

Women and Slavery in the Black Atlantic

AFR 329
Spring 2019
T/R 3:05-4:20 PM
Chambers 1003

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Course Description

From the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, over 12 million Africans were shipped to the New World. Of those who survived the Middle Passage, fewer than 500,000 arrived in the United States; the vast majority were dispersed throughout the Caribbean and South America. The experiences of enslaved women, as well as the relationships between free and enslaved women, are as diverse as the African diaspora. Given the broad geographical scope of Africans' arrivals in the New World, this course will offer a comparative examination of women and slavery in the Black Atlantic. Topics for consideration include black women's gendered experiences of slavery, white women's roles in slave societies, and women abolitionists. The course will also examine how African and European conceptions of gender shaped the institution of slavery in the New World. Particular attention will be devoted to slavery in West Africa, Barbados, Cuba, Brazil, and the United States.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the historical processes that contributed to the formation of the Black Atlantic
- Compare and contrast women's roles in sustaining and/or abolishing slavery throughout the Black Atlantic
- Explain the strategies that African diasporic women used to navigate their enslavement
- Develop familiarity with archival research methods, archival theory, and oral history
- Synthesize primary and secondary sources about women's experiences of slavery

Required Texts

- Eric Nellis, *Shaping the New World: African Slavery in the Americas, 1500-1888*
- Sowande' Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (available as e-book through library website)
- Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (e-book)
- Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (e-book)

- Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (e-book)
- Camillia Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom: Women of Color, Gender, and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro* (e-book)
- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (e-book)
- Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (e-book)

Required texts are available at the college bookstore or as e-books on the library website. All other readings will be available through Moodle and are marked with an asterisk (*) on the reading schedule. To access Moodle, go to <http://moodle.davidson.edu>.

Academic Misconduct

All students are expected to abide by the Honor Code as specified in the Student Handbook. Any instances of academic misconduct will be addressed according to college policies. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to: aiding and abetting academic misconduct; cheating; fabrication; plagiarism; and violating ethical or professional standards. For further information, see <http://davidsonwriter.davidson.edu/ethical-use-of-sources/>.

Disability Statement

The college welcomes requests for accommodations related to disability and will grant those that are determined to be reasonable and maintain the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources, which is located in the Center for Teaching and Learning in the E.H. Little Library: Beth Bleil, Director, bebleil@davidson.edu, 704-894-2129; or Alysén Beaty, Assistant Director, albeaty@davidson.edu, 704-894-2939. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Tardiness and unexcused absences will affect your daily class participation grade. You may miss two classes for any reason without being penalized. Absences due to medical conditions, family emergencies, job interviews, or college-sponsored activities will be excused with written notice. In accordance with college policies, a student who is absent from more than one-fourth of the course meetings shall be assigned a grade of F.

Instructor Communication

I look forward to working with you throughout the semester to ensure that you have a fulfilling learning experience. If my office door is open, you are more than welcome to stop by. I encourage students to speak to me during office hours about any questions or concerns regarding the course. You can make an appointment for office hours at <https://calendly.com/nnekadennie>.

Please consult the syllabus, Moodle, and your classmates prior to sending emails about class procedures and requirements. If we have not resolved your issue after exchanging three emails, meet with me during office hours. I will respond to emails within three business days. This includes emails sent after 5 PM on weeknights or any time on weekends. I will not answer last minute questions via email the night before an assignment is due.

Evaluation of Students

Class Participation (10%)
Discussion Facilitation (10%)
Historiographical Essays (30%)
Archival Research Project (15%)
Primary Source Analysis (5%)
Oral History Project (20%)
Film Analysis (10%)

Class Participation 10%

This class will be structured as a seminar. All students are expected to contribute to discussion consistently. Students will receive a participation grade for each class. A rubric is available on the handout titled “Class Participation Guidelines” on Moodle.

Discussion Facilitation 10%

Each student will facilitate class discussion once during the semester. Post 3-5 discussion questions on Moodle by 11:59 PM the night before class. During class, you will be responsible for highlighting key themes from the readings and guiding the class’s conversation for approximately 20 minutes.

