there is no stigma attached to getting help on writing – we all need help, or we’d be living large off our book sales profits. To this end, here are some specific suggestions:

- 1) Strive for *simplicity* in your writing. Short, direct sentences and phrases are much better than high-falutin’ fancy-pants oratory, even in an academic paper. Trying to be fancier than necessary will almost always earn you an “AWK” (for awkward). Most problems can be avoided by being simple and direct.
- 2) Remember that the point of language is to communicate, not to obscure, meaning. Read back over what you’ve written to make sure you are saying what you think you are saying. *Don’t assume a spell check can catch everything – it just doesn’t work that way.* You may feel like a fruitcake when you do it, but if you read a paper *out loud* you can often catch some of the most egregious or nonsensical errors.
- 3) You should also *enlist someone else to proofread and read for meaning*, to make sure you are not leaving unsaid what needs to be said. I would also be delighted to read over drafts, outlines, etc., to help in this and other regards. (I will not read and comment on papers sent to me within two working days before a paper is due, however.)
- 4) Having someone else read your paper will also help you clarify points that you think are self-evident because you are closer to the subject. Keep in mind that you should *assume your audience knows next to nothing* about the subject.
- 5) Be sure your paper is a coherent essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion. You should present your argument clearly and then support it with relevant evidence. Be sure, as you construct and then read back over the essay, that *one point leads logically to another, you transition between points well*, etc. Logical presentation and flow will really help you present your points clearly (if you don’t, why bother?).
- 6) Strive for coherence *within as well as between paragraphs*. Remember the basics: each paragraph should have ONE (1) main idea, introduced well by a topic sentence. Topic sentences can also help in transitions between paragraphs / main ideas. The inventor of the paragraph sought to bless all our lives; honor his / her legacy in your writing.

Here are some very common problems that I trust you will look out for to keep me, your grader, friendly to your cause:

1) The passive voice: Avoid this like the plague. The passive voice is when the subject of your sentence has something “done to” it/him/her. A classic example of the passive voice is used in government, because it obscures the actor: “Mistakes were made.” The active voice is much better and clearer: “The CIA [or whoever] made mistakes.”

2) Noun-verb disagreement: When the noun is plural or the verb refers to more than one noun, the verb should be plural. Same with singular. And throughout the *whole sentence*.

3) Incomplete / run-on sentences: Having a natural voice in writing doesn't *always* mean you write like you talk. Each sentence should have a noun and a verb. (For good examples of incomplete sentences, see the second and third sentences just above in #2.) Perhaps a more common problem is the run-on sentence, which can often be avoided simply by keeping your sentences simple and direct.

4) Tense inconsistency: Oh, the whiplash I've gotten over the years reading sentences or paragraphs that switch from the past to the present tense and then back again! The easiest way to avoid this in a history paper is to write in the past tense for past events. But whatever tense you choose to describe past events, *pick a tense and stick with it!*

5) Apostrophe and quotation mark confusion: Caused by confusing possessives with plurals. The plural does not require an apostrophe, while the possessive does. The same goes for plural possessives. Keep these things straight. So for instance, you are taking Matt Mason's course, but are not Masons yourselves. But if you go over to the Masons' house, . . . you get the picture, I hope. Related problems come when people aren't clear on how we use quotation marks in the United States. Get clear on this.

6) Overuse / underuse of the comma: I thought this was basic stuff before I started grading student papers. Be sure you know the rules on when to use and not use a comma.

In short, English can be a nutty language, and it takes some work to keep it from being an instrument of torture for your reader. So while this is far from an exhaustive writing guide, from a purely selfish perspective I hope it will keep you from repeating some of the mistakes that have put me on the rack in times past.