

**AMH 6939, Section 001**  
**Seminar: Women and Slavery**

CRN: 92434, 3 Credit Hours

Prerequisites: Admission to graduate history program or permission of instructor

Wednesdays, 4:00-6:50 p.m.

AH, Rm. 105

Fall 2013

Florida Atlantic University



**Instructor:** Dr. Talitha LeFlouria

**Office Location:** AL, 153

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 2:00-3:50 p.m., and by appointment

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**Course Description:**

In this course, students will be introduced to the major themes incorporated in the study of female slavery in the American South and other geographic spaces where slavery has prevailed. Topics covered in this course include female slave labor and the construction of the southern plantation economy, gendered violence, medical exploitation, and resistance. While this course explores women's experiences of slavery in the traditional context, it also examines alternative spaces of female captivity including the southern convict lease system of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early

20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and contemporary issues pertaining to the global epidemic of female sex-trafficking.

After a few weeks of being introduced to the historical literature undergirding the sub-field of women and slavery studies, and becoming familiarized with the practices and methodologies implored in historical research and writing, students—in consultation with the professor—will develop their own research projects that will result in the completion of a seminar paper utilizing the research methods and analytical skills acquired in this course as well as HIS 5060.

**Course Objectives:**

By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to do each of the following:

- Identify and summarize the major themes in the study of women and slavery
- Construct an individual research project
- Exhibit the skills necessary for scholarly historical research
- Compose a cogent and well-crafted essay that contributes to the field of women & slavery studies

**Course Structure:**

HIS 1930 is a seminar course. Although the prime objective of this course is for students to produce a unique work of scholarship that explores, chiefly through the use of primary source materials, some aspect of women and slavery studies, class meetings will be conducted with an emphasis on in-class discussion. Therefore, it is imperative that students attend class regularly, complete a close reading of the required texts, and be prepared to **actively** engage in class discussions. **ALL** students should come to class prepared to contribute to the intellectual atmosphere of the course, while taking away critical information to enhance his/her existing knowledge about the course topic or related subject matter.

**Course Evaluation:**

Research Paper & Oral Presentations	40%
Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography	15%
Introduction	10%
Partial Draft (minimum 7 pgs.)	10%
Rough Draft	10%
Slave Narrative Primary Source Analysis	10%
Discussion Questions	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

*Grading Scale:*

Letter grades issued at the conclusion of the course are based upon the following scale:

A	93-100	A-	90-92	B+	87-89
B	83-86	B-	80-82	C+	77-79
C	73-76	C-	70-72	D+	67-69
D	63-66	D-	60-62	F	Below 60

### **Weekly Readings**

During weeks 2-7, you are expected to perform a close reading of the required text(s). A close reading includes an identification and examination of each of the following: “the overarching theoretical framework(s), the core research methodologies, the primary source base, the narrative techniques/structures, and the author’s major historiographical contributions. Rather than simply reading a text, you should be working with it to understand, critique, and appreciate how the author deploys a particular constellation of sources, frameworks, methodologies, and narrative structures to make an innovative and/or analytic claim about the past.”<sup>1</sup> (Do not worry—these skills will be acquired over the duration of the semester, so students should not be overly concerned with the application of these strategies at the outset of the course).

### **Weekly Discussions**

During weeks 2-7, students should arrive to class with a minimum of **two** critical, thought provoking discussion questions based upon the weekly readings. These questions should solicit responses that extend beyond “yes” or “no,” and stimulate extended dialogue among the class.

### **Final Research Paper:**

At the conclusion of the course, each student will be expected to submit a 15-25 page final research paper, and to conduct a formal presentation of his/her work. All essays must be based upon one’s original work and must include appropriate citations. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and perhaps for the course. In preparation for the final research paper, students will be required to submit a 1 ½ to 2 page, double spaced, research prospectus that describes the focus and objective of his/her essay and an annotated bibliography of at least ten secondary sources. *Specific guidelines for the research paper, research prospectus, and annotated bibliography will be disseminated at a later date.*

### **Slave Narrative Primary Source Analysis:**

Students will participate in the practice of history by providing a presentation of one slave narrative to his/her peers. Slave narratives can be found in the “Born in Slavery” collection on the Library of Congress website, which contains audio and written files (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>). Choose one narrative that offers the voice of an enslaved woman. You may also select from slave narratives found in the University of North Carolina’s Documenting the American South online collection, or you may use printed primary volumes. In your brief (7-10 minute presentation), you should provide background information on the particular narrative, including the name of the subject being interviewed, the name of the interviewer, the gender of the interviewer, the location (city and/or state) where the interview was conducted, and discuss what themes relative the study of female slavery the narrative addresses. Also, you should assess the evidentiary merit of the narrative, as well as the problems implicit in the use of slave testimonies as a source of evidence.

### **Absenteeism:**

Excessive absences will negatively impact your grade. Since the course only meets once a week, it is imperative that students regularly attend class. You will be permitted one unexcused absence for the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your grade by

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<sup>1</sup> This definition was provided by Dr. Dierdre Cooper Owens, Assistant Professor of History, University of Mississippi.

one letter for each missed class. For example, two unexcused absences will result in a maximum grade of a B. Any grade below a B- is considered a failing grade.

**Punctuality:**

Please try to arrive to class **ON TIME**. The productivity of this course is largely contingent upon your timely attendance. It is, thereby, strongly encouraged that you arrive to class as promptly as possible. Also, important announcements are shared at the beginning of class meetings. It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain what vital information he/she may have missed during this crucial period.

**Collegiality:**

At some point in this course, you will be expected to critique one another’s work. This should be done in a constructive and respectful manner. Anything less will not be tolerated.

**Students with Disabilities:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute course work must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)—in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, MOD 1 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 117 (561-799-8585); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 128 (772-873-3305)—and follow all OSD procedures.

**Regulation 4.001 Code of Academic Integrity**

**University Honor Code:**

*“Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty.” Students who plagiarize will automatically receive an F in the course, and will be subject to harsh disciplinary action. For more information, see the Code of Academic Integrity in the University Regulations at [http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001\\_Code\\_of\\_Academic\\_Integrity.pdf](http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf).*

**Required Texts:**

Deborah Gray White, *Arn’t I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985).

Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

Kara Siddharth, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia

University Press, 2010).

**Required Articles & Book Chapters (Available in Blackboard):**

Mary Ellen Curtin, "Female Prisoners," in *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000)

Talitha LeFlouria, "'The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Cuts Cordwood: Exploring Black Women's Lives and Labor in Georgia's Convict Camps, 1865-1917,'" *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Fall, 2011).

Amrita Chakrabarti Myers, "'Sisters in Arms': Slave Women's Resistance to Slavery in the United States," *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 5, 1996.

**Recommended Writing & Style Guides**

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

*The Chicago Manual of Style*, Sixteenth Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1 (8/28): Introduction**

- Review Syllabus
- Discuss historiographical trends in the study of women and slavery

**Week 2 (9/4): Women and Slavery in the Antebellum South**

- Read Deborah Gray White, *Arn't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*

**Week 3 (9/11): Female Slave Resistance**

- Read Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*

**Week 4 (9/18): Sickness and Slavery**

- Read Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*

**Week 5 (9/25): Black Women and Slavery in the Caribbean**

- Read Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society: 1650-1838*

**Week 6 (10/2): Female Sex Trafficking: A Global Perspective**

- Read Kara Siddharth, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*

**Week 7 (10/9): Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South**

- Read Talitha LeFlouria, "'The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Cuts Cordwood: Exploring Black Women's Lives and Labor in Georgia's Convict Camps, 1865-1917'" and Mary Ellen Curtin, "Female Prisoners," in *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (see **blackboard**)

**Week 8 (10/16): Student/Professor Research Consultations**

- **Research prospectus due**
- **Annotated bibliography due**

Week 9 (10/23): **Remembering Slavery: The Power of Testimony in the Production of History**

- Read Amrita Chakrabarti Myers, “‘Sisters in Arms’: Slave Women’s Resistance to Slavery in the United States”
- **Conduct slave narrative primary source analysis**

Week 10 (10/30): **Student/Professor Research Consultations**

- **Research paper introduction and thesis statement due**

Week 11 (11/6): **Writing Period (Optional Student/Professor Research Consultation)**

- **Email partial draft of research paper (minimum 7 pgs.) to assigned peer reviewer and the professor by Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.**

Week 12 (11/13): **In-class Critiques of Partial Research Paper Drafts (minimum 7 pgs.)**

Week 13 (11/20): **Writing Period (Optional Student/Professor Research Consultations)**

Week 14 (11/27): **Rough draft of research paper should be submitted, electronically, by this date (can also be submitted earlier)**

Week 15 (12/4): **Final Student/Professor Research Consultations**

Week 16 (12/11): **Submit Final Research Papers & Conduct Oral Presentations**