

*Syllabus*  
*HIST 364 History of Slavery and Emancipation in the U.S.*  
*Spring 2013*  
*William G. Thomas III*  
*University of Nebraska*

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*Course Description:*

This course covers the history and development of slavery and the process of emancipation in the U.S. This course will closely examine the economic, social, legal, political, and cultural characteristics of American slavery, how these changed over time, and how slavery grew in the Atlantic world. The South became the primary location for the development of slavery in the U.S., although other states and colonies actively shaped the institution as well, and the history of slavery in the South followed a different trajectory from other societies in the Americas. This course fully explores the development of emancipation in the U.S. from the colonial period to the 20th century including self-libration, slave resistance, compensated emancipation, the antislavery and abolition movement, and colonization projects.

The U.S. has been shaped by various cultures and peoples, including Native American, British, African, Spanish, French, and Caribbean. The formation and consequences of racial and regional identities, first, are at the center of this study, and the course charts these processes along several axes. Second, this course explores the encounters of Americans of all backgrounds with the changing, modernizing world economy and society. Third, the course examines the role of the Civil War in the collapse of slavery. Chronological treatments include the following major subjects: the encounter of Indian, European, and African c. 1607, the development of slavery in the Atlantic, the nature of the transatlantic slave trade, the American Revolution and its impact on slavery, the politics of slavery and emancipation in the early republic, the expansion of slavery in antebellum America, the problem of sectional crisis and secession over slavery, and the experience and legacies of the Civil War and emancipation in U.S. history.

This course will use a wide array of digital history projects for students to investigate primary sources-- letters, diaries, photographs, and maps from and about the region. Students of all backgrounds are welcome in this course to learn about the problem of slavery in the U.S., the process of emancipation, and the legacies of slavery and emancipation today.

*Course Objectives:*

- to give students the experience and opportunity to do history for themselves and participate in it through gathering evidence, communicating ideas, and engaging with historical scholarship.
- to improve fluency and proficiency in and historical thinking, primary source analysis, essay writing, and critical analysis.
- to develop comprehensive and deep knowledge of the history of slavery and emancipation in

the United States, including the Atlantic World context of its development from 1570 to the present--the events, structures, ideas, and people that shaped slavery as social system and their relevance today and the process of emancipation in the U.S. and its relationship to other societies.

*Course Readings:*

Books:

David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*  
Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*  
Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War*  
Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*  
Steven Ash, *A Year in the South: 1865*  
James Walvin, *Atlas of Slavery*

Selected Essays:

Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1  
([http://matrix.msu.edu/hst/hst202/docs/berlin\\_time\\_space.pdf](http://matrix.msu.edu/hst/hst202/docs/berlin_time_space.pdf))

Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. (<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/essays/fieldsideolandrace.html>)

Required Electronic Archives:

Virtual Jamestown  
[www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org)  
Geography of Slavery  
<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/>  
Papers of George Washington--Road to Revolution Letters  
<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/revolution/letters/index.html>  
Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War  
<http://lib.valley.virginia.edu>  
Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, Emory University  
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>  
Visualizing Emancipation, University of Richmond  
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>

*Grading Scale:*

A+ 97-100	C+ 77-79
A 94-96	C 74-76
A- 90-93	C- 70-73
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 84-86	D 64-66
B- 80-83	D- 60-63

F below 60

*Grading:*

2 page Discussion Posts (7 of 8)	20 %
Mid Term Exam	20 %
5-7 page Essay	20 %
Final Exam	20 %
Attendance (10%)/Participation (10 %)	20 %

Discussion Posts are biweekly and meant for students to try out ideas, gain fluency in historical thinking, and to demonstrate use of primary source evidence. These regular, brief writings are an essential aspect of the practice of scholarly engagement. The 5-7 page Essay due at the end of the semester will require students to assemble the "best of" the evidence they have gathered in their respective posts. Posts will be assessed on a 10 point scale based on: significance of the thesis, quality of historical thinking, and the effectiveness of the use of primary source evidence.

*Academic Policies:*

Attendance at all lectures and class periods is required. Essays will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at class session. Assignments will not be accepted after the due dates except in cases where students can document an illness, family emergency, or university-related responsibility that prevented them from completing the assignment on time.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments.  
(<http://www.unl.edu/writing/>)

Participation will be graded on completion of occasional in-class writing assignments and hand-ins (one-page typed lists for each of the website assignments). Please remember to bring these to class the day they are due for discussion.

*Office Hours:*

Students are welcome to come by regular office hours to discuss the course, the history major, assignments, or other academic issues. Students are also welcome to schedule a meeting outside of office hours. The best way to reach me is always by email, and I encourage all students to communicate questions directly.

*Academic Honesty:*

All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University. Violations of academic honesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Dean of Students.