Historiographical Essays (30%)

Two 4-5 page historiographical essays will be due at the end of our unit on the Caribbean and at the end of our unit on Latin America. Historiographical essays analyze how historians have written about a particular topic or theme. They examine how scholars have addressed a central historical problem from multiple perspectives. In your essay, discuss how the assigned readings relate to each other. Essays may explore, for example, how a set of readings debate an issue, or how scholars offer shared explanations of a historical phenomenon. Essays must use at least two readings from the assigned unit and may explore a topic of your choosing.

Archival Research Project (15%)

Throughout the semester, students will create an archival collection about enslaved and slaveholding women’s experiences in the greater Charlotte area based on primary sources from local archives, including records at Latta Plantation and the Davidson College Archives. Each student is expected to select a minimum of 5 primary sources and write a short summary of each document that I will compile into a research guide. Your archival documents will be digitized

and the collection will be available for public use on the Davidson College Archives website. You will be graded based on the appropriateness of your document-choice; your summaries of your documents; and your level of engagement with the material.

Primary Source Analysis (5%)

Analyze 1-2 sources from the class's archival collection in a 1-page blog post that will be posted to the [Davidson College Archives and Special Collections blog](#). Summarize the primary sources and explain what they reveal about women and slavery in the greater Charlotte area. Your blog post may also be based on primary sources from the class trip to Barbados.

Oral History Project (20%)

Throughout the semester, the class will conduct an oral history project with the descendants of Betty Davidson Tate, a woman who was enslaved by Davidson College. You will be responsible for writing interview questions, conducting interviews, and working as a group to create a documentary for public use. The documentary will be available under the "[College History](#)" page of the Davidson College Archives and Special Collections website.

The work produced in this assignment is intended to be publicly available through the college's website and credited to each student by name. Participation in the project implies granting Davidson College non-exclusive perpetual right to distribute your work over the internet and/or make it part of the college's digital archive for scholarship. All work must meet specific requirements to be accepted for the website:

- Work must meet quality criteria as defined in the syllabus.
- Research works must have appropriate documentation with footnotes or works cited.
- Projects using original oral histories must have permission forms signed by interviewer and interviewee. Copies of the sound files and/or transcripts must accompany final projects.
- Projects that involve scanned documents or images must have signed permission forms accompanying the scanned materials. Digital copies of permissioned documents must accompany final projects.
- Students must sign a [Student Work Permission Agreement Form](#).

Film Analysis (10%)

Write a 3-4 page paper discussing the representation of black/white women and slavery in *Beloved* (1998), *Django Unchained* (2012), or *12 Years a Slave* (2013). Pick one movie.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	60-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	F	0-59
B	83-86	C-	70-72		

Late Policy and Extensions

Late submissions for will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e. A- becomes B+ after one day; A- becomes B after two days). A maximum of one extension will be available under extenuating circumstances only. If requesting an extension, please do so at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline.

I reserve the right to edit this syllabus. In the event of any changes, I will notify you in a timely manner.

Optional Trip to Barbados – PASSPORTS REQUIRED

There will be an optional trip to study slavery in Barbados from March 3-March 8. During the trip, students will conduct archival research in the special collections at the Barbados Museum and Historical Society; attend a lecture by Dr. Tara Inniss, a historian at the University of the West Indies; and tour various historical and cultural sites. Students attending the trip will complete additional assigned readings about legacies of slavery prior to arriving in Barbados. We will discuss relevant concepts in two 1.5 hour-long seminars held during the trip. Following the trip, students must share written or recorded reflections on a Davidson domains website about how direct exposure to Barbadian history and culture impacted their learning experience in the course. The itinerary will be available on Moodle by mid-February.

