



[Kim F. Hall](#) (African-American Quilter and Professor of Africana Studies and English at Barnard College, *Duafe*, 2008)



[Harmonia Rosales](#) (Afro-Cuban American Artist, *Creation of God*, 2017)



[Charly Palmer](#) (African-American Visual Artist, *Battleship 3*, 2016, Personal Collection of Keecha Harris)



[Shon Pittman](#) ([African-American Artist](#), *Fortifying Woman*)

Fall 2023

Course Title: Introduction to African-American History (History BC2440)

Class Days/Times: MW, 2:40-3:55 p.m.

Venue: TBD

Instructor: Professor Celia E. Naylor

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COURSE OVERVIEW (AKA THE [PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE](#))

We remain in the midst of a global pandemic that has disproportionately impacted people of African descent (as well as Indigenous and Latinx people) and those living in impoverished and insecure conditions in this country. We are still reckoning with nationwide and global uprisings in response to the litany of (ongoing) incidents of anti-Black state-sanctioned violence and acts of vigilante violence/ domestic terrorism, while simultaneously attempting to understand this moment, this movement, along the long arc of history. We are witnessing history and recognizing the importance of looking back in history to tease out more capacious understandings of the present moment and the future possibilities ahead of us.

Some of you may have read about, watched, and/or participated in worldwide protests/uprisings over the past few years; others may have decided to disengage from (or avoid) these images, videos, news reports, and protests/uprisings. Whether you have been actively engaged or disengaged with recent issues related to people of African descent in the U.S., in this course you will be required to review and interrogate material on a range of triggering subjects; some of these items include violent descriptions, images, and acts. In order to join in our collective engagement with African-American history, and with the history of the U.S., we will review items that have not been sanitized for popular consumption. Thus, we will not be “erasing history” in this course by avoiding the deployment of white supremacy and its vast, related violence(s) against Black bodies and lives.

In this introductory survey course, we will examine major topics and themes in African-American history from the colonial era to the present day. We will not be exploring the nebulous subject of “[race relations](#)” in this course. We will, though, attend to, what literary scholar and Columbia University Professor [Saidiya Hartman](#) describes as, the “afterlife of slavery.” In her 2006 book [Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route](#), she posits: “I wanted to engage the past, knowing that its perils and dangers still threatened and that even now lives hung in the balance. Slavery had established a measure of man and a ranking of life and worth that has yet to be undone. If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. I, too, am the afterlife of slavery.” (6)

During the journey of this course, we will individually and collectively reflect on and analyze myriad materials to explore the particular precarities confronting Blacks in the echoes and afterlives of slavery, the historical groundings and contemporary iterations of the “underlying conditions” of white supremacy, as well as the countless modalities of Black resistance (from the colonial era to the present) to the enduring pandemic of racism. Central topics we will address include the Middle Passage and the transatlantic slave trade; African-American enslaved culture(s) and communities; slave resistance; freedom struggles/movements during slavery; Jim Crowism; mass migrations and the “New Negro”; participation in international wars; the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Feminist Movement(s); challenges to and manifestations of the contemporary “color line” in the United States, and the current [Movement for Black Lives](#).

We will approach the subject matter utilizing a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g., slave narratives, slave ships' logs, ex-slave interviews, oral histories, speeches, essays, documentaries, and an autobiography). For this course, in addition to the "take home" midterm and "take home" final exam, students will submit 3 reflections—in writing (2 pages/reflection) or via an audio recording (4-5 minutes in length/recording). Small groups of 3-4 students will also co-lead some sections of class discussions on selected reading assignments. You are also required to attend at least 2 academic public lectures/panels focused on African-American history. Your selections can be on any area of African-American history (e.g., arts, sports, politics, etc.). You have the option of viewing/listening to 2 online lectures/panels or you could also listen to podcasts on related topics. You are not required to submit any written work regarding this assignment. Instead, simply notify me via email with information regarding the 2 specific online lectures/podcasts you watched/listened to for this.

