

HIST099: Slavery in the American North

Prof. Cory Young, Main Second Session, Summer 2021

Class: Monday-Thursday, 3:15-5:15pm, School of Continuing Studies, Room TBD

Office Hours: TBD

cjy28@georgetown.edu

NOTE: This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change.

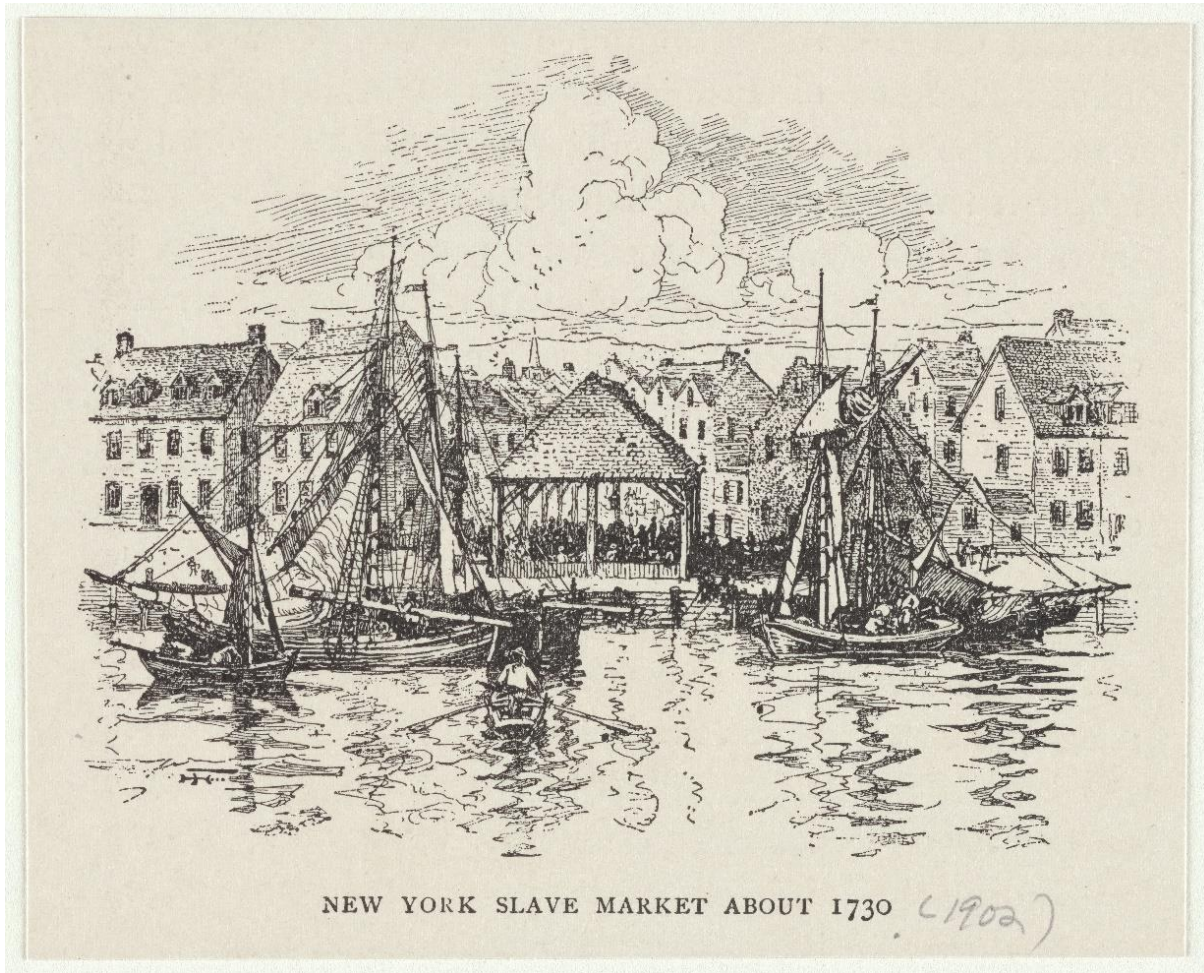


Image courtesy of the [New York Public Library](#).

Course Description: Students in this course will examine the establishment, operation, and eradication of slavery in the American North between colonization and civil war. As with all sections of HIST099, our topic of study, while vital in its own right, serves primarily as a setting for grappling with the historical method: how to formulate meaningful questions, to read complex sources, to identify competing perspectives, and to develop persuasive arguments like a historian. In our examination of northern slavery, we will necessarily engage in frank, often difficult discussions about settler colonialism, violence and exploitation, and racial segregation. At the same time, our readings and conversations will confront issues pertaining to the dignity of labor, the challenges of political organizing, the formation of Black communities, and freedom's promises. In all places, slavery and freedom coexisted in desperate tension.

