Introduction to African American History, Part I: Beginnings to Civil War and Reconstruction

History 250
Winter 2014
Mon/Wed 2-3:20 pm

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Stuckey
207 Chapman Hall

Contact information:
Office Hours:
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M/W 12:00-1:00PM
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Course Description
This course surveys the history of African people and their descendants in the U.S. from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade through the end of Reconstruction. Topics include slave trade, middle passage, life in plantation south, culture, family structure and resistance, and the experience of free blacks, North and South. We will read the work of historians and primary documents from the periods of study. We will focus, in particular, on black identity in slavery and freedom. We will debate the influence of Africa on African Americans, the importance of slave resistance and the meanings of freedom.

Course Objectives
To learn the history of black Americans during this period;
To debate issues based on evidence (primary and secondary sources);
To improve writing skills;
To think critically about identity and “community.”

General method of instruction
Lectures and discussions.

Recommended preparation
Willingness to read carefully, to discuss earnestly, and write and revise.
Class assignments and grading
This class is a combination of lecture and discussion. Lectures will provide background, while readings and discussions will focus on details and debates; discussions (based on readings) will be held in discussion sections. Students will be graded on their participation, reading responses, discussion, two in-class tests, one take home essay, and a short research paper.

Discussion Section
Discussion sections will be run by Adam Turner. Mr. Turner is part of my teaching team and is responsible for grading all written work, exams, papers, and class participation. He and I will work together to ensure fair grading across all of the sections. He is your first point of contact with any and all questions related to discussion sections and grades. Learn his name and stay in communication with him during the term.

Course Requirements and Grading
Class Participation 15%
Class Message Board article posting—10% See details below
Test 1 15% February 10
Essay 15% Due February 12
Test 2 20% March 17
Slave Narratives Paper 25% March 14

Readings
Required Texts
--Quintard Taylor, Jr., From Timbuktu to Katrina: Readings in African-American History, Vol. 1
--Course Packet available at Duck Store.

All readings will also be available on reserve in the library.

Class Participation (15% of grade)
Discussion sections work best when everyone thoughtfully prepares for them and participates. I expect each of you to contribute to the learning community of your discussion section. Class participation will be graded on the following criteria: attendance, preparation (i.e. reading and taking notes), handing in writing assignments, random checking of reading notes, and possible pop quizzes.

Note Taking You are required take notes on the lectures and readings. These notes must be kept in a bound notebook or three-ring binder which you are required to bring to
every class meeting. *Laptop users must sit in the first row and must use their computers only for taking notes. Using your laptop in class is a privilege and will be taken away if abused. Your GTF will monitor laptop (and other technology) use in the classroom.*

**Message Board: The Past is Present (10% of grade)**
Each week, you will find a journalistic article (i.e. newspaper or magazine) that is related to the themes of this course and post it to our class message board along with your analysis of why your chosen article speaks to the course themes. You will also read the articles posted by your classmates and join in the conversation that has been started by the initial post and comments.
Articles should be posted by Friday of each week.
Some suggestions:
--You can ask your classmates to contemplate specific passages in the article.
--You can post a few questions about it.
--You can highlight intriguing contradictions, and hypothesize about what is at stake in the article as it relates to the idea of the “past being present.”

**Final Paper (25% of your grade)**
Each student will write an independently produced, primary source based paper from a common set of primary sources known as the *Federal Writers’ Project Slave Narratives*. The paper will be 6-7 pages in length and based on at least three slave narratives that are least 3 pages in length. You will develop a paper topic based on the major themes of the Pre-Reconstruction African American experience as gleaned from readings and lectures. Some examples include:
The Domestic Slave Trade
Escaping Slavery
Everyday Resistance
Family Life
Religion
The Lives of Slave Women
Slave Diet
African American Involvement in the Civil War
Plantation Life
The Lives of Slave Men
The Lives of Slave children
Life away from work (play, religion, family, courting, leisure activities, music

The *Slave Narratives* will be made available to you on reserve in Knight Library and the due dates for paper related assignments can be found within the syllabus from Weeks 7 to 10. You will receive additional instructions during the term.
Class Rules and Policies

**Attendance** It is important that you attend every class session, both lectures and discussion sections. Attendance will be taken in sections and if necessary in lecture and will be factored into your participation grade.

**Email** All email communications will be sent to your University of Oregon email address. Please use only your university email address when contacting me. I will not respond the messages sent via commercial email accounts (i.e. Gmail or Yahoo). Important: Your GTF is your first point of contact for all questions related to discussion sections and grades.

**Late work** Late work will not be accepted.

**Assignments** All assignments must be typed, double spaced, and in Times New Roman font, with standard margins.

**Academic Integrity** Unless otherwise specified, all assignments, presentations, and examinations are to be completed independently.

**Plagiarism** is using others’ ideas and/or words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. Plagiarism with result in failure of the course and will be reported. Please ASK if you have any questions.

**Classroom Decorum** In this classroom people and ideas are respected. Interrupting and other outbursts will not be tolerated. Please put turn your cell phones off prior to the start of class. Absolutely no internet surfing, text messaging, Tweeting, Facebooking, Myspacing, Friendstering, iChatting, G Chatting, Skyping, Instant Messaging, or use of any other form of social media is allowed. Those using computers to take notes must sit in the first row of the lecture hall. The recording of lectures is not without demonstrated medical need. There is to be no eating in class, however beverages are acceptable.

**Disability Statement** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

This syllabus is subject to modification with notice as necessary.
Week 1  Africa
January 6  Course Introduction, Ancestral Africa
January 8  Finding new lands and labor; trading in slaves

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 1
Primary Source Reader: *From Timbuktu to Katrina*, Chapter 1, pp.1-5

Week 2  Africans in the Atlantic World (1492-1800)
January 13  Middle Passage; slavery in the Caribbean and Latin America
January 15  Early settlements and ambiguous status

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 2
Primary Source Reader: *From Timbuktu to Katrina*, Chapter 1, pp.5-12 and Chapter 2, pp.13-14

Week 3  Establishing North American Slavery (1520s to 1720s)
January 20  No Class, Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
Extra credit opportunity: participate in a campus or community event created to honor Dr. King and provide to Professor Stuckey or Mr. Turner documentary evidence of your participation, for example a photo of you at a march or the program of a talk and you will receive 2 bonus points on your midterm exam.

January 22  Codification of Slavery

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 3
Primary Source Reader: *From Timbuktu to Katrina*, pp.15-17
Week 4  Eighteenth-Century Slave Societies (1700-1780s)
January 27  Slavery in New England and the Mid Atlantic
January 29  Slavery in the Upper and Lower South, Florida, and Louisiana

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 4  
Primary Source Reader: *From Timbuktu to Katrina*, Chapter 2, pages 17-23 and 38-39

Week 5  African Americans and the Struggle for Independence and in the Early Republic (1763-1830)
February 3  The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom during the American Revolution
February 5  Building communities in the early Republic

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 5  
Primary Source Reader: *From Timbuktu to Katrina*, Chapter 3, all

Week 6
February 10  Midterm Test in class. You will receive a take home essay question when you turn your test in.
February 12  Take home essay test due by 3:20PM. Class will not meet.

Required Readings
Text Book: *The Struggle for Freedom*, Chapter 6
Week 7 Life in the Cotton Kingdom
February 17 The Domestic Slave Trade

February 19 Slave life in the Antebellum South

Required Readings
Text Book: The Struggle for Freedom, Chapter 7
Primary Source Reader: From Timbuktu to Katrina, Chapter 4, all

Final Paper assignment: Choose your paper topic and sources. You will receive additional information on how to do this from the professor well in advance.

Week 8 Opposition to Slavery
February 24 Free blacks in Antebellum America

February 26 Abolitionism in Black and White

Required Readings
Text Book: The Struggle for Freedom, Chapter 8
Primary Source Reader: From Timbuktu to Katrina, Chapter 5, all

Final Paper assignment: Draft your introduction and write an outline of your paper.

Week 9 Civil War
March 3 The Path to the Civil War
March 5 African Americans and the Civil War

Required Readings
Text Book: The Struggle for Freedom, Chapter 9
Primary Source Reader: From Timbuktu to Katrina, Chapter 6, all

Final Paper Assignment: Begin drafting the body paragraphs of your paper.
Week 10  Reconstruction
March 10  African Americans and the Civil War
March 12  African Americans and the Civil War cont. and the Promise
          Reconstruction

Required Readings
Text Book: The Struggle for Freedom, Chapter 10
Primary Source Reader: From Timbuktu to Katrina, Chapter 7, all

Final Paper due to GTF on Friday, March 14, 2014 by 5PM

Exam Week
In class test 2 on exam day, Monday, March 17, 2014, 3:15 PM