Given some of the challenges and lessons from remote learning processes, as well as my own pedagogical beliefs about active, engaged learning environments, this course will continue to be a combination of lectures and discussions. Our class will be small enough (probably between 24-28 students) for class discussions to be manageable. With the particular topics of discussion for this course, it is important that we do not solely explore ideas via reading texts or even watching films and documentaries; rather, we must also exchange our perspectives and analyses as we learn in generative discussions with each other. If you would prefer the form of a lecture-only course, I encourage you to register in other courses.

Over the past couple of years, I have begun each class session with what I call a musical libation. It has been a fruitful way for all of us to transition to the class, to highlight particular musical selections, and to consider countless musical contributions in various genres. Beginning this semester, I have decided to add libations of joy to the course. Last year it became clear to me and to the students in the class that the integration of such dedicated moments of joy—intentionally integrated moments of joy—was critical. We did not fully realize this until the end of the fall semester, and so I am incorporating and practicing this now with the beginning of this new fall semester. We shall decide on how to do this together!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- * Critically examine historical documents (primary sources) and scholarly interpretations/analyses (secondary sources) concerning key elements and topics of African-American history
- * Explore different methods and theories of historical analysis related to African-American historiography
- * Analyze the impact of enslavement and discrimination, as well as ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, status, and domination, on the experiences of people of African descent in the United States

- * Identify and examine acts, processes, and strategies of individual and collective resistance (including via organizations and movements) focused on the human and civil rights of people of African descent in the United States
- * Discuss the causes and ramifications of significant events on people of African descent in the United States (e.g., the Great Depression, mass migrations, and world wars)
- * Critique the “place” of race, the manifestations of the pandemic of racism, and the presence of the “color line” in the twenty-first century
- * Hone and demonstrate critical analytical abilities and writing skills in written (or audio recorded) reflections, a midterm, and a final exam

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING IN-PERSON AND REMOTE LEARNING

It is possible that at some point, during this semester, we may need to have one or more virtual/Zoom class sessions. Most of you were introduced to online courses over the past couple of years. If we need to incorporate online sessions at any time, we shall work with and through any challenges (e.g., limited access to the internet, delays with connecting to the internet due to Wi-Fi restrictions, etc.). When challenges arise during the semester, and if comfortable doing so, please convey them directly to me. We can work together on possible options one-on-one, with your classmates, and/or with the assistance and support of others in the Barnard community.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

During our first class, I will share a few possible guidelines and ground rules for our course. We will then discuss your suggestions to collaborate on the creation of working, organic ground rules. We will revisit these guidelines as necessary at different points in the semester. I will dedicate a few minutes at the beginning and/or at the end of some of our classes for your informal sharing, check-ins, announcements, etc. We can also explore other options as we move through this semester together.

BARNARD HONOR CODE (ESTABLISHED IN 1912 AND UPDATED IN 2016)

“We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.”

HONOR CODE AND THIS COURSE

You are expected to observe all aspects of the Barnard Honor Code. All work submitted for this course must be your own. If you include information from books, articles, and internet websites, such sources must be clearly identified in your footnotes/end notes and bibliography. The Barnard Honor Code includes relevant language for the proper use of electronic/remote class material: "We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources." To be clear, this means that any recorded class content — from lectures, seminars, office hours, and discussion groups — is the intellectual property of your professors and your fellow students, and should **not** be distributed or shared outside of class. In addition, any use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)-generated content in your work should be duly noted. Please let me know if you have any questions about the honor code as it relates to this course.

WELLNESS

It is important for all of us to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors we may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, and/or academic. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how deep racial, gender, and class inequities exist in various forms in our healthcare and medical policies and systems. It is important to prioritize your overall health and wellness throughout this semester, your career here, and beyond the gates of Barnard and Columbia. Rest, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress and to exercise self-care and self-love. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and I encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- <https://barnard.edu/primarycare>
- <https://barnard.edu/about-counseling>
- <https://barnard.edu/rosemary-furman-counseling-center>
- <https://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS) Statement

If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please feel free to contact the Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS). If requested, students may be able to work with CARDS to receive assistance with notetaking, transcription/closed captioning, text to speech applications, etc. Please make sure to reach out to CARDS if you have any questions whatsoever regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester for this course or any other classes. Please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634 or via email at cards@barnard.edu. More information is available at <https://barnard.edu/disabilityservices>. CARDS is located in 101 Altschul Hall. For Columbia University's Disability Services, you may contact that office via email at disability@columbia.edu or at 212-854-2388.