*Schedule of Assignments:*

(note: all assignments and due dates are subject to change as necessary in the semester)

Week 1: Introduction

1/7 Introduction

1/9 Discussion:

[Thomas Jefferson, \*Notes on the State of Virginia\*, query 14 and 18](#)

[Olaudah Equiano, \*Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano\*](#)

[Thomas R. Gray, \*The Confessions of Nat Turner\*](#)

[Frederick Douglass, \*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass\*, chapter 7](#)

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapter 1

Week 2: Encounters and the Origins of Slavery in the New World

Discussion Post: Virtual Jamestown-- what were the first encounters like between English, African, and Native Americans in the Chesapeake? Select 2-3 documents explain three (3) encounters. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

<http://www.virtualjamestown.org>

1/15 Lecture Topic: Exploration

1/17 Lecture Topic: Race and Slavery in the 17th century

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapters 3 and 4

Primary Source Reading: [Court Cases of the Johnson Family-College of William and Mary](#)

Week 3: Slavery and the Atlantic World

Discussion Post: Find three (3) examples of runaways from The Geography of Slavery project, and

briefly explain the evidence for their motivations. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class. [http:// www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos.html](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos.html)

1/22 Lecture Topic: 18th-century Chesapeake Society

1/24 Discussion: [Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," American Historical Review, Vol. 85, No. 1](#)  
([http://matrix.msu.edu/hst/hst202/docs/berlin\\_time\\_space.pdf](http://matrix.msu.edu/hst/hst202/docs/berlin_time_space.pdf))

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapter 5 and 6

Primary Source Reading: [Carter Family Correspondence](#)

Week 4: The Slave Ship and The Slave Voyage

1/29 Lecture Topic: The Diligent, A Slave Voyage

1/31 Discussion: Walter Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*

Reading: Walter Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*

Week 5: The Transatlantic Slave System

Discussion Post: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, Emory University--select either a place or a voyage and explain with three (3) specific examples how that place or voyage was similar to or differed from other places at the same time period.

2/5 Guest Lecture: African Society and Culture

2/7 Guest Lecture: The Middle Passage

Reading: James Walvin, *Atlas of Slavery*, chapters 1-15 (pp. 1-107)

Primary Source Reading: [Olaudah Equiano, \*Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano\*](#)

Week 6: Revolutions and Constitutions

Discussion Post: Papers of George Washington--Road to Revolution Letters--why do white planter Virginians participate in the revolution? Find three (3) reasons in Washington's correspondence and briefly explain. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.  
<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/revolution/letters/index.html>

2/12 Lecture Topic: The American Revolution

2/14 Lecture Topic: The Haitian Revolution

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapters 7 and 8

Primary Source Reading: [Thomas Jefferson, \*Notes on the State of Virginia\*, query 14 and 18](#)  
[The Sonthonax Broadside \(1793\)](#)

Week 7: Free Black Life

2/19 Discussion: Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*, chapters 1-4

2/21 Discussion: Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*, chapters 5-9

Reading: Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

Primary Source Reading: [Register of Free Blacks, Augusta Co., Va.](#)  
[Edward "Ned" Queen v. Rev. John Ashton, 1794 judgment](#)

Week 8: Slavery in the 19th century South

Discussion Post: Valley of the Shadow--select three documents of (3) different types (newspaper, letter, diary, census record, will, . . . ) in the period 1857-1861 from Augusta County, Virginia, to explain the ways that southern whites rationalized, defended, or explained slavery and discuss their significance. Was there a difference between private and public expression regarding slavery? Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

2/26 Lecture Topic: Slavery and the Cotton South

2/28 Discussion: [Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.](#)

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapter 9 and 10

Primary Source Reading: [John C. Calhoun, "Slavery as a Positive Good"](#)  
[James Henry Hammond, "Cotton is King"](#)

Week 9: Mid Term

3/5 Review

3/7 MID TERM EXAM

Week 10: Anti Slavery and Abolitionism

Discussion Post: Valley of the Shadow--Letters and Diaries--how did Northern and Southern women characterize the conflict over slavery, what language and symbols did they use to describe their respective sectional positions? Select 3 exemplary documents for discussion and bring to class with list of key points. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

3/12 Lecture Topic: Explaining Abolitionism and Anti-Slavery

3/14 Lecture Topic: The Rise of the Republican Party

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapters 12 and 13

Primary Source Reading: [Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" \(1852\)](#)  
[Harriet Jacobs, \*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl\* \(pp. 1-150\)](#)

SPRING BREAK

Week 11: The Slave Market and the Interstate Slave Trade

3/26 Lecture Topic: Modernity and Slavery's Expansion in the U.S. South

3/28 Discussion: Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*

Reading: Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*  
Primary Source Reading: [John Coleman to John McCue, May 29, 1857](#)

Week 12: Violence, Revolts, and Resistance

Discussion Post: Valley of the Shadow--Newspapers--how did Northern and Southern editors characterize raid by John Brown in 1859, what language and symbols did they use to describe their respective positions? Select three (3) exemplary documents for discussion and bring to class with list of key points. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

4/2 Lecture Topic: Prosser, Vesey, and Turner  
4/4 Lecture Topic: John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapter 11  
Reading: Walvin, *Atlas of Slavery*, chapters 17 and 18  
Primary Source Reading: [Thomas Gray, The Confessions of Nat Turner](#)

Week 13: Political Crisis and The Civil War

4/9 Lecture Topic: Lincoln and Slavery  
4/11 Lecture Topic: Republicans and War Powers--Making Freedom National

Reading: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, chapters 14 and 15  
Primary Source Reading: [The Demus and Christy Family Letters](#)

5-7 Page Essay Due 4/12 5 p.m.

Week 14: Emancipation

Discussion Post: Visualizing Emancipation--select three (3) events in one place or topic--evaluate their relationship to one another.

4/16 Lecture Topic: The Meaning of Emancipation  
4/18 Discussion: Stephen Ash, *A Year in the South*

Reading: Stephen Ash, *A Year in the South*  
Primary Source Reading: [Freedmen and Southern Society Project Post 1865 sample documents](#)

Week 15: Review

4/23  
4/25

Week 16: Exam Week--Final Exam