

History 755.02/AAAS 755.02  
5 Credit Hours  
African Americans during the Nineteenth Century

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### Course Description

The nineteenth century was a tumultuous century in the history of African Americans. While at the beginning of the century, half of the country had abolished, or was in the process of abolishing, slavery, the other half embraced it vigorously. Nineteenth-century black activist traditions in the North and in the South challenged general conditions not only for slaves but also the free. Still, probably, few people at the beginning of the century (still touting the rhetoric of the American Revolution) could imagine that pro-slavery sentiment would become so deep that, by mid-century, it would be the root cause of a Civil War. Probably few freed people at the end of that war anticipated the creation of a system that would be almost as constraining as slavery had been. But that happened, also. Along with Jim Crow, however, came a resolve on the part of black Americans to develop their own institutions and to chop away at the restrictions that seemed to define their lives.

This course explores, in some detail, these aspects of the century. But it does not focus on the oppression that is without-a-doubt an important part of the context. It focuses, instead, on black Americans, the leaders and the led; black institutions, secular and sacred; black work, formal and informal, waged and unwaged, organized and improvised; and, in general, the way this incredibly diverse group of black Americans attempted to live—and lead—their lives. The point is to provide a somewhat detailed survey of the African-American experience during the nineteenth century and to begin to examine how some historians have addressed aspects of this experience. Consequently, you will notice that the required readings suggest both content and historiography. They include one source, which, while possessing historiographical significance, is characterized by broad, general coverage, followed by a more narrowly focused study of the phenomenon. And, finally, because the “slavery” topics course is a very popular one, and plantation slavery is probably the most developed topic historiographically (i.e., Phillips, Stampp, Elkins, Fogel and Engerman, Blassingame, Stuckey, Levine, Gutman, Genovese, White, etc.), our reading of slavery studies will draw much of your attention to other equally important aspects of slavery.

This course is the equivalent to African-American and African Studies 755.02, and is not open to students with credit for that course.

### STUDENT CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to

investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “Academic Misconduct” includes all forms of unethical practices on the part of the student wherever committed illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of academic misconduct to the Committee. Students found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct may receive a failing course grade and are subject to disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the Ohio State University (Faculty Rule 33356-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

#### DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue, telephone 292-3307 (<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>)

#### ENROLLMENT

All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the department chair after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of each student.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed for graduate history/humanities students, especially those preparing major and minor fields in American and African-American history and studies. Upon the completion of the course, students should have a clear understanding of :

1. the broad, general history of black America during the nineteenth century.
2. the development of free black institutions and their contexts.
3. the history and development of early organized efforts in the struggle for freedom and equality.
4. the history of slavery beyond the plantations.
5. the diverse array of questions, sources, and methods that have helped to uncover the history of black Americans.
6. the process of critically reading and reviewing any work of history.

#### **Evaluation (Writing assignments)**

1. For 20% of the final grade, you are to write reviews (which we will discuss in

detail on the first day of class) of three of the nine books listed in the required readings. These reviews must be no more than three pages long (approximately 300 words per page). You must choose for your reviews: Litwack or Rael, Wade or Phillips; Dew or Buchannan; Foner, Schwalm, or Jaynes. The review will be due on the day of the discussion of that book at the beginning of the class.

2. For 40% of the final grade, you are to write two extended reviews (which we shall discuss in class), up to six pages in length. This pair may not include any of the books you reviewed or will review for one of the single book reviews. You should review Litwack and Rael, or Wade and Phillips, or Dew and Buchannan; or Foner and Schwalm, or Foner and Jaynes. In addition to a brief summary of the works (very brief) you should consider how these books relate analytically to each other. In those cases in which one work is broad and general and the other narrow and specific (this will be the case in all pairings except the Dew/Buchannan pairing), have the questions, methods, analyses, sources, conclusions changed? Why? With what result? Which work is best? Be sure to judge the work justly—for what it is. Broad, general works have different objectives when compared to works focused on narrower, specific topics. Avoid simple conclusions based on which work you liked or enjoyed more. For all of the pairings, which work best accomplishes what it should have, given the nature of the work? How has time (and timing) of the analyses mattered? (That is, what difference has the forty years made in the conceptualization Rael's book when compared to Litwack's? Can you "date" the book by its questions, methods, etc.?) Are the authors using the best methods and asking the best questions considering their topics?