CLASS COMPACT

(originally created by Dr. Koritha Mitchell at Ohio State University, adapted by Dr. Kim F. Hall at Barnard College, and with a few additional changes by me).

Please review the agreement below. Anyone in our intellectual community can suggest changes; the class will decide to accept, reject, or revise it. Please let me know if you have questions or suggestions/additions.

- 1) The majority of our thinking about the readings will be done outside of class. Our 2 classes per week is not enough time to appreciate the richness of this material. Remaining enrolled in this course means that you are ready to devote the time, effort, and energy to reading and thinking about these works that they deserve.
- 2). This class will be free of hate speech regarding race, sexual orientation, gender expression, socio-economic status, abilities, and background. Inflammatory remarks will not go disregarded and will not be tolerated. Each member of this class is responsible for fostering an environment in which people and their ideas are respected. For the same reasons, students will strive to make remarks that are informed by our material and the history that surrounds it.
- 3). Some of our texts will use naming practices that are derogatory and dismissive of the various peoples being written about. Although you may be called upon to use those words for scholarly purposes (in research searches for example), we will practice using respectful terminology when speaking to each other. The N-word won't be used in this class by a person of any race, even if it appears in selected materials. You will notice that it is included in the title of one of the documentaries for this class. The same goes for the "F" word, regardless of a person's (perceived) sexual orientation or gender expression.
- 4). While I welcome your enthusiasm and any desire to talk about the issues raised in class either in real life or online, being part of a respectful community means not making complaints about individual classmates on social media. If you are troubled by a class dynamic or by specific interactions, please come to me first so that I can try to resolve any problems. If the issue is related to me, ideally you will talk or write to me directly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class participation (15% of final grade): Attendance as well as **active, engaged** class participation are crucial to this course experience. In addition to verbalizing questions and comments during class sessions, if we create any virtual sessions, students may also submit questions and comments via the Zoom Chat function during class. Every student will also be responsible for co-leading (with 3 or 4 students) one (1) section of a class discussion of assigned materials. All students will sign up for co-leading particular discussions by the end of the fourth week of class. The specific implementation of this assignment will be decided by the members of each group. All group members will work with me beforehand on generating specific questions for these class discussions. The questions will be distributed to members of the class at least one (1) day before each class discussion. My usual class participation rule is that the final class participation grades of students who miss more than 2 classes will be docked for each additional absence (e.g., from a B+ → B). Please let me know if an extended absence becomes necessary as a result of illness or any other circumstances. In addition, please contact me as soon as possible if you have any particular concerns and needs related to your engagement with all aspects of this course.

3 (2-page written reflections or 5-minute audio recorded reflections) (30% of final grade): To complement your engagement in class discussions, I have included the submission of regular reflections as part of the overall grade. These reflections can be submitted in writing (2 double-spaced pages per reflection) or via an audio recording (5 minutes per recording). These reflections should analyze specific issues regarding the required readings (with a focus on **primary sources**). Use these as a tool for exploring your own questions and interpretations that have emerged as a result of the readings and class discussions. **Students should submit 2 reflections before the midterm (by October 18th) and 1 reflection after the midterm (by December 11th).** The reflections will be graded on a check/check minus/check plus basis. My assessment of your reflections will be based on your thoughtful presentation of a topic/issue as well as your integration of your analysis of assigned materials.

Take Home (Essay) Midterm (25% of final grade): We will discuss more specifics about the midterm during our class sessions. I will post the midterm to the Canvas Website (and email it to all students) on Wednesday, October 18th by noon. You will upload your completed midterm via the Canvas course website by Sunday, October 22nd by 11:59 p.m.

Individual Take Home (Essay) Final Exam (30% of final grade):

I will also discuss specifics about the final exam during our class sessions. The final exam will include only short essay responses. In early November, we will collectively decide on the specific dates in December you will receive and submit the final exam. You will upload your completed final exam via the Canvas course website.

