

African American History to 1877
HIST 289
Syllabus
Fall 2017
MW, 9:30-10:45
CCC 303

Contact:

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Course description and learning objectives:

This class is an exploration of the African American experience from the origins of African slavery in North America to the end of Reconstruction. By the end of the semester you will be able to describe the regional variations of slavery, freedom, and black agency over the course of nearly three centuries as well as discuss the changing interpretations of black America within the historical profession.

You will be required to keep up with a considerable volume of reading throughout the semester as we develop your ability to evaluate secondary sources critically. At the end of the course you will be able to identify competing historical arguments and the types of primary sources that historians have used to interpret African American history.

Text Rental:

Hine et al, *The African-American Odyssey* (Prentice Hall, Fourth Edition).

Books for purchase:

Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States* (Chicago, 1961).

John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *In Search of the Promised Land: A Slave Family in the Old South* (Oxford, 2006).

Both of the books for purchase are available as e-books through the university library. The course will also include additional readings on D2L and JSTOR (a library database).

Class format:

Class time will be divided between lectures and discussions. Our Monday class meetings will be devoted to lectures and our Wednesday meetings will be divided between lectures and discussion of weekly reading.

Grades:

Book précis: You are required to write a book précis on *North of Slavery* and *In Search of the Promised Land*. These papers should highlight the book's thesis, scope, sources, methodology, and its overall significance. I will also provide an additional handout on D2L with details about proper formatting and other guidelines for writing book précis.

Exams: The midterm and final exams will have a combination of multiple choice and essay. You are allowed one 4x6" notecard filled with your own handwritten notes to assist you on the exams.

Class participation: You will be evaluated on your regular attendance, participation on in-class primary source activities, and contributions to class discussions. If you fail to attend class regularly or are frequently unprepared to talk about class reading, your final grade will suffer.

Grade breakdown:

Book précis: 30% (15% each)

Exams: 50% (25% each)

Class participation: 20%

Desire2Learn site:

The course syllabus, handouts, PowerPoint slides, and an online gradebook will be available through Desire2Learn. You should log on regularly to check for any course updates.

Schedule of topics and course reading:

All readings should be completed by the Wednesday class meeting of each week.

September 6: Class introduction. The origins African American history. Read John Hope Franklin, "The History of African American History" (pdf available on D2L).

Week of September 11: The origins of African slavery in North America. Read Hine, chapter two and Winthrop D. Jordan, "Modern Tensions and the Origins of American

Slavery” *Journal of Southern History* 28, no.1 (Feb. 1962): 18-30. Available through the library database JSTOR.

Week of September 18: African and African American cultures. Read Hine, chapter three and Holt and Brown eds. *Major Problems in African American History* pp. 128-156 (on e-reserve).

Week of September 25: Toward a slave society. Read Allan Kulikoff, “The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700-1790” *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no.1 (April 1978): 226-259. Available through JSTOR.

Week of October 2: African Americans and the American Revolution. Read Hine, chapter four and begin reading Litwack.

Week of October 9: Slaves and free blacks in the early republic. Finish Litwack. **Précis of North of Slavery due Wednesday October 11.**

Week of October 16: Slaves and free blacks in the early republic, continued. Read Hine, chapter five.

Monday, October 23: Midterm exam.

October 25: “A necessary evil.” Read Hine, chapter six.

Week of October 30: Expansion of the Black Belt and plantation slavery. Read Hine, chapter seven.

Week of November 6: The interstate and clandestine slave trades. Read Edward E. Baptist, “‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men’: Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States” *American Historical Review* 106:5 (2001): 1619-1650. Article available online through JSTOR.

Week of November 13: Resistance. Read Dea H. Boster, “‘An Epeleptick Bondswoman’: Fits, Slavery, and Power in the Antebellum South,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 83, no.2 (Summer 2009): 271-301 (on e-reserve); and Hine, chapters eight and nine. Begin Franklin and Schweninger.

Week of November 20: Resistance, continued. **Précis of *In Search of the Promised Land* due November 22.**

Week of November 27: Civil War and emancipation. Read Hine, chapters ten and eleven; and Holt and Brown, eds. *Major Problems in African American History*, pp. 343-367- (on e-reserve).

Week of December 4: Reconstruction’s promises. Read Hine, chapter twelve.

Week of December 11: Reconstruction: disillusion and retrenchment. Read Hine, chapter thirteen and David Blight, "For Something Beyond the Battlefield': Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War" *Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1156-1178. Available on JSTOR.

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 20, 8:00 AM.