

Freedom and Slavery in American History

LSHV-463-40

James H. Hershman, Jr.

Instructor

Tuesday, 6:00 – 9:20 p.m.

Summer, 2017

25 May – 3 August

Room: 210B ICC

Slavery was a central, and highly controversial, part of the American past. How it has been interpreted in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries tells us a great deal about social attitudes, national values, and about the practice of historical study. The upheaval in race relations that swept the larger society from the 1950s to the 1970s—the Civil Rights Movement—energized the study of slavery and set off one of the strongest debates in American scholarship. The debate over slavery attracted the attention not only of academics but of a much larger public. It challenged the most talented historians who increasingly turned to creative, interdisciplinary approaches. Slavery studies were the area where innovative concepts and techniques as well as provocative ideas entered the mainstream of modern American intellectual life.

Slavery, and the interpretation of it, has played a pivotal and long ignored role in shaping our national identity. This course will examine this crucial and troubling aspect of the American experience.

Books:

Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877*, Hill & Wang, Revised ed., New York: 2004 (available in paperback)

Peter J. Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians*, Harper & Row, New York: 1989 (available in paperback, ISBN 0-06-430182-6)

Additional assigned readings online. Instructor will provide a select bibliography of recent works on slavery.

Format:

The initial four or five meetings will consist of lecture and discussion of readings; in the following sessions, in addition to the instructor's discussion of context, students will make a short presentation on a book chosen from the bibliography. They will be expected to submit a 7-8 page book review by the close of the course. A final exam will be given at the last class.

Schedule:

Thursdays, 6-9:20 p.m.

25 May, 1, 8, 15, 22, 28 June, 6,13,20,27 July, 3 August

25 May--Introduction and Overview

Kolchin, pp. 1-27

Parish, pp. 1-10

1 June—Origins

Kolchin, pp. 28-92

Parish, pp. 10-25

8 June—Slavery as a Functioning System

Kolchin, pp. 93-132

Parish, pp. 26-63

15 June—Slave Life & the Slave Community

Kolchin, pp. 132-168

Parish, pp. 64-96

Subsequent sessions will deal with such topics as:

Resistance and Rebellion (assignments from Kolchin and Parish to completion; and film segment)

Urban and industrial slavery and the hiring out system

Comparisons with other slave systems

The end of slavery

Honor Code

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

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