NOTE: Overall guidelines regarding the midterm and the final are included at the end of the syllabus.

BARNARD COLLEGE AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS STATEMENT

All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. Barnard librarians have partnered with students, faculty, and staff to find ways to increase student access to textbooks. By the first day of advance registration for each term, faculty will have provided information about required texts for each course on Canvas, which can be viewed by students. A number of cost-free or low-cost methods for accessing some types of courses texts are detailed on the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability guide (library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability). Undergraduate students who identify as first-generation and/or low-income students can check out items from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library (library.barnard.edu/flip) and in Butler Library for an entire semester. Students may also consult with me, the Office of the Dean of Studies, and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for access to course texts. Please speak with your Barnard librarian(s) for more details.

NOTE: In order to provide easy and free access to a significant amount of the readings for this course, I have uploaded most of the readings to the Canvas website. These items are noted clearly in the syllabus. I have listed the additional required texts in the section below with the respective prices for these items if ordering a new copy. However, as noted, the cost for used copies is significantly lower. Please let me know if you need additional support related to acquiring the textbooks for this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS (AVAILABLE IN THE BARNARD COLLEGE-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM)

* LeAlan Jones, Lloyd Newman, and David Isay, *Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago* (New York: Scribner, 1997).

Retail: \$17.00 (new) [used book for half the cost or less online]

* Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (New York: Dell, 1997, c1968).

Retail: \$18.00 (new) [used book for half the cost or less online]

* Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Ballantine Books--Reissue edition, 1989, c1984).

Retail: \$8.99 (new) [used book for half the cost or less online]

* David Walker, *David Walker's Appeal: To the Coloured Citizens of the World*, ed., Peter P. Hinks (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000, c1829).

Retail: \$22.94 (new) [used book for half the cost or less online]

Online text available at: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html>

* Deborah Gray White, Mia Bay, and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Freedom on my Mind: A History of African Americans with Documents, Second Edition* (New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2016). NOTE: Although the third edition was released in September 2020, we will use the second edition this semester. Used copies of the second edition are available for purchase at about half the cost of the new third edition. **Please do NOT purchase this book until after the first week of classes, as I will also mention another option in class.**

NOTE: We will be utilizing the *Freedom on my Mind* textbook to contextualize the other course materials (primary sources, articles, documentaries, etc.). Thus, it will serve as our “historical foreground” throughout the course. Textbook chapters are *required* for the first 5 weeks. For the remainder of the semester, I *strongly encourage* reading the chapters assigned each week. However, due to your previous knowledge and background on topics, there may be some weeks which may require limited attention to (or active engagement with) this text (i.e., skimming).

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED TEXTS (AVAILABLE IN THE BARNARD COLLEGE-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM)

- * Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- * Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press in conjunction with the New York Historical Society, 2005).
- * Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
- * Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Random House, 2015).
- * Deirdre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017).
- * William A. Darity and A. Kirsten Mullen, *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
- * Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 volumes (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930-1935).
- * W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, Norton, 1996, c1903).
- * Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *She Came to Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019).
- * John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- * Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
- * Michele Goodwin, *Policing the Womb: Invisible Women and the Criminalization of Motherhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- * Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

- * Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).
- * Harriet A. Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000, c1861).
- * Martha S. Jones, *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All* (New York: Basic Books, 2020).
- * Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
- * Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).
- * Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
- * Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.
- * Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, 2nd edition (with a new preface) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).
- * Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).
- * Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).
- * Marilyn Richardson, ed., *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).
- * Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, Second Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 2017, c1997).
- * Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2018). NOTE: Originally his doctoral dissertation in 1986.
- * Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).
- * Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016).
- * Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017).

* Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

* Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African-American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

* Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Norton, 1996, c1900).

* Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999, c1985).

* Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

* Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1975).

REQUIRED AND SELECTED RECOMMENDED FILMS (MANY OF THESE FILMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE BARNARD/COLUMBIA LIBRARY SYSTEM AND/OR VIA YOUTUBE)

* *Africans in America*, Part 1: The Terrible Transformation—America's Journey Through Slavery, WGBH Boston Video, 2000, PBS Video, c1998, 90 minutes.