Davidson will pay for the entire cost of the trip (travel, lodging, meals, and outings). **If you plan to attend, you will need a passport.** I encourage everyone to apply for funds from the Abernethy Endowment and the Dean Rusk International Studies Program. The application deadline for the Dean Rusk grant is February 1 and you can access the application at <https://www.davidson.edu/offices/international-studies-program/travel-grants>.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Slave Trade

January 17

- Andrew Kahn and Jamelle Bouie, [The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes](#)*
- Eric Nellis, *Shaping the New World: African Slavery in the Americas, 1500-1888*, Chapter 2: "The Atlantic Slave Trade," pg. 25-42

Week 2: West Africa

January 22

- Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, "Women's Importance in African Slave Systems," *Women and Slavery in Africa*, pg. 3-28*
- Herbert S. Klein, "African Women in the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Women and Slavery in Africa*, 29-38*

- Paul E. Lovejoy, “Internal Markets or an Atlantic-Sahara Divide? How Women Fit into the Slave Trade of West Africa,” *Women and Slavery: Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic*, pg. 259-280*

January 24

- Carol P. MacCormack, “Slaves, Slave Owners, and Slave Dealers: Sherbro Coast and Hinterland,” *Women and Slavery in Africa*, pg. 271-294*
- Bruce L. Mouser, “Women Slavers of Guinea-Conakry,” *Women and Slavery in Africa*, pg. 320-339*
- Jennifer L. Morgan, “‘The Number of Women Doeth Much Disparayes the Whole Cargoe’: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and West African Gender Roles,” *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, pg. 50-68

Week 3: The Middle Passage

January 29

- Sowande’ Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*, Introduction: “Middle Passage Studies and the Birth of Slavery at Sea,” pg. 1-18
- Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, Chapter 1: “Waves of Calamity,” pg. 19-35
- Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, Chapter 2: “Imagined Bodies,” pg. 36-54
- Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, Chapter 3: “Healthy Desires, Toxic Realities,” pg. 55-75

January 31

- Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, Chapter 4: “Blood Memories,” pg. 76-105
- Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, Chapter 5: “Battered Bodies, Enfeebled Minds,” pg. 106-130
- Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*, Prologue, pg. 1-18*

Week 4: Historical Research Methods

February 5

- Library of Congress, “[The WPA and the Slave Narrative Collection](#)”*
- Catherine A. Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers’ Project*, “Introduction,” pg. 1-10*
- Stewart, *Long Past Slavery*, Chapter 8: “Rewriting the Master(‘s) Narrative: Signifying in the Ex-Slave Narrative,” pg. 197-228*

February 7 – Class will meet in library; Guest lecture with Jessica Cottle

- Janell Hobson, “The ‘Batty’ Politic: Toward an Aesthetic of the Black Female Body,” *Hypatia* 18 (4), pg. 87-94*

- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe* Volume 12, Number 2, pg. 1-14*
- Jessica Marie Johnson, “Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads,” *Social Text* 36 (4), pg. 57-79*
- [The Mary Lacy Letters](#)* (Read each page on the website)

Week 5: Slavery in the Caribbean

February 12

- Nellis, *Shaping the New World: African Slavery in the Americas, 1500-1888*, Chapter 4: “The Making of the Black Caribbean, 1650-1800,” pg. 73-88
- Hilary Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society: Britain’s Barbarity Time in Barbados, 1636-1876*, “Introduction: Defining the Black Slave Society,” pg. 1-10*
- Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society*, Chapter 1: “Made in England: A Racialized Chattel Society,” pg. 11-22*
- Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society*, Chapter 2: “‘Our Negroes Are Our Property Forever,’” pg. 23-29*
- Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society*, Chapter 5: “The Chattel Model Exported: Jamaica and South Carolina,” pg. 61-76*
- Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society*, Chapter 12: “Cheaper to Breed Than to Buy Negroes,” pg. 141-150*

February 14

- Hilary Beckles, “White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean,” pg. 66-82*
- Barbara Bush, “White ‘Ladies’, Coloured ‘Favourites’ And Black ‘Wenches’; Some Considerations on Sex, Race And Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in The British Caribbean,” *Slavery and Abolition* 2(3): 245-262*
- Kenneth Morgan, “Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica, ca 1776-1834,” *Women and Slavery, Volume 2: The Modern Atlantic*, pg. 27-53*

