

## **African American and African Studies**

### **AFAMAST 2295: Resisting Slavery in the Americas**

#### **Course and Contact Information**

Instructor: Shavagne Scott  
Email: [scott.2972@osu.edu](mailto:scott.2972@osu.edu) [Contact via Canvas]  
Office Location: University Hall, 386N  
Office Hours TR 3:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Mode of Delivery: In person  
Course Time: 9:30am-11:00am  
Course Location: University Hall, 386B

#### **Course Description**

Slavery existed from the earliest history of civilization. However, the transatlantic slave trade—the oceanic trade in the forced removal of Africans mainly to the Americas—was unprecedented in nature, scope, and arguably consequences. At every moment, Africans and their descendants provided stiff resistance to the conditions that “New World” slavery produced. This class will examine the history of slave uprisings in the Americas to explore how slavery was experienced, imagined, and contested by the enslaved. We will use primary and secondary written sources to delve deeper into the ideologies, tactics, and meanings of slave resistance. To this end, we will explore how race, gender, ethnicity, and class shaped the contours of slavery in the Americas and contests over its rise and perpetuation. In considering racial slavery from a hemispheric viewpoint, we will assess the extent to which geography and ethnicity influenced responses to slavery. Students will learn how to think productively about resistance in the past and will apply their knowledge to contemporary fights for racial justice.

#### **GE Foundation: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Diversity (REGD)**

#### **GE Course Information**

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Think productively about slavery and slave resistance by interrogating the conditions that produced them.
2. Identify and describe the significance of important events, individuals, and ideas associated with resistance to transatlantic slavery.
3. Describe and assess different modes of resistance to transatlantic slavery.
4. Explain how different societies and social groups in Africa, Europe, and the Americas participated in and were shaped by resistance to slavery.
5. Apply their knowledge to contemporary fights for racial justice.

### **Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Diversity Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)**

**GOAL 1:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how historically and socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, and gender, and possibly others, shape perceptions, individual outcomes, and broader societal, political, economic, and cultural systems.

Expected Learning Outcome 1.1: Successful students are able to describe and evaluate the social positions and representations of categories including race, gender, and ethnicity, and possibly others.

Expected Learning Outcome 1.2: Successful students are able to explain how categories including race, gender, and ethnicity continue to function within complex systems of power to impact individual lived experiences and broader societal issues.

Expected Learning Outcome 1.3: Successful students are able to analyze how the intersection of categories including race, gender, and ethnicity combine to shape lived experiences.

Expected Learning Outcome 1.4: Successful students are able to evaluate social and ethical implications of studying race, gender, and ethnicity.

**GOAL 2:** Successful students will recognize and compare a range of lived experiences of race, gender, and ethnicity.

Expected Learning Outcome 2.1: Successful students are able to demonstrate critical self-reflection and critique of their social positions and identities.

Expected Learning Outcome 2.2: Successful students are able to recognize how perceptions of difference shape one's own attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.

Expected Learning Outcome 2.3: Successful students are able to describe how the categories of race, gender, and ethnicity influence the lived experiences of others.

**GE Rationale:** This course explores the broad theme of “Race, Ethnicity, and Gender” as it relates to the system of Atlantic slavery. Atlantic slavery produced interlocking levels of domination and privileges that were themselves configured by race, ethnicity, and gender. Resistance against slavery was also shaped by these salient categories. With these groupings of identities at the core of our explorations, the course demonstrates how systems of power and fights to change such systems shape the experience of all.

## How This Course Works

**Mode of Delivery:** This course is 100% in person at a scheduled time and location. It requires use of Canvas for submitting assignments, quizzes, and discussion boards.

**Credit Hours and Work Expectations:** This is a 3 credit-hour course. Students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction in addition to 6 hours of homework to receive a grade of C average.

## Course Materials

### Required Book Purchases:

1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
2. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl*

All other course materials such as syllabus, readings, handouts, notes, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System website: <https://carmen.osu.edu/>. You are responsible for accessing the course materials there.

## Evaluation

**Attendance and class participation: 20%**

**Weekly Reading Reflections: 10%**

**In Class Quizzes: 10%**

**Film Reflection Essay: 10%**

**Group Presentation: 5%**

**Argumentative Essay: 20%**

**Primary Document Assignments: (25%)**

**Proposal: 5%**

**Analysis: 20%**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class. If you are sick or have a personal emergency that requires your absence from class, please provide the appropriate documentation.

