

# **The History of Antislavery Thought and Action**

**Summer 2009**

**Instructor:** Michael Stancliff

**Format:** Hybrid—the course meets daily  
online and face-to-face on Tuesdays,  
7:00-8:40 pm

**Office:** FAB N230H

**Office Hours:** Perpetual by email, in person,  
M-F, 2-3pm and by appointment

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JHR 598: The History of Antislavery Thought and Action surveys resistance, rebellion, and reform across historical eras of slavery. Beginning with the earliest known records of slavery and carrying forward to the present, the course fosters a critical, historical understanding of slavery and antislavery thought and action. This course is both interdisciplinary and action oriented, consulting historical scholarship in historical, rhetorical, sociological, and cultural studies as a scholarly basis for considering policy and practice in our own era of forced labor. Students write short, critical responses daily and twice weekly report on their individual research. A final research essay challenges students to do comparative research and analysis of antislavery thought and action within the broad historical context developed throughout the semester.

Our hybrid format allows instruction and conversation each day via the basic functions of our Blackboard site, primarily the Discussion Board. It also allows students to share their research with classmates (via the Scholar's Log). For the duration of the semester, office hours are constant. Send me an email whenever you have a question about the readings or assignments, to test ideas for your Final Paper, or just to share reactions and responses to the course overall. The face-to-face meetings on Tuesdays consist of brief lectures, discussion, and conversations about Final Paper research. I also look forward to the opportunity of more face-to-face meetings. Please send an email to schedule a conference.

The compressed summer semester requires students to do a considerable amount of the work each day of the semester. This is an intensive course, so please schedule your work time accordingly.

## **Course Texts**

*Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World.* Davis, David Brion.

*Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy.* Foner, Eric.

*Classic Slave Narratives.* Gates, Henry Louis, editor.

*Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Rise of Racial Equality.* Goodman, Paul.

*Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery.* Hochschild, Adam.

### ***Other readings***

*Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem.* Miers, Suzanne  
(selections will be made available).

Any additional course readings will be on reserve at Fletcher Library or otherwise made available.

## Course Goals

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Have a strong understanding of political and rhetorical patterns across the history of slavery and antislavery action.
- Have a well-informed historical perspective on controversies and debates within contemporary slavery and human trafficking.
- Have developed an independent research area within the interdisciplinary field of antislavery study.
- Have greater proficiency researching and writing at the graduate level.

## Assignments

### Responses to Readings and Lecture Notes (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday) 200 points

Each Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, a Response to Readings and Lecture Notes is due. To log your Responses, find the most recent thread at our Blackboard Discussion Board. There you will find my lecture notes, which will be posted *by midnight the night before*. Each Response consists of two parts: A) a detailed engagement with the readings and lecture notes and B) comments on what struck you the most in the readings for that day. Lecture notes consist of comments of key themes and assertions in the readings and suggestions for tracing connections among readings and across contexts of slavery. With each set of lecture notes, questions and provocations are posed for your careful consideration. Reading responses should be 200-250 words total. *I recommend composing the responses in a document, then pasting them in to your Blackboard post.*

Students must also **respond to three** of their classmates' posts **each day**.

### Scholar's Log 100 points

Each Wednesday and Friday by midnight, students will post a thread on the Discussion Board reporting on their individual research. This Scholars Log will consist of two parts: A) Comments that link individual research with the week's readings, and B) summaries of sources from the individualized bibliographies. This assignment is meant to achieve two ends at once as students inform their classmates about an important book or article in the process of pursuing their own individualized research. Students thus teach others as they learn. The Logs should discuss major conclusions, methodologies, theoretical insights, biases, whatever seems most relevant or interesting. You may also choose to post a traditional scholarly annotation on the model of an annotated bibliography entry.

## **Final Paper**

**200 points**

The final assignment in this course is a 10-15 page paper on the model of a conference presentation. Consider the following general goals for your essay:

- Tracing continuities and discontinuities in antislavery thought and action from one historical moment to another
- Developing historical perspectives or even proposals on contemporary practice and policy in the antislavery field
- Investigating a specific historical moment or perennial dynamic of the history of slavery / antislavery
- Writing a scholarly review of a specific text

Pursuing one of the Final Paper Research Areas provided below and working toward any of the general goals listed above, write a well-researched and persuasive paper. Take your classmates as your audience. Think of those you address as a “general academic” audience, a group of scholars with disparate disciplinary training, methodological assumptions, etc.