Week 6: Slavery in the Caribbean

February 19

- Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, “Introduction,” pg. 1-12
- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Chapter 1: “Jane: Fugitivity, Space, and Structures of Control in Bridgetown,” pg. 13-45
- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Chapter 2: “Rachael and Joanna: Power, Historical Figuring, and Troubling Freedom,” pg. 46-69

February 21

- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Chapter 3: “Agatha: White Women, Slave Owners, and the Dialectic of Racialized ‘Gender,’” pg. 70-99
- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Chapter 4: “Molly: Enslaved Women, Condemnation, and Gendered Terror,” pg. 100-123
- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Chapter 5: “‘Venus’: Abolition Discourse, Gendered Violence, and the Archive,” pg. 124-143
- Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, Epilogue, pg. 144-148

FEBRUARY 22-23: RACE AND SLAVERY SYMPOSIUM

Keynote Speaker: Marisa Fuentes

Attendance required on Saturday only; lunch will be provided

Week 7: Slavery in the Caribbean

February 26

- Bernard Moitt, “Pricing Freedom in the French Caribbean: Women, Men, Children, and Redemption from Slavery in the 1840s,” *Women and Slavery, Volume 2: The Modern Atlantic*, pg. 155-171*
- Natasha Lightfoot, “The Hart Sisters of Antigua: Evangelical Activism and ‘Respectable Public Politics in the Era of Black Atlantic Slavery,” *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, pg. 53-72*
- Philippe R. Girard, “Rebelles with a Cause: Women in the Haitian War of Independence, 1802-04,” *Gender and History* 21:1 (Apr. 2009), 60-85*
- Watch [Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess](#)*

February 28

- Laurence Brown and Tara Inniss, “Slave Women, Family Strategies, and the Transition to Freedom in Barbados, 1834-41,” *Women and Slavery, Volume 2: The Modern Atlantic*, pg. 172-185*
- Tara Inniss, “‘Any elderly, sensible, prudent woman’: The Practice and Practitioners of Midwifery during Slavery in the British Caribbean,” *Health and Medicine in the Circum Caribbean, 1800-1968**
- Tara Inniss, “‘This Complicated Incest’” Children, Sexuality and Sexual Abuse during Slavery and the Apprenticeship Period in the British Caribbean,” *Sex, Power, and Slavery*, pg. 165-178*

MARCH 1: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY DUE

Week 8: Spring Break

MARCH 3-MARCH 8: CLASS TRIP TO BARBADOS

Week 9: Slavery in Latin America

March 12

- Nellis, *Shaping the New World: African Slavery in the Americas, 1500-1888*, Chapter 3: "Slavery and the Shaping of Colonial Latin America: 1500-1800," pg. 43-72
- Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil*, Chapter 6: "Life, Death, and Migration in Afro-Brazilian Slave Society," pg. 151-188*

March 14

- Mary Karasch, Chapter 4: "Slave Women on the Brazilian Frontier in the Nineteenth Century," in *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, pg. 79-96*
- Robert W. Slenes, Chapter 7: "Black Homes, White Homilies: Perceptions of the Slave Family and of Slave Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil," in *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, pg. 126-145*
- Bianca Premo, *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, Chapter 4: "As if She Were My Own: Love and Law in the Slave Society of Eighteenth-Century Peru," pg. 71-87*

Week 10: Slavery in Latin America

March 19

- Sarah L. Franklin, *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba*, Introduction: "Patriarchy, Paternalism, and the Development of the Slave Society," pg. 1-20*
- Franklin, *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba*, Chapter 5: "Wet Nurses," pg. 125-146*
- Ulrike Schneider, "Sexual Relations between the Enslaved and between Slaves and Nonslaves in Nineteenth-Century Cuba," *Sex, Power, and Slavery*, pg. 149-165*