Historical memory is a central theme of this course. Since the U.S. Civil War pitted a slaveholding south against a free soil north, it has become too easy to forget that slavery not only existed above the Mason-Dixon Line, but once thrived there. By learning to think as historians, which includes direct engagement with the archive of northern slavery, students will come to see that human bondage was not just a source of nineteenth-century political conflict, but a foundational pillar of the American project.

Learning Goals

Students will be able to...

- develop their skills [as historical thinkers](#)
- analyze and intelligently discuss a variety of historical sources, both primary and secondary
- advance historical arguments both orally and in writing
- identify formative episodes in the histories of slavery and of the American North
- define African American chattel slavery
- distinguish between empathy in a general sense and historical empathy in a technical sense
- draw meaningful connections between the past and the present

Classroom Requirements and Expectations

In order to pass, students must...

- come to class having engaged meaningfully with that day's readings
- prepare at least one sincere question and one thoughtful comment about that day's subject
- respect the right of their peers to ask questions, make comments, and express responses
- complete all assignments
- demonstrate growth

Grade Breakdown

- Attend office hours, 1%
 - This is only required once, but recommended regularly
- Participation, 25%
 - See classroom requirements and expectations
- Labs, 25%
- Summer Session Project, 48%
 - Primary Source Analysis, 15%
 - Secondary Source Analysis, 15%
 - Book Review or Public History Proposal, 18%
- Complete course evaluation, 1%
 - We will make time for this during the final exam period

Note: At the start of the session, each student will select a book on slavery in the American North from a list of monographs. This is the only text I would recommend students consider purchasing, as it will be the text from which they develop their summer session project. In other words, they'll be engaging with it for the entire session.

Assignments

- History Labs, 25%
 - Each Thursday students will complete a lab assignment that focuses on some aspect of the historical method. Lab reports must be submitted online before the start of class the following Monday. As each lab is different, we will discuss specifics in class.

- Summer Session Project, Primary Source Analysis, 15%
Due Thursday, 22 July
 - Students will identify a primary source cited in their Summer Session Project book that is accessible online. They will locate said primary source using library or other online resources, analyze it, and evaluate how their author uses it in their book. 3-5 pages.

- Summer Session Project, Secondary Source Analysis, 15%
Due Thursday, 29 July
 - Students will identify an academic article cited in their Summer Session Project book that is accessible online. They will locate said secondary source using library or other online resources, analyze it, and evaluate how the author engages it in their book. 3-5 pages.

- Summer Session Project, Book Review or Public History Proposal, 18%
Due during the final exam period
 - Students will either:
 - a) compose a review of their Summer Session Project book, addressing its argument, method, strengths, and weaknesses. 3-5 pages.
 - b) propose a public history project based on a person, event, or source addressed in their Summer Session Project book. 3-5 pages.
 - **Students must clear their decision/ideas with me by Monday, 2 August.**

Grading Policy

Student work that meets all expectations earns a B. This means that it advances an original argument, supports it with sufficient evidence, adheres to the conventions of scholarly writing, and contains minimal errors. A-level work meets all expectations, and excels in originality, sophistication, and style. C-level work is lacking in one or more of the basic categories of expectation (argument, evidence, conventions, accuracy), but demonstrates clear effort. Work that fails to demonstrate effort earns a D.

Late work loses one-third of a letter grade for each day that it is late. In other words, work that would have earned a B+ becomes a B, then a B-, etc. Of course, sometimes life gets in the way. Students who have a compelling reason for requesting an extension must clear it with me *at least three days* before the assignment is due. Emergencies are the exception to the rule.

Students reserve the right to appeal a grade, as professors are human beings who make mistakes. Any student wishing to do so must schedule an appointment with me, bring their original work with any comments, as well as a paragraph explaining why, specifically, they feel they should have earned a different grade.

Email Policy

Although I am quite good about responding to emails, I reserve the right to keep free my evenings and weekends, just as you reserve the right to yours. If you send me a message during ordinary business hours, I will make every effort to respond that day. If you send me a message during the evening, you may not receive a response until the next day. If you send me a message over the weekend, I guarantee a response Monday morning, although I might respond earlier. **Before sending any email, please check the syllabus or the assignment sheet. Twice. These aren't just for fun.**

Academic Honesty

As a Hoya, you have agreed to abide by the Georgetown University honor system, pledging the following: “*In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system: to be honest in every academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.*” In the context of this course, this means no plagiarism and no hostile antagonism. You can avoid these pitfalls by citing your sources in the [Chicago-Turabian style](#) and assuming that your peers question and comment in good faith. **It is always acceptable to ask for clarification of a point.**

Student Accommodations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Georgetown University policy, students who self-identify and provide sufficient documentation of a qualifying disability are entitled to receive reasonable academic accommodations. *All students* should familiarize themselves with the various forms of support available through Georgetown’s [Academic Resource Center](#).