### ***Final Paper Research Areas***

Due to the compressed format of this seminar, students will select a research area *by the second day of the semester*. After choosing a research area, students will begin reading through the provided short bibliography and get started adding selections to the bibliography and working towards a more focused research question. The short bibliographies included in the Syllabus Appendix are merely a suggested place to begin research. While there is no minimum number of required sources, substantial research is expected. *I expect all students to schedule appointments with me to discuss research progress and issues in composition.*

## **Course Calendar**

**All changes in the reading schedule will be announced.**

**Monday, June 1:** Davis, chapters 1, and 2

**Tuesday, June 2:** Davis, chapters 3 and 4 / *Meeting in FAB B10 West, 7:00-8:40 pm*

**Wednesday, June 3:** Davis, chapters, 5, 6, and 7 / **Scholar’s Log Due**

**Thursday, June 4:** Davis, chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11

**Friday, June 5:** Davis, chapters 12, 13, 14, 15 and Epilogue / **Scholar’s Log Due**

**Monday, June 8:** Hochschild, Part 1 and 2

**Tuesday, June 9:** Hochschild, Part 3 / *Meeting in FAB B10 West, 7:00-8:40 pm*

**Wednesday, June 10:** Hochschild, Parts 4 and 5/ **Scholar's Log Due**

**Thursday, June 11:** Hochschild, Epilogue / Equiano narrative

**Friday, June 12:** Prince narrative / **Scholar's Log Due**

**Monday, June 15:** Douglass and Jacobs narratives

**Tuesday, June 16:** Goodman, Preface and Part 1 / *Meeting in FAB B10 West, 7:00-8:40*

**Wednesday, June 17:** Goodman, Part 2 / **Scholar's Log Due**

**Thursday, June 18:** Goodman, Parts 3 and 4

**Friday, June 19:** Goodman, Part 5 / **Scholar's Log Due**

**Monday, June 22:** Foner, all

**Tuesday, June 23:** selections from Miers / *Meeting in FAB B10 West, 7:00-8:40 pm*

**Wednesday, June 24:** selections from Miers / **Scholar's Log Due**

**Thursday, June 25:** selections from Miers

**Friday, June 26:** selections from Miers / **Scholar's Log Due**

**Monday, June 29:** Final Paper Proposals Due / online workshop

**Tuesday, June 30:** *Meeting in FAB B10 West, 7:00-8:40 pm* / face-to-face workshop

**Wednesday, July 1:** special Reading Response devoted to course reflection

**Thursday, July 2:** **Final Paper Due**

## *Appendix: A List of Research Topics with Short Bibliographies*

### **Resistance and Rebellion**

Resistance and rebellion exist on a continuum, and like all elements of antislavery thought and action, exhibit both strong patterns of similarity and striking local specificity when considered across contexts. Read from this list considering the many practices of resistance employed by enslaved people.

- Childs, Matt D. *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Egerton, Douglas. *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
- James, C.L.R. *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York: Vintage Book, 1963.
- McKivigan, John R. and Stanley Harrold, eds. *Antislavery Violence: Sectional, Racial, and Cultural Conflict*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999.
- Reis, Joao Jose. *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprisings of 1835 in Bahia*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Urbainczyk, Theresa. *Slave Revolts in Antiquity*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2008.

### **Antislavery Organizing and Protest**

As you read texts on this list, consider issues such as movement politics (think of the tensions and schisms between today's NGOs), the articulation of movement principles and vision, rhetorical strategies of protest, landmark events worthy of further study, the emergence of slave-led abolitionism, state and non-state collaborations, etc. Be specific and focused in your choice of research direction in this broadly construed category, "Antislavery Organizing and Protest." Consider focusing on a small set or even a single primary work, the historical record surrounding a specific event, or the development of specific arguments, ideas, or textual strategies within the long history of antislavery thought and action.

- Bales, Kevin. *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Basker, James G. *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems About Slavery, 1660-1810*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Davis, David Brion. *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Gerteis, Louis S. *Morality and Utility in American Antislavery Reform*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Goodman, John. *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California University Press, 1998.
- James, C.L.R. *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York: Vintage Book, 1963.
- Harrold, Stanley, ed. *The Rise of Aggressive Abolitionism: Addresses to the Slaves*.

- Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2004.
- Hochschild, Adam. *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*. New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 2005.
- Howard, Bell. *A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement*. New York: Arno Press, 1969.
- Miers, Suzanne. *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*. Landham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003.
- Newman, Richard, ed. *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African American Protest Literature, 1790-1860*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Rael, Patrick. *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

## **Slave Narratives**

Slave narratives have been an important means of changing public opinion about slavery. They also provide some of the richest accounts of life in slavery available to us. Witnessing against crimes, espousing solidarity among enslaved peoples, theorizing the power of slaver holders and the culpability of states, slave narratives remain a potent political tool and an engine for antislavery thought. As you approach slave narratives across centuries, remember to read for literary, rhetorical, and political strategies and for testimony about specific instantiations of enslavement.