Due date for both assignments is the day of the discussion of the last work in the group under review.

**NOTE: AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR SINGLE-BOOK REVIEWS AND ONE OF YOUR DOUBLE-BOOK REVIEWS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE MID-TERM.**

3. For 40% of the final grade, you are to write a final paper, up to 20 pages in length. For this final paper, you should choose one topic for discussion that appears to be salient throughout the nineteenth-century African American experience. That is to say that you may choose "institution building" but not "slavery." You could choose "protest" but not "anti-slavery." The paper should trace the topic across the nineteenth century, based on the required reading and any other works you choose to add. Although historiographical issues may enter into your discussion, this is not an historiographical essay. Here, the focus should be the phenomenon (e.g., protest, labor, family, inter-racial relations, community, or intra-racial relations, education, etc.) and its manifestations across time and place. The paper should define the topic clearly, trace its history and development across time and place, offer critical assessments of the process, people, events, where appropriate. How have its manifestations changed across time?

Why? What about it has not changed? How do you account for that? Where appropriate, what is the relationship between what is going on among black Americans and national or international developments? What, related to the topic, is missing? That is, what questions related to this topic have not been explored adequately or at all? Where do we go from here? (Be careful to make this a scholarly exploration rather than a personal/political one. Your personal politics may inform, but should not define, your discussion.) This paper is due at the beginning of the class hour reserved for the final exam. There will be no exam..

4. This is a discussion class. Therefore, class attendance and participation are expected.

#### GRADING SCALE

Grades will be distributed as follows: A: 92.6 and above; A-: 89.6-92.5; B+: 87.6-89.5; B: 82.6-87.5; B-: 79.6-82.5; C+: 77.6-79.5; C: 72.6-77.5; C-: 69.6-72.5; D+: 67.6-69.5; D: 62-67.5; E: below 62.

#### Required Reading:

Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (University of Chicago Press, 1961)

Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*, (University of North Carolina, 2002)

Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (Oxford University Press, 1972)

Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (University of Illinois, 1997)

Charles Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge* (W. W. Norton, 1995)

Thomas C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction, 1863-77* (Knopf, 2006)

Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (University of Illinois Press, 1997)

Gerald David Jaynes, *Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1882* (Oxford University Press, 1986)

**Course Schedule and reading assignments:**

Due date for both assignments is the day of the discussion of the last work in the group under review. Groups will be assigned during first weeks of class.

The review will be due on the day of the discussion of that book at the beginning of the class.

Week One – Introduction to the course

Week Two –Read Litwack

Week Three –Read Rael

Week Four—Read Wade

Week Five –Read Phillips

Week Six –Read Dew

Week Seven—Read Buchanan

Week Eight —Read Foner

Week Nine—Read Schwalm

Week Ten – Read Jaynes

Final Exam Day: There will be no final exam, but class will meet on this day at the time of the scheduled exam.

Due: Paper 20 pages

**Supplementary Sources**

**Topic: Black Northerners before the Civil War**

Dorothy B. Porter, "The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1828-1846," *JNE* 5 (1936), 555-76

William B. Graveley, "The Rise of African Churches in America, 1776-1822: Re-examining the Contexts," *J. of Religious Thought* 14 (1984), 58-73

Emma Jones Lapansky, "Friends, Wives and Strivings: Networks and Community Values among Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Afro-American Elites," *Penn. Mag. Of Hist. and Bio.* 108 (1984), 3-24;

James Oliver Horton, "Freedom's Yoke: Gender Conventions among Antebellum Free Blacks," *Feminist Studies* 12 (Spring 1986), 51-76

Shane White, "It was a Proud Day: African American Festivals and Parades in the North, 1741-1834," *JAH* 81(1989), 13-50 [numerous others of Shane White and Shane White and Graham White's work introduce many

important topics related to institutions and identity, especially in the North, but many of the works focus on the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Please consult them if they might be useful to you.

- Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (1969)  
 Howard Holman Bell, *A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830-1861* (1969) [a primary source collection]  
 Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (1974)  
 Charles Wesley, "The Negroes of New York in the Emancipation Movement," *JNH*  
 Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850: The Shadow of a Dream* (1981)  
 Harry Reed, *Platforms for Change: The Foundations of the Northern Free Black Community, 1776-1865* (1994)  
 James Oliver Horton, *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (1993) (also includes some discussion of southern cities)  
 James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (1997)  
 Keith P. Griffler, *The Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (2004)  
 Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activity, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787-1848* (1988)  
 W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," *JAH* 76 (1990): 1173-99.  
 [Also note the recent books of Leslie Harris and Graham Russell Hodges, that focus on New York, New Jersey, and/or New England but begin in the colonial period.]

### **Topic: Slaves and Slavery in the antebellum South**

- Stephanie J. Shaw, "The Maturation of Slave Society and Culture," in John B. Boles, ed., *Blackwell Companion to the American South* (Consider all the works discussed in this essay as major works. They are not listed separately below.)  
 Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American society in British Mainland North America," *AHR* (Feb. 1980) 44-78  
 John T. O'Brien, "Factory, Church, and Community: Blacks in Antebellum Richmond," *JSH* 44 (1978), 509-36  
 John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South, 1800-1861* (1956, 2002)  
 Cheryl A. Cody, "There was no 'Absalom' on the Ball Plantations: Slave-Naming Practices in the South Carolina Low Country, 1720-1865," *AHR* 92 (1987), 563-96  
 Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America* (1995)  
 Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (1996)  
 Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (2000)

- Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (1998)
- Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (2003)
- Christopher Morris, "The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered," *JAH* (December 1998), 982-1007
- Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (2003)
- Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Antebellum South* (2004)
- Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (2003)
- Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004)
- Robert H. Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (2003)
- William Dusi Berre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the Antebellum Rice Swamps* (1996)
- Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (1999)

**Topic: Free black southerners during the antebellum era**

- Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1974), chapters 5-11
- Whittington B. Johnson, "Free African-American Women in Savannah, 1800-1860: Affluence and Autonomy Amid Adversity,"
- Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (1984)
- Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790-1915* (1990) (This book is not entirely about free blacks but also about slave property owners.)

**Topic: Emancipation and Reconstruction Eras**

- William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (1907)
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (1935)
- Vernon Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (1947)
- Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (1964)
- Thomas Holt, *Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction* (1979)
- Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (1988)
- Noralee Frankel, *Freedom's Women: Black Women and Families in Civil War Era Mississippi* (1999)
- Berlin, Miller, and Rowland, "Afro-American Families in Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Radical History Review* 42 (1988), 89-121.
- Julie Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870* (1994)
- Donald R. Shaffer, "'I do not suppose that Uncle Sam Looks at the Skin': African Americans and the Civil War Pension System, 1865-1934," *Civil War History* 46 (2000), 132-47
- Armstead Robinson, *Bitter Fruits of Bondage: The Demise of Slavery and the Collapse of the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (2005)
- Roger C. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (1977)
- Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, 2 vols., (1991) (also note that there are at least three additional volumes edited by Fogel OR Engerman and others related to issues pertaining to slavery, freedom, and the emancipation process)
- Sharon Holt, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves*, (2000)
- Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (1990)
- John David Smith, ed., *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (2002)

**Topic: Post-emancipation free labor and institutions (to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

- Herbert Gutman, "Schools for Freedom: The Post-Emancipation Origins of AfroAmerican Education," in *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, ed. Ira Berlin, (1987), 260-297
- Kathleen C. Berkeley, "Colored Ladies also Contributed: Black Women's Activities from Benevolence to Social Welfare, 1866-1896," in Fraser, Saunders, and Wakelyn, ed., *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family and Education* (1985)
- Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," *Journal of Urban History* (March, May 1995)
- Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (1979)
- Janice L. Reiff, Michael R. Dahlia, and Daniel Scott Smith, "Rural Push and Urban Pull: Work and Family Experiences of Older Black Women in Southern Cities, 1880-1900," *Journal of Social History* 16 (Summer 1983), 39-48.
- Peter Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890* (1989)
- Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (1991)
- James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970* (1980)
- Tera W. Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War*, (1997)
- W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (1993)
- W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South, Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (1993)
- David M. Oshinsky, 'Worse than Slavery': *Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (1996)
- Mary Ellen Curtin, *Black Prisoners and their World, Alabama, 1865-1900* (2000)
- Ann Field Alexander, *Race Man: The Rise and Fall of the 'Fighting Editor'*" (2002)
- Timothy B. Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story* (2002)