**Weekly Reading Reflections:** Each week, students will post reading reflections (250-300 words) to a group discussion page or online discussion tool on CANVAS [e.g., by Sunday at 11:59p]. Reflections should include responses to 2 out of 3 questions:

1. What is the main point of the reading?
2. What information did you find surprising? Why?
3. What did you find confusing? Why?

**Quizzes:** In class assessments of themes and facts covered in class.

**Film Reflections:** Students will write two brief reflection pieces of 2 double-spaced pages (500 words) that demonstrate critical analysis of the films we screen in class. The goal is to think critically

about how the films/documentaries challenge or perpetuate stereotypes of the enslaved and/or critique social and political issues, especially those around issues of race, ethnicity, and gender.

\*No weekly reading reflections during weeks Film Reflections are due.

**Group Presentation:** Each group of four students will give a 5-minute presentation on an organization working to address issues in Columbus, OH. Students will give an overview of the issue the organization seeks to address and the organization's ideas and efforts to effect change. Students will argue for the importance of the work being done by said organization.

**Argumentative Essay:** Write a paper of approximately 1500 words (six double-spaced pages) on the following: Historians sometimes make distinctions between individual acts of resistance that negated a slave owner's authority and collected acts of resistance that theoretically worked to abolish the slave system? Write an essay in which you agree or disagree with this dichotomy. In your analysis, be sure to consider how attention to race, gender, and/or ethnicity supports your position.

**Primary Document Analysis Proposal and Essay:** Students must write a 3000 words (twelve double-spaced pages) primary document analysis. Students may choose a primary source from a list provided by the instructor or select a source on their own. Students must submit a proposal for their primary source analysis with an annotated bibliography, which may include up to 5 course readings and at least 1 book and 2 academic articles that are not on the syllabus.

### **Grading Rubric for Participation**

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|----------|---|
| <b>A</b> | You are consistently well prepared for class, actively listen to your peers and offer constructive critiques of their arguments; you actively participate in collaborative discussion and contribute thought-provoking insights to the class. |
| <b>B</b> | You are prepared for class and demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the material, peers, and me. This is commendable, but you could do more.  |
| <b>C</b> | You are inconsistent in your preparation for class and infrequently engaged with your peers and the instructor. Your intellectual contributions are minimal.  |
| <b>D</b> | You attended class without participating.   |
| <b>E</b> | You were absent in mind, body, and spirit.  |

### **Grading Rubric for Papers**

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|-----------|--|
| <b>A</b>  | Signifies an excellent paper. It is exemplary, with little to no oversights in grammar, critical analysis, and clarity in writing. |
| <b>A-</b> | Signifies top-rate work, but certain areas within the paper need to be refined.  |

<b>B+</b>	Signifies that the paper represents solid work. The paper stands out in terms of its thoughtfulness and level of engagement with the matter, but a few notable “problem areas.”
<b>B/B-</b>	Signifies a competent work that is good. The paper meets the basic stipulations of the assignment and the argument presented is fairly clear with occasional oversight. Use of evidence is sufficient.
<b>C+/C</b>	Signifies a competent piece of work that is not yet good. Basic expectations and requirements are met, but significant sections should be revised to develop a more coherent paper. Use of evidence may be inadequate.
<b>C-/D/D-</b>	Signifies a piece of work that demonstrates some efforts on your part but is too marred by technical problems or flaws in thinking or development of ideas to be considered competent work.
<b>E</b>	You did not meet any of the stipulations of the assignment or did not turn it in.

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points
A	93–100
A-	90–92
B+	87–89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
E	Below 60

## Course Policies & Resources

**Academic Integrity and Collaboration:** Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow Chicago style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to

proofread your assignments before you turn them in but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

**Late Assignments:** Please refer to Carmen and syllabus for due dates. Due dates are set to help you stay on pace and to allow timely feedback that will help you complete subsequent assignments.

**Classroom Inclusivity:** The classroom space represents an environment where individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences come together to engage in the teaching and learning process. I am committing to fostering an atmosphere for learning that respects and honors diversity. I encourage you to share your unique experiences, values, and beliefs, while being respectful and open to the views of others that may differ from your own. I expect that you will communicate in a manner that is thoughtful, honors the uniqueness of your peers, and appreciates the opportunity to learn, engage, and be challenged by your colleagues and me. Our collective goal is to exemplify civil discourse with the hopes of engaging in the creative exchange of ideas.