- Andrews, William L., ed. *Six Women's Slave Narratives*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Bales, Kevin and Zoe Trodd, eds. *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories of Today's Slaves*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1938*. 2001. Library of Congress. 22 May, 2009. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>>.
- Cadet, Jean-Robert. *Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Curtin. Philip D. *Africa Remembered; Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.
- Foster, Frances Smith. *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-Bellum Slave Narratives*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
- Gates, Henry Louis, ed. *Classic Slave Narratives*. New York: Signet Classics, 2002.

## **Antislavery Work and Churches / Theology**

Eminent historian of slavery, David Brion Davis, argues that many scholars underestimate the power of religion in systems of slavery. Consider this claim as you read the books on this list.

- Davis, David Brion. *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Gerteis, Louis S. *Morality and Utility in American Antislavery Reform*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Kempadoo, Kamala, ed. *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. London: Paradigm Publishers, 2005.

Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Strong, Douglas M. *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the religious Tensions of American Democracy*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

### **The Politics of Social Difference in the History of Antislavery Thought and Action**

Hierarchies of social difference have almost always been the philosophical, rhetorical, and political accompaniment of slave economies. Race, ethnic, gender, class, religious, national, regional differences are no simple social fictions despite being social constructions. Proslavery arguments about the virtues of enslavement have always depended on some theory (even if that theory is tacit) of innate difference. It is thus no surprise that escaped slaves and other antislavery activists have written so extensively about the politics of social difference in their protest writing. The books on this list

Davis, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Goodman, John. *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California University Press, 1998.

Kara, Siddarth. *Human Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Kempadoo, Kamala, ed. *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. London: Paradigm Publishers, 2005.

Sánchez-Eppler, Karen. *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993

Sklar, Kathryn Kish and James Brewer Stewart. *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

Stauffer, John. *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Yellin, Jean Fagan and John C. Van Horne, editors. *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994

### **Slavery, the Law, and Antislavery Action**

For centuries, the law stood directly in the way of antislavery action, and now, slavery in all its forms is illegal. Projects of questioning, testing, and changing laws related to slavery have been a powerful means of reform as various civil rights efforts attest. For many, legal emancipation remains the realization of freedom. For many “freed” slaves, the reality was something quite different. Reading through the texts provided here, consider the kinds of efforts made in reforming law, the partnerships formed in the effort between state and non-state groups, and the often tragically ironic failures of legal emancipation as a means achieving broad human rights.

Davis, David Brion. *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.

Chang, Grace. "State Responses to Human Trafficking: Failure or Complicity?" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA's 50th ANNUAL CONVENTION "EXPLORING THE*

- PAST, ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE*", New York Marriott Marquis, NEW YORK CITY, NY, USA, Feb 15, 2009 <Not Available>. 2009-04-24  
[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p310462\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p310462_index.html)>
- DeStefano, Anthony M. *The War on Human Trafficking: U.S. Policy Assessed*. New Brunswick, NJ: 2007.
- Fehrenbacher, Don E. *Slavery, Law, and Politics. The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Kara. Siddarth. *Human Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Miers, Suzanne. *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*. Landham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003.
- Morris, Thomas D. *Southern Slavery and the Law, 1619-1860*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Stolz, Barbara. "Implementing the U.S. 'Trafficking Victims Protection Act': New Challenges for Law Enforcement and Prosecutors" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY, Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, Georgia, Nov 14, 2007* <Not Available>. 2009-02-03  
[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p200415\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p200415_index.html)>

### **Coalitions, Divisions, and Controversies within Antislavery Movements**

Keeping in mind the vexing communication and collaboration breakdowns plaguing anti-trafficking efforts read, read these texts and consider the historical scope of problems that keep disparate actions from becoming a broader movement. Look for the issues and disagreements that divide and the principles and projects that unite antislavery workers. Where do visions and actions diverge or intersect? Where have slaves and former slaves led the way in movement politics? Where were they disciplined by outside "help"? What controversial events galvanized or shattered coalitions?

- Goodman, John. *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California University Press, 1998.
- Kempadoo, Kamala, ed. *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. London: Paradigm Publishers, 2005.
- Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Sánchez-Eppler, Karen. *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
- Stauffer, John. *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

### **Emancipation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation**

With clear warrant, Kevin Bales refers to the period of Reconstruction following Civil War in the United States as a "botched emancipation." As you read, consider broad patterns of success and failure in emancipating the enslaved. Keep track too of the criteria scholars use to make judgments about the success and failure of emancipations. Without detracting from the great

accomplishments of those who came before us, we must analyze political compromises and the failure of political will across the centuries.

- Bales, Kevin. *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- DuBois. W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black People played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*.
- Foner. Eric. *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- . *Reconstruction: Americas Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Wang, Xi. *The Trial of Democracy: Black Suffrage and Northern Republicans, 1860-1910*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997.
- Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Anchor Books, 2008.
- Nash, Gary B. and Jean R. Soderlund. *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.