

History 320      Comparative Slavery  
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### Course Goals and Expectations:

This course is designed to familiarize you with some of the main themes in the history of world slavery, focusing on African and African American slavery in the western hemisphere. We will begin with a brief look at classical slavery in Europe and Africa, then proceed to a more in-depth examination of African slavery in the Americas, between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Finally, we'll consider emancipation and the transition to freedom in comparative perspective, including the related question of race relations after the end of slavery. Throughout the course we'll discuss several common themes in the history of unfree people: legal status; demographics and work routines; treatment or "conditions of life;" community and culture; access to freedom; relationship to the culture and society of free people (whether of the same or another racial background); and life after emancipation. Last, we'll be discussing contemporary slavery as we read *A Crime So Monstrous*, an important recent book on world slavery today, and as we discuss articles presented by everyone in the class.

Our readings and discussions in much of the course will focus on the conditions and culture of slavery in the western hemisphere, detailing the interaction of three cultures: European, African, and American Indian. Of course within those broad racial categories there were actually hundreds of different cultures, language groups, and ethnic divisions. In addition, we will consider the question of how the nature of slavery in various parts of the world affected racial attitudes and race and class relations after emancipation. This debate dates back to the 1930s and 1940s, at least, when several scholars argued that race relations were "better" in Latin America (particularly in Brazil) because slavery in those parts of the world was "less harsh" than in the United States. Thus, the United States's miserable record of race relations in the twentieth century could be traced to the nature of slavery in the nineteenth-century southern United States. More recently, many historians, journalists, sociologists, and other scholars have demonstrated that twentieth-century racial attitudes and relations were not all that different in the United States and Latin America. Still, the central questions remain important for us: to what extent and in what ways did the different experiences of slavery in different parts of the Americas influence the nature of racial attitudes and race relations in the post-emancipation era?

This set of questions is naturally relevant to our discussion of slavery around the world today: how do we end it?, how do we integrate former slaves into the world as free people?, and how do we ensure that former slaves are treated equally? Most estimates say that there are more than 25 million slaves in the world today. Thankfully there is a great deal of attention paid to slavery today—when I started teaching this course almost 20 years ago there was almost nothing written about it, and students struggled to find investigative journalism devoted to contemporary slavery. Now we know a great deal more about slavery today, although it seems to remain as difficult as ever to stop it. As we read about historical and contemporary slavery throughout this class, please think particularly about the "timeless" characteristics and nature of slavery, as well as those things that are obviously different today. And consider ways that all of us can help end slavery.

**\*\* This class involves a considerable amount of reading—some of it pretty time-consuming—and essay quizzes and exams. Given that the summer schedule of assignments means we "meet" every day, it can be exhausting. Do your best to keep up, and please let me know immediately if you're having particular trouble with the reading or are falling behind.**

**\*\* The schedule for this term is especially compressed because we have only three weeks to cover a huge amount of material. The reading, quizzes, and exams come fast and furious!! I'm sure that you all can handle it, but just be ready for a fast pace. As you'll see in the detailed reading schedule, there are days when the reading is quite light, and of course you can use Saturdays and Sundays to catch up or read ahead.**

**Grading:**

discussion board participation	150 points
exams (x3)	600 points
quizzes (x3)	150 points
article presentations (x2)	100 points
	<b>Total: 1000 points</b>

  

Scale:	A+	100-99	C+	79-78
	A	98-92	C	77-70
	A-	91-90	C-	69-68
	B+	89-88	D+	67-65
	B	87-82	D	64-60
	B-	81-80	D-	59-55

**Discussion Board:**

On most days I'll post discussion questions and start threads on the Bb site discussion board. Of course I hope as many people participate as possible, but you shouldn't feel like you must participate every day. I consider this as a replacement for what would often take place in class, and therefore you should participate as often as you can. But things happen and some days you inevitably will be less prepared than others, which is fine. Naturally you will need and want to participate on a fairly regular basis—most days. Consider this also as your chance to demonstrate that you've read the material and thought about it. Ideally we'll have some good discussions that go back and forth. Last, I normally won't read posts after a day has passed—one of the problems with the summer schedule is that we have to move quickly. Don't spend your time posting on the DB several days after we've moved on—I won't read them and you won't get credit for them. Of course if you have comments or questions about material from a previous day you should feel free to email me.

The discussion grade is based on both the quality and quantity of your posts, but I'll look particularly for those that evidence a careful reading of the material rather than a perfunctory one- or two-sentence summary (in other words, quality is probably more important than quantity). It's particularly important to analyze the readings and engage the material, rather than simply summarize what you've read. I will try to follow-up on many, if not all, posts, either on the DB or privately via email.

**\*\*The Discussion Board is the best way to get help and really engage the material. Like most online classes it's critical that you participate in the DB on a regular basis, it's how you can really get something out of the course (and do well). In a traditional class it's easier to come to class, listen to the lecture or discussion, and then do well on an exam or paper. In the online format that's not really possible. More than in other courses, you really do get out of an online course what you're willing to put into it. It's hard for me to really elaborate certain points or discussions if there isn't a robust DB exchange—my posts are often the equivalent of some things I'd say in class as part of a lecture or group discussion.\*\***

**Quizzes and Exams:**

Quizzes and exams are nearly all essay format. As mentioned in the introduction video, you will need to use the "Respondus Lock-Down Browser" to access the quizzes and exams. They will be posted to the Bb site and you'll have a 12-hour (for quizzes, noon to midnight on a single day) or 24-hour (for exams, 9:00 p.m. one night to 9:00 p.m. the next night) window to take each of them (listed on the schedule). Quizzes and exams are timed, though, so you won't have twelve or twenty-four hours to take them, just that long to access them. Generally you have an hour for the quizzes and two hours (or a bit more) for the exams (I hope that makes sense!).

**Blackboard site:**

The Bb site is organized in a pretty straightforward way and I suspect it will be intuitive, particularly if you have any experience with on-line classes. The course schedule is divided into five units, with each of the main themes for that unit (outlined in the videos) represented with a folder. Within the folders are web sites, additional readings, images, and so forth that are important for supplementing the regularly assigned readings. These are things that I would normally present in class as part of a lecture or discussion. You need to read them and look at them as carefully as possible. I do not expect that everyone will be able to read everything that I include in every folder, but you will need to read those that I particularly emphasize. There will be some that I explicitly state are optional, or I might direct you to a particular part of a web site. Some folders are pretty full, others are nearly empty. Again, the main point is that you need to view everything you can in each folder, and especially things that I identify as critical.

**Articles on contemporary slavery:**

Throughout the course we'll be reading about and discussing slavery in the world today. To better inform ourselves, everyone is going to find and present to the class two articles about contemporary slavery. They can be from a variety of sources: newspapers, magazines, books, etc. I assume, of course, that most of these will be from the Internet. If you choose something from the Internet, of course, be sure it is recommended by, or linked to a reputable site. If you are unsure of a particular site, please feel free to contact me.

Here are some good places to start (these links are also included on the Bb site under the folder for "Course Documents" in the Course Documents tab):

[CNN Slavery Today](#)

[Antislavery International](#)

[Free the Slaves](#)

[BBC News Slavery Today](#)

[Historians Against Slavery](#)

For the article presentations, you should send to me a link to the article and provide a short summary (a paragraph or two) that places the article in context of our readings. This may include relating your article to other pieces on contemporary slavery or to our readings and discussions of historical or contemporary slavery. In other words, you should consider the many "timeless" aspects of slavery as you read and present articles on contemporary slavery. This will be difficult to do, of course, at the beginning of the class before we have read much other material, and don't feel uneasy about just summarizing the first article you present; by the time you do a second one, you'll be better able to compare it with our other material. You should also be prepared to answer questions from other students about your article.

I'll post the summaries and links as they come in (roughly three per day); please do one article in the first half of the course and another in the second half.

To get us started, I'll post the first article with a summary on the first day of class, and you can read that as an example.

**If you have problems with Blackboard or Respondus, please contact the I. S. U. Help Desk (ext. 2910) as soon as possible. I will always be very sympathetic to your technical problems—we all hate computers from time to time!—but almost certainly I'll be unable to help you get them resolved.**

**Official-sounding stuff:**

Plagiarism: borrowing sentences or even phrases from the text, the internet, or from another student without quotes and citation is against university rules and will not be tolerated in the class. I will enforce ISU's stated policy on academic dishonesty at: <<http://web.indstate.edu/sjp/docs/code.pdf>>.

A specific point for the quizzes and exams: you cannot complete the short-answer essays using phrases lifted from other websites. In addition, if you quote from our assigned readings, be sure to put it into quotation marks and cite the page number from which it's taken. Generally you need to write the essays in your own words—quote from the readings as little as possible.

Writing Standards: Writing (grammar, spelling, organization, clarity, style, etc.) is an important part of your grade. It is your responsibility to make sure that all papers you turn in meet minimal writing standards; please take advantage of the Writing Center in the Cunningham Memorial Library (if possible); the Center is not just for remedial work; it is also for those who desire to excel in their writing.

**Foundational Studies:**

In the FS 2010 program, Comparative Slavery meets the Upper Division Integrative Elective requirement. As an Upper Division Integrative Elective, this course requires that students engage the material through multiple “ways of knowing.” Within the Foundational Studies program, this means ways of knowing about the world or ways of solving problems. Most courses in the Foundational Studies program teach from a particular perspective or “way of knowing” about the world and human behavior. The Upper Division Integrative Electives then allow you to make use of multiple ways of knowing to examine a particular topic or theme. In History 320, we will employ the following ways of knowing on a regular basis: 1. Historical studies; 2. Social and behavioral sciences; 3. Literary studies; 4. Global Diversity and Cultural Perspectives; and 5. Ethics and social responsibility. In addition, the course requires that students make use of, and improve, their communication and composition skills through in-class discussion and multiple writing assignments.

Learning Objectives for all courses that satisfy the UDIE requirement:

1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing.
2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue.
3. Analyze and write at an advanced level.

Skill Applied Learning Requirements for all courses that satisfy the UDIE requirement:

1. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop critical thinking skills.
2. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop information literacy skills.
3. Include a graded writing component, which whenever possible is developmental.
4. Must incorporate opportunities for students to critically read and analyze sophisticated, complex text, and to write intensively.
5. Must include assignments that apply information from within and across various “ways of knowing.”

**Required Readings:**

Herbert Klein and Ben Vinson III, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)  
John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)  
E. Benjamin Skinner, *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-Day Slavery* (Free Press, 2009 edition, if possible, which has a new Afterward by Skinner)  
articles and other material on the Blackboard site

**Class outline: issues, topics, exams & quizzes, and assigned readings****UNIT I**

What is slavery? The international slave trade and expansion of forced labor to the Americas.

5.12            Skinner, xi-41  
                  Kevin Bales (on Bb)  
                  Orlando Patterson (on Bb)  
                  Slavery in the Roman Empire (on Bb): read the short summary (the first linked file) and whatever else interests you in the folder (the images are also good).

European expansion into the western hemisphere. Use of indentured servants, American Indians as slaves, and the transition to African slaves.

5.13            Thornton, 1-42  
                  Klein, to 16  
                  Bb material: there are a couple short summaries (one page) and primary documents related to early servant and slave laws in Virginia

5.14            **Quiz 1 [covers material from 5.12-5.13], available noon to midnight**

The international African slave trade.

5.14 & 5.15    Skinner, 153-191  
                  Thornton, 72-128; 183-205  
                  Bb material: be sure to read the summary (from the PBS site) in the first linked file, and look at all the images and maps (which are good). The last two files are for your interest if you have time (the article on the slave trading post in Ghana is quite good).

5.16-5.17      **EXAM 1 [Unit I], available 9:00 p.m. on 5.16 to 9:00 p.m. on 5.17**

**UNIT II**

Economics, Demographics, and Work Routines among slaves in the Americas:

5.19            Skinner, 42-104  
                  Thornton, 129-182  
                  Klein, 17-63  
                  Bb material: in the first two folders for this unit there are several images that trace slavery and work in Latin America, particularly sugar

5.20            Klein, 65-118  
                  Bb material: in the last three folders are images and documents related to slavery in North America. Begin with the Discussion Questions and narrative in the third folder (“Work Routines in North America: 16th-18th Centuries”).

5.21 Quiz 2 [covers material from 5.19 & 5.20], available noon to midnight

### UNIT III

The slave community and slave culture: marriage, family, women and gender, and religion.

5.21 Skinner, 105-191 (part of this is a re-read from Unit I)  
Thornton, 183-205

5.22 Klein, 119-164  
Bb material: in the first two folders (“Marriage” and “Women/Gender”) there are images and some short documents related to slave families and marriage in North America.

5.23 Thornton, 206-271  
Bb material: in the third folder (“Religion”) there are two short articles on the significance of spiritual songs and the religious tradition of conjure, in addition to some good photographs and images related to slave religion.

5.23-5.24 EXAM 2 [all of Unit II and material from 5.21-23], available 9:00 p.m. on 5.23 to 9:00 p.m. on 5.24

The slave community and slave culture: resistance, runaways, and rebellions.

5.26 Thornton, 272-303

5.27 Klein, 165-192  
Bb material: in the final folder for this unit are a number of images and documents related to slave resistance, primarily in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two files contain numerous images on the Underground Railroad in the United States and the Haitian Revolution, as well as a good, brief summary of the latter.

5.28 Quiz 3 [covers material from 5.26-5.27], available noon to midnight

5.28 Thornton, 304-334

### UNITS IV & V

Free people in a slave society: How did living in a slave society affect people? The defense of slavery. The attack on slavery. The legacies of slavery. Race relations after slavery, focusing on Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States. What is the racial legacy of slavery? Contemporary Slavery

5.29 Klein, 193-246  
Bb Material: in the first folder of Unit IV are some images and documents defending slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century United States. There is also a critical self-assessment by a contemporary antislavery advocate who used to own slaves himself.

Bb material: in the last folder are documents and one article on ending slavery in the Americas and one article on how to end slavery today.

5.30 Skinner, 192-end

Bb material: in the first three folders for Unit V are a series of short editorials and articles suggesting the impact of historical slavery on society and culture today (mostly in the U. S.)

Bb material: in the last two folders are several longer pieces that debate the issue of race relations today and how they are or are not related to slavery. Read particularly the selections from Carl Degler, Joel Williamson, and Kevin Bales; the piece by David Roediger is good, but read it only if you have time and interest.

5.30-5.31 EXAM 3 [Units IV and V], available 9:00 p.m on 5.30 to 9:00 p.m. on 5.31