

History 498: The Age of Emancipation

Spring 2010

Tuesdays, 2-4:50

Professor [Diana Williams](#)

Office: SOS 277

Office hours: Wednesdays 9am-11am

Course #37247R

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[FAQs and General Policies](#)

To look at slavery and emancipation as phenomena that extended well beyond the geographical borders of the United States is to discover a whole range of new events and actors in one of human history's most compelling dramas. This seminar seeks to resituate the traditional US-based narrative of Civil War and Reconstruction in a broader temporal and geographical context. It asks when the Age of Emancipation was, why it came about, and who it principally affected. Covering issues ranging from the start of gradual emancipation in New England to the legal abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, we will examine the origins and ideological underpinnings of antislavery and abolitionist movements across the Atlantic World. We will pay special attention to the different methods by which those defined as "chattel" slaves in the Atlantic World both attained and redefined the meaning of liberty. Active participation in weekly discussions and the development of a substantial research paper will constitute the main basis for the grade.

Because of the enrollment size and subject matter, I intend to run this course as a research seminar, by which I intend for it to be much heavier on readings, discussion, research, and writing than other history courses. The course will culminate in the development of a substantial research paper.

Some examples of paper topics that would engage the course's subject matter could include coverage of a particular emancipationist event or abolitionist figure's travels abroad, outside the U.S. It could also include coverage abroad of slavery and/or abolitionist related events here. Papers may focus on how certain aspects of emancipation were specific to (even exceptional within) a local community, so long as they engage somehow with the idea of and interest in slavery and emancipation as existing in places other than the U.S. South.

Requirements:

- Attendance & Class Participation (20%)
- Office Hours Meetings (5%)
- Paper Proposal & Bibliography (5 pages, due Friday, February 12) (10%)
- Rough Draft (10 pages, due Friday, March 5) (15%)
- One in-class essay exam on the readings (Tuesday, March 23) (25%)
- Final Paper (18-25 pages, due Friday, April 30) (25%)

Books to Purchase

- David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford, 2006).
- Ira Berlin et al., *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1992).

Schedule of Classes

January 12-Introduction. Film (Amistad)

January 19-- Atlantic Slave System(s)

Davis, Prologue & Chapters 1 & 5 from *Inhuman Bondage* (**blackboard—please order the book ASAP**)

Melish, Joanne Pope. "Emancipation and the Em-Bodiment of 'Race': The Strange Case of the White Negroes and the Algerine Slaves." In *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America*, edited by Janet Moore Lindman and Michel Lise Tarter, 223-36. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. (**Blackboard**)

Nathan Huggins, "The Deforming Mirror of Truth" (**Blackboard**)

January 26—Colonial and Revolutionary North American Slavery

Morgan, Edmund. "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox." [Journal of American History](#) 59, no. 1 (1972): 5-29.

Davis, chapters 6 ("Slavery in Colonial North America," p. 124-140) and 7 ("The Problem of Slavery in the American Revolution," p. 141-156)

February 2— Slavery and Emancipation in the Caribbean

Davis, chapter 8 (Brazil, Caribbean, French, Haitian Revolutions)

Sue Peabody, "Negresse, Mulâtresse, Citoyenne: Gender and Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1650-1848," p. 56-78 in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*. (blackboard)

Thomas C. Holt, "The Essence of the Contract: The Articulation of Race, Gender, and Political Economy in British Emancipation Policy," in *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, p. 33-60. (**blackboard**)

February 9— Free Black Life in New England

Paper Proposals with Preliminary Secondary Bibliography, Primary Source Base Due Friday, February 12

Melish, Joanne Pope, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* (Cornell, 1998), Chapter 3 (**blackboard**)

----. "The Condition Debate and Racial Discourse in the Antebellum North." *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 4 (1999): 651-72. (blackboard) (20 pages)

Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black in a Two-Story White House, North* (1859). Available from the [Internet Archive](#).

February 16—Southern Slavery

Davis, chp. 9-10 (pps. 175-204)

Frederick Douglass, [Narrative](#)

February 23— Abolitionist Feminism I

Stowe, [Uncle Tom's Cabin](#), Part I. Available from the website, Uncle Tom's Cabin in American Culture.

Selections from Sklar, ed., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Slavery in the Era of Emancipation*. TBA (ebrary)

March 2— Abolitionist Feminism, II

Rough Draft of Papers Due by Friday, March 5

Stowe, [Uncle Tom's Cabin](#), Part II

Selections from Sklar TBA

March 9— Abolitionism

Davis, chapters 12 (“Explanations of British Abolitionism,” p. 231-249) & 13 (“Abolitionism in America,” p. 250-268)

March 23—Midterm Exam plus Library Research Session with Sue Tyson

March 30—Runaways, Maroons, and Slave Conspiracies

Davis, chapter 11

Nat Turner's [Confessions](#)

Martin Delaney, [Blake: or, the Huts of America](#) (available from Uncle Tom's Cabin website)

April 6— Emancipation and Beyond, I

Davis, Chapter 15 & Epilogue (p. 297-331)

Berlin, ed., *Slaves No More*, Chp. 1 (p. 1-76) & 2 (p. 77-186)

April 13—Emancipation and Beyond, II

Slaves No More, Chp. 3 (p. 187-233)

Hannah Rosen, “A Constitutional Convention,” Chapter 4 of *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Post-Emancipation South*. (blackboard)

April 20—Emancipation and Beyond, III

Guterl, Matthew. “After Slavery: Asian Labor, the American South, and the Age of Emancipation.” *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (2003): 209-41. (blackboard)

Scott, Rebecca J., and Michael Zeuske. "Property in Writing, Property on the Ground: Pigs, Horses, Land, and Citizenship in the Aftermath of Slavery, Cuba, 1880-1909." *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 44, no. 4 (2002): 669-99.

April 27—Final Papers Due; Student Reflections