Course Readings

NOTE: All course readings are online and freely available to students through either Lauinger or Canvas.

- Archer, Richard. *Jim Crow North: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Antebellum New England*. 2017. (Lauinger)
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. 1998. (Lauinger)
- Bond, Richard E. “Shaping a Conspiracy: Black Testimony in the 1741 New York Plot,” *Early American Studies* 5:1 (Spring 2007): pp. 63-94. (Lauinger)
- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. *Never Caught: The Washingtons’ Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*. 2017. (Lauinger)
- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong and Kathleen Van Cleve. *Never Caught, the Story of Ona Judge: George and Martha Washington’s Courageous Slave Who Dared to Run Away*. 2019. (Canvas)
- McManus, Edgar J. *Black Bondage in the North*. 1973 (Canvas)
- O’Malley, Gregory E. *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807*. 2014. (Lauinger)
- Rushforth, Brett. “‘A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60:4 (October 2003): pp. 777-808. (Lauinger)

- Ross, Marc. *Slavery in the North: Forgetting History and Recovering Memory*. 2018. (Lauinger)
- Warren, Wendy. “The Cause of Her Grief: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England,” *Journal of American History* 93:4 (March 2007): pp. 1031-1049. (Lauinger)
- White, Shane. “‘It Was a Proud Day’: African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834,” *Journal of American History* 81:1 (June 1994): pp. 13-50. (Lauinger)
- Whiting, Gloria McCahon. “Emancipation Without the Courts or Constitution: The Case of Revolutionary Massachusetts,” *slavery & abolition* 41:3 (2020): pp. 458-78.
- Zilversmit, Arthur. *First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North*. 1967. (Canvas)

Course Schedule

Week 1, 12 July, beginnings

Skill: Primary Sources

- Monday, 12 July, Frameworks and Overview
 - Read Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, prologue
 - Read Ross, *Slavery in the North*, introduction
 - Explore www.slavenorth.com
- Tuesday, 13 July, Settler Colonialism
 - Listen to [Ben Franklin’s World on New England Bound](#)
 - Read Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, introduction and epilogue
- Wednesday, 14 July, Native American Slavery
 - Read Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You”
- Thursday, 15 July, The Slave Trade
 - Read O’Malley, *Final Passages*, introduction and chapter 5
 - Explore the [Intra-American Slave Trade Database](#).

Week 2, 19 July, consolidation

Skill: Secondary Sources

- Monday, 19 July, The Law
 - McManus, *Black Bondage in the North*, chapters 1 through 6
- Tuesday, 20 July, Experiencing Bondage
 - Read Warren, “The Cause of Her Grief” (CW: Rape)
 - Read Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation*, pages 3 through 11
- Wednesday, 21 July, Resisting Bondage
 - Read Bond, “Shaping a Conspiracy”
 - Read White, “It Was a Proud Day”

- Thursday, 22 July, The Economy
 - **Primary Source Analysis Due**
 - Listen to [Teaching Hard History's "Slavery and the American Economy"](#)

Week 3, 26 July, fragmentation

Skill: Archives (*pending COVID safety*)

- Monday, 26 July, Slave Narratives
 - Read [Life of James Mars, a Slave Born and Sold in Connecticut](#)
 - Read [Narrative of Sojourner Truth](#), pages one through fifty-nine
- Tuesday, 27 July, U.S. War for Independence
 - Watch [Slavery and the Making of America, Part II: Liberty in the Air](#)
- Wednesday, 28 July, The Revolution
 - Read Whiting, "Emancipation Without the Courts or Constitution"
- Thursday, 29 July, Gradual Abolition
 - **Secondary Source Analysis Due**
 - **Meet at the Library of Congress, Madison Building**

Week 4, 2 August, endurance

Skill: Digital Humanities

- Monday, 2 August, Freedom and Fugitivity
 - **Final Project decisions due**
 - Read Dunbar, *Never Caught*
- Tuesday, 3 August, Fugitivity and Freedom
 - Read Dunbar, *Never Caught*, Young Readers Edition, chapters 9 through 11
- Wednesday, 4 August, Jim Crow North
 - Read Archer, *Jim Crow North*, chapters 1 and 7
- Thursday, 5 August, Emancipation
 - Read Steward, [Twenty-Two Years a Slave, Forty Years a Freeman](#), chapters 16 and 17

Week 5, 9 August, memory

Skill: Museums (*pending COVID safety*)

Monday

- Monday, 9 August, Academic Approaches
 - Read Ross, *Slavery in the North*, chapters 1, 7 and 8, and epilogue
- Tuesday, 10 August, Institutional Approaches
 - Read the [Report of the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation to the President of Georgetown University](#)

- Wednesday, 11 August, Public Approaches
 - **Meet at the National Museum of African American History and Culture**
- Thursday, 12 August, Wrapping Up
 - Course Evaluations

Final Project Due Monday, 16 August