March 21

- Karen Y. Morrison, *Cuba's Racial Crucible: The Sexual Economy of Social Identities, 1750-2000*, Chapter 2: "Slavery and Afro-Cuban Family Formation during Cuba's Economic Awakening, 1763-1820," pg. 40-73*
- Morrison, *Cuba's Racial Crucible*, Chapter 3: "The Illegal Slave Trade and the Cuban Sexual Economy of Race, 1820-1867," pg. 74-105*

Week 11: Slavery in Latin America

March 26

- Camillia Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom: Women of Color, Gender, and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro*, Introduction, pg. 1-20

- Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom*, Chapter 2: “The Law is Final, Excellent Sir: Slave Law, Gender, and Gradual Emancipation,” pg. 47-68
- Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom*, Chapter 3: “As a Slave Woman and as a Mother: Law, Jurisprudence, and Rhetoric in Stories from Women’s Claims-Making,” pg. 71-96

March 28

- Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom*, Chapter 4: “Exaggerated and Sentimental? Engendering Abolitionism in the Atlantic World,” pg. 97-122
- Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom*, Chapter 7: “She Was Now a Free Woman: Ex-Slave Women and the Meanings of Urban Freedom,” pg. 174-197
- Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba*, Chapter 5: “And the Women Also Knew: The Gendered Terrain of Insurgency,” pg. 141-167*

MARCH 29- HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY DUE

Week 12: Slavery in the United States

April 2

- Morgan, *Laboring Women*, Chapter 3: “The Breedings Shall Goe with Their Mothers”: Gender and Evolving Practices of Slaveownership in the English American Colonies,” pg. 69-106
- Jessica Millward, *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, Chapter 5: “Wombs of Liberation: Petitions, Law, and the Black Woman’s Body in Maryland, 1780-1858,” pg. 88-108
- Deirdre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*, Introduction: “American Gynecology and Black Lives,” pg. 1-14

April 4

- Owens, *Medical Bondage*, Chapter 1: “The Birth of American Gynecology,” pg. 15-41
- Owens, *Medical Bondage*, Chapter 2: “Black Women’s Experiences in Slavery and Medicine,” pg. 42-72
- Owens, *Medical Bondage*, Chapter 3: “Contested Relations: Slavery, Sex, and Medicine,” pg. 73-88

APRIL 8 – ARCHIVAL RESEARCH PROJECT DUE

Week 13: Slavery in the United States

April 9

- Deborah Gray White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, Chapter 3: The Life Cycle of the Female Slave, pg. 91-118*

- Brenda E. Stevenson, *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, Chapter 9: “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South,” pg. 159-188
- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Chapters 1-7, pg. 1-40

April 11

- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Chapters 8-17, pg. 41-85
- Saidiya Haartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Chapter 3: “Seduction and the Ruses of Power,” pg. 79-114*

Week 14: Slavery in the United States

April 16

- Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, Introduction, pg. 1-11
- Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, Chapter 2: “I Could Not Stay There: Women, Men, and Truancy,” pg. 35-59
- Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, Chapter 3: “The Intoxication of Pleasurable Amusement: Secret Parties and the Politics of the Body,” pg. 60-92

April 18

- Delores M. Walters, “Re(dis)covering and Recreating the Cultural Milieu of Margaret Garner,” *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner*, pg. 1-22*
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, Part 1, pg. 1-83*

APRIL 19 – PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE

Week 15: Slavery in the United States

April 23

NO CLASS

April 25

- Watch at least one of the following movies:
 - *Beloved* (1998)
 - *Django Unchained* (2012)
 - *12 Years a Slave* (2013)
- Glenda R. Carpio, “I Like the Way You Die, Boy,” *Transition*, no. 112, *Django Unpacked* (2013), pg. 1-12*

- Erica L. Ball, “The Unbearable Liminality of Blackness: Reconsidering Violence in Steve McQueen’s *12 Years a Slave*,” *Transition*, no. 119, Afro-Asian Worlds (2016), pg. 175-186*

APRIL 25 – FILM ANALYSIS DUE

Week 16: Wrap Up

April 30

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”*

May 2 – Makeup Day

MAY 13 – ORAL HISTORY PROJECT DUE