* *Caravans of Gold*, Part 3 of *Africa* (8-part) Series, Home Vision, 1997, c1984, 60 minutes.

* *Da 5 Bloods*, 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, 2020, 154 minutes.

* *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson*, Public Square Films, 2017, 1 hour and 45 minutes.

* *Descendant*, Night Tide Production and Take One Five Entertainment, 2022, 1 hour and 49 minutes. NOTE: This is available on Netflix. **(REQUIRED)**

* *Digging for Slaves*, Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1989, 50 minutes.

* *Enslaved*, Cornelia Street Productions, 2020, 6-part series (each episode is approx. 53 minutes). NOTE: This is available on Amazon Prime and Epix.

* *Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker*, Icarus Films, 1981, 48 minutes.

* *Ethnic Notions*, California Newsreel and Signifying' Works, 2004, c1986, 57 minutes.

* *Eyes on the Prize*, Part # 4: "No Easy Walk, 1962-1966," PBS Video, 1986, 60 minutes.

* *I am Not Your Negro*, Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2017, 94 minutes. **(REQUIRED)**

* *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*, William Greaves Production, 1989, 58 minutes. **(REQUIRED)**

- * *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, Magnolia Films, 2020, 96 minutes.
- * *Just Mercy*, Warner Brothers Pictures, 2019, 137 minutes.
- * *Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, PBS Video, 2002, 90 minutes.
- * *Middle Passage*, HBO Film, 2000, 78 minutes.
- * *The Negro Soldier*, Mad Phat Enterprises, 2009, c1944, 50 minutes.
- * *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger*, Cinema Guild, 1968, 68 minutes. **(REQUIRED)**
- * *Tongues Untied*, Marlon Riggs and Brian Freeman, 1989, 55 minutes. **(REQUIRED)**
- * *Unearthing Secret America*, PBS Video, 2002, 60 minutes.

CANVAS WEBSITE AND ORGANIZATION OF ONLINE MATERIALS

I have posted this syllabus in the SYLLABUS folder on the CANVAS WEBSITE. For class assignments please check the MODULES folder on the CANVAS WEBSITE. You will find REQUIRED READINGS AS WELL AS LINKS TO ARTICLES AND VIDEOS (e.g., journal articles, links to external websites, etc.) for this course organized by specific weeks in the MODULES folder. I have also placed several supplemental materials in the MODULES folder. These supplemental materials are recommended (**not** required) readings; they are noted as (REC).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

September 6

Week 2:

September 11

As we begin this course, I would like us to start with a class discussion about race, racial identity, and racism. We cannot assume we all have a common, consistent definition for race, racial identity, or racism. Our current notions about these terms may have changed with different experiences, perhaps they have changed over our lifetimes, perhaps they have changed over the past couple of months or weeks, or perhaps this is the first time we have considered these terms for any duration of time.

Before class on Monday, September 11th, I would like you to read [“Talking about Race,”](#) created by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). This online piece has a number of embedded articles. You can certainly review the other related articles in this piece. However, for the purpose of our class discussion, read the main article on [“Race and Racial Identity.”](#) We will begin exploring our individual and general understandings of race and racism. **By the end of this week, Sunday, September 17th, you will submit your first reflection on your personal response(s) to the “Race and Racial Identity” segment; you may also integrate any thoughts related to our class discussion on this topic.**

* [“The National Museum of African American History and Culture: I, Too, Sing America,”](#) *New York Times*, September 15, 2016.

(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African-American History*, Volume 1, Chapter 1 —“Interpreting African-American History” (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

(RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

September 13: “Old World” Conceptions of “Race,” Femaleness/Womanhood, and Blackness

* David Brion Davis, “Constructing Race: A Reflection,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 54, No. 1. (Jan., 1997), pp. 7-18. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Robin Blackburn, “The Old World Background to European Colonial Slavery,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 54, No. 1. (Jan., 1997), pp. 65-102.

(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Jennifer L. Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder’: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 54, No. 1. (Jan., 1997), pp. 167-192.

(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Episode 1 of *Enslaved* documentary series (“Cultures Left Behind”)
(RECOMMENDED)

Week 3: “Crossing the Danger Water”: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage

September 18:

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 1—“From Africa to America, 1441-1808.”

* Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed., W. Sollors (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000, c1789).

[*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*](#): **FOR THIS CLASS SESSION READ ONLY, Introduction and Chapters 1-2. (AVAILABLE ONLINE)**

* Selections from Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 volumes (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930-1935), Focus on reading Volume I, Document 157, pp. 392-410 and Volume 2, Document 167, pp. 342-361. **(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)**

* Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021. **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Robin D.G. Kelley, [“What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?”](#) *Boston Review*, January 12, 2017. **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Phillis Wheatley, [*Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave*](#) (Boston: Geo. W. Light, 1834). **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Stephanie E. Smallwood, [*Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*](#) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998). **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Episode 2 (“Rationalization”) and Episode 3 (“Follow the Money”) of *Enslaved* documentary series **(RECOMMENDED)**

September 20:

Cont. Discussion “Crossing the Danger Water”: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage

Week 4: Race and Power in the “Strange New Land”

September 25: Africans in Colonial North America

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 2—“African Slavery in North America, 1619-1740.”

* Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press in conjunction with the New York Historical Society, 2005): Introduction—Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris’ “Uncovering, Discovering and Recovering: Digging in New York’s Slave Past Beyond [the African Burial Ground](#),” pp. 1-27. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Episode 4 of *Enslaved* documentary series (“New World Cultures”) (RECOMMENDED)

September 27: Race and National Identities in the Revolutionary Era

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 3—“African Americans in the Age of Revolution, 1741-1783.”

* Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press in conjunction with the New York Historical Society, 2005), Chapter 3—Graham Russell Gao Hodges’ “Liberty and Constraint: The Limits of Revolution,” pp. 91-109. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Peter H. Wood, “‘The Dream Deferred’: Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence” in *In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean and Afro-American History*, ed. Gary Y. Okihiro (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), pp. 166-187. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Before this class, view, “[Frederick Douglass’s Descendants Deliver His \[1852\] ‘Fourth of July’ Speech](#),” July 3, 2020, 7 minutes. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Nikole Hannah-Jones, “[Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make Them True](#),” *New York Times Magazine*, August 14, 2019. NOTE: This is the Introduction to The 1619 Project and Jake Silverstein, “[Why We Published The 1619 Project](#),” December 20, 2019. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Before this class, view Kimberly Jones, “[How Can We Win](#),” June 2020, 7 minutes. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Erik Ofgang, “[After 215 Years, the Man Fortune Was Finally Laid to Rest](#),” *Connecticut Magazine*, January 15, 2018. (RECOMMENDED)

* Sylvia Frey, “Between Slavery and Freedom: Virginia Blacks in the American Revolution,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 49, No. 3. (Aug., 1983), pp. 375-398. (RECOMMENDED)

Week 5: Enslaver-Enslaved Relations and “The World the Slaves Made”

October 2

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 4—“Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic in North America, 1775-1820.”

* Before this class session, view [Unearthing Secret America, Season 13, Episode 1](#), Segments on Williamsburg and Thomas Jefferson/Monticello (PBS Video, 2002, 19:37-56:48). (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Lecture by Prof. Annette Gordon-Reed, 2008, “[The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family](#),” The Library of Congress, Kluge Center Webcasts, 73 minutes. (RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

October 4

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 5—“Black Life in the Slave South, 1820-1860.”

* Selections from Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980). (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Norman R. Yetman, “Ex-Slave Interviews and the Historiography of Slavery,” *American Quarterly* 36: 2 (summer 1984): 181-210. (RECOMMENDED)

* View Episode 5 of *Enslaved* documentary series (“Resistance”) (RECOMMENDED)

* *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: New Press in conjunction with the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution, 1998). (RECOMMENDED)

* [Voices Remembering Slavery: Freed People Tell Their Stories](#), Library of Congress, Digital Collections. (RECOMMENDED)

Week 6:

October 9: NO CLASS—View *Descendant* documentary (available on Netflix)

October 11: NO CLASS—At some point between October 1st and October 22nd visit the African Burial Ground (outdoor memorial is temporarily closed). We will discuss more about this assignment in class.

Week 7:

October 16: The