**Statement on Academic Misconduct:** 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 student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

**Statement about Disability Services:** The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).

**Statement on Religious Accommodations:** Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to

attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing makeup assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office. (Policy: Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances)

**Statement on Intellectual Diversity:** Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

**Statement on creating an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct:** Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office:

Online reporting form at <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>,

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,

Or Email [civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.

The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.



## COURSE OVERVIEW

WEEK 1	JANUARY 6-8	Introduction & Course Overview
WEEK 2	JANUARY 13-15	The Making of a “Slave”
WEEK 3	JANUARY 20-22	“Docile Slaves” and the Early Historiography
WEEK 4	JANUARY 27-29	The Role of Ethnicity
WEEK 5	FEBRUARY 3-5	Theorizing Resistance
WEEK 6	FEBRUARY 10-12	The Black Spartans
WEEK 7	FEBRUARY 17-19	Writing Rebellion
WEEK 8	FEBRUARY 24-26	Gendering Resistance
WEEK 9	MARCH 3-5	SPRING BREAK
WEEK 10	MARCH 10-12	(Re)Gendering Resistance
WEEK 11	MARCH 17-19	Creating Insurgent Testimonies
WEEK 12	MARCH 24-26	Cross-Alliances
WEEK 13	MAR/APR 31-2	Reflections
WEEK 14	APRIL 8-9	Primary Document Analysis

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

### PART I

**Week 1      Introduction and Overview**  
Monday: Course Overview  
Wednesday: Read Chapters 1-3 in Gomez’s *Reversing Sail* and Chapter 1 in *An Indigenous Peoples’ History*

- Week 2      The Making of a “Slave”**  
Monday: Read Chapter 4-5 in Gomez’s *Reversing Sail* and Chaplin’s “Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without Narrative” (2015)  
Wednesday: Read *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*
- Week 3      “Docile Slaves” and the Early Historiography**  
Monday: Read Chapter 6 in Gomez’s *Reversing Sail*  
Wednesday: Read *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*  
**IN CLASS QUIZ**
- Week 4      The Role of Ethnicity**  
Monday: Read Walter Rucker’s “Fires of Discontent, Echoes of Africa” in *The River Flows On* (2006) and John Thornton’s “The Coromantees: An African Cultural Group in Colonial North America and the Caribbean” (1998)  
Wednesday: Film, *Prince among Slaves* (2006)
- Week 5      Theorizing Resistance**  
Monday: **FILM REFLECTION DUE**  
Read “The Turning Point” in Eugene Genovese’s *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (1992)  
Wednesday: Read Sinclair Thomas, “Contours for a History of Power and Political Transformation in the Aymara Highlands,” in *We Alone will Rule* (2002)  
(In Class) *Tupac Amaru’s Proclamation of Freedom for the Enslaved*  
**IN CLASS QUIZ**
- Week 6      The Black Spartans**  
Monday: Read C.L.R James’s *The Black Jacobins*  
Wednesday: **PRIMARY SOURCE WORKSHOP**
- Week 7      Writing Rebellion**  
Monday: Read C.L.R James’s *The Black Jacobins*  
Wednesday: **ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY DUE**
- Week 8      Gendering Resistance**  
Monday: Read Angela Davis’s “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves” in *The Massachusetts Review* (1972) and Stephanie Camp’s “The Pleasure of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Bodies Politics in the Plantation South” (2002)  
Wednesday: Read Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl*  
**IN CLASS QUIZ**
- Week 9      Spring Break**

- Week 10**      **(Re)Gendering Resistance**  
Monday: Read Stephanie Camp's "WHAT LOOKS LIKE A REVOLUTION":  
Enslaved Women and Gendered Terrain of Slave Insurgencies in Cuba, 1843-1844"  
(2014) and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl*  
Wednesday: **PRIMARY DOCUMENT PROPOSAL**
- Week 11**      **Creating Insurgent Testimonies**  
Monday: Read "Name, Face, and Body" **and** "The Construction of the Confessions  
of Nat Turner" in *Nat Turner: a Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*  
Wednesday: (In Class) Film, *Descendant* (2022)  
**IN CLASS QUIZ**
- Week 12**      **Cross-Alliances**  
Monday: **FILM RELECTION DUE**  
Read, Edward Morgan's "Book III: The Volatile Society" in *American Slavery,*  
*American Freedom* (2000)  
Wednesday: Read James D. Rice's "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country"  
(In Class) *The Declaration of the People*
- Week 13:**      **REFLECTIONS/GROUP PRESENTATIONS**
- Week 14:**      **PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS**