

THE SLAVE NARRATIVE

ANT 3930 (#10554)

Fall 2021

Little Hall, Room 0113

MWF Period 6 (12:50 – 1:40 pm)

Instructor: James M. Davidson, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 – 4:00 pm (and by appointment, in person or via Zoom)

Description: This course presents a historical overview of the American Slave Narrative. Participants will obtain knowledge of the narrative form as it evolved through time, first as a force for social change in the broader abolitionist literature, then as biography for selected African-American leaders, and finally as an attempt to record a history, through the ex-slave narratives of the 1930s. The narratives will be viewed through various lenses -- as literature, as political discourse, as biography, and ultimately as a window through which we may view the conditions of slavery. Through lectures, I will introduce the readings and provide broad overviews of the overarching topics and issues within the Slave Narrative as a genre. A portion of class time, however, will be spent discussing and critiquing the readings.

Required Readings:

1. 2002 *The Classic Slave Narratives*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Signet Classics. New American Library, New York.
2. 2000 *Voices From Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*. Edited by Norman R. Yetman. Dover Publications.
3. 2000 (1901) *Up From Slavery*, by Booker T. Washington. Signet Classics. New American Library, New York.

(or read digital text on line, at:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WASHINGTON/cover.html>)

Supplementary Reading (not required, but would be useful):

1. 1988 *The Slave Narrative: Its Place in American History*, by Marion Wilson Starling. (Second Edition; originally published 1981). Howard University Press, Washington, DC.

Requirements: Participation in class discussions is expected, and each student's input will be crucial. Students are expected to have read the readings for that day, and come to class prepared to discuss them.

The writing component for this class consists of two critical essays on key readings to be assigned throughout the semester. Each essay will be three to five pages in length, double spaced, 12 point font, and one-inch margins. These will be corrected and returned with comments.

There will be three non-cumulative exams, the format of which will be a mixture of objective questions (e.g., true false, multiple choice, etc), and short answer or essay questions. There will also be a final exam, following this same format, but comprehensive and cumulative.

Grading:

Exams 1 thru 3 (20% each)	60%
Essays 1 and 2 (5 % each)	10%
Attendance/Class Participation:	10%
Final Exam (comprehensive)	20%

A final letter grade will be assigned at the end of the semester, according to this scale:

A	(93-100%)
A-	(90-92%)
B+	(88-89%)
B	(83-87%)
B-	(80-82%)
C+	(78-79%)
C	(73-77%)
C-	(70-72%)
D+	(68-69%)
D	(63-67%)
D-	(60-62%)
E	(59% or below)

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. Excessive unexcused absences will detract from the student's final grade (see above).

Make-up Exams:

If an exam is missed, and the absence was pre-arranged, or in the event of illness accompanied by a physician's note, a make-up exam will be given. No make-up exams will be given for students who miss the testing period due to unexcused absences.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who in turn must provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

Academic Honesty:

The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: “on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid.” **THIS REFERS TO CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM, WHICH WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN THIS CLASS**

Consult the Student Guide at www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/ for further information. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use another person’s idea, opinion, or theory; any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings (any pieces of information) that are not common knowledge; quotations of another person’s actual spoken or written words; or paraphrase of another person’s spoken or written words.

Students caught cheating will be referred to the University administration for disciplinary action, the consequences of which can include failure of this course, and possible expulsion from the University.

Masks:

It is expected that each participant in the class will wear a mask to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Schedule and Topics:

Week 1 (August 23 thru August 27)

Lecture: Introduction
Why are slave narratives of value to us in the 21st century?

Week 2 (August 30 thru Sept 3)

Lecture: Timeline of Olaudah Equiano
Equiano’s methods and goals in writing his narrative

Reading: The Life of Olaudah Equiano (Preface; Chapters 1 through 4)

Week 3 (September 6 thru September 10)

NO CLASS Monday (Sept 6): Labor Day

Lecture: Slavery in Africa and the Atlantic World of Europe and the Americas

The Middle Passage

Reading: The Life of Olaudah Equiano (Chapters 5 through 8)

Week 4 (September 13 thru September 17)

Lecture: Structure of the Slave Narratives
 Confessions of Nat Turner
 The Abolitionist Movement In Britain and the United States

Reading: The Life of Olaudah Equiano (Chapters 9 through 12)

Week 5 (September 20 thru September 24)

Lecture: Discrepancies in Equiano's Narrative

Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2)

*******Exam 1 (Friday –Sept 24)*******

Week 6 (September 27 thru October 1)

Lecture: Frederick Douglass (1818-1895): Introduction
 A Comparison of his Three Different Narratives (1845, 1855, 1881)

Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Chapters 3 through 6)

Week 7 (October 4 thru October 8)

NO CLASS Friday, Oct 8- Homecoming

Lecture: Douglass: Timeline of Childhood Events/Plantation Life
 Brutality in the Slave Narratives and Douglass
 Literacy in the Slave Narratives

Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Chapters 7 through 9)

Week 8 (October 11 thru October 15)

Lecture: Occupations of Frederick Douglass
 Escape in the Slave Narratives

Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas (Chapters 10 through 11 and Appendix)

Week 9 (October 18 thru October 22)

Lecture: Escape in the Slave Narratives (cont)
Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915): An Introduction

Reading: Booker T. Washington *Up From Slavery* (Introduction and Chapters 1 through 5)

Week 10 (October 25 thru October 29)

Lecture: Washington's Two narratives (1900 and 1901)

*******Exam 2 (Wednesday – October 27) *******

Week 11 (November 1 thru November 5)

Lecture: The world of Booker T. Washington: Reconstruction and Jim Crow
Booker T. Washington: Public and Private

Reading: Booker T. Washington *Up From Slavery* (Chapters 6 through 10)

Week 12 (November 8 thru November 12)

Lecture: Booker T. Washington: Public and Private (cont.)
The WPA Ex-Slave Narratives: An Introduction/ Precursors.

Reading: Booker T. Washington *Up From Slavery* (Chapters 11 through 17)

Week 13 (November 15 thru November 19)

Lecture: The WPA Ex-Slave Narratives: Conducting the Interviews
The WPA Ex-Slave Narratives: Black Participation in the Project

Reading: *Voices From Slavery* (Yetman edited volume) Introduction

*******Exam 3 (Friday – November 19) *******

Week 14 (November 22 thru November 26)
NO CLASS Wednesday or Friday – Thanksgiving

Lecture: Problems Using the Ex-Slave Narratives

Reading: *Voices From Slavery* (Yetman edited volume)
1. Mary Anderson (p. 15)
2. Frank Bell (p. 21)
3. Boston Blackwell (p. 27)
4. Martin Jackson (p. 173)
5. Silvia King (p. 198)

Week 15 (November 29 thru December 3)

Lecture: Belief Systems and Charms in the Ex-Slave Narratives

Reading: *Voices From Slavery* (Yetman edited volume)
6. Elizabeth Sparks (p. 296)
7. Ria Sorrell (p. 294)
8. J. T. Tims (p. 301)
9. Mingo White (p. 310)
10. Lulu Wilson (p. 322)

Week 16 (December 6 thru December 8)

Lecture The Slave Narrative: Closing Thoughts

Lecture: Listening to the Narratives: Laura Smalley, Billey McCrae,
Fountain Hughes

Last Day of Class: Wednesday, December 8

Final Exam Period Thursday – December 16 – 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

*******The Final Exam is at least in part, comprehensive and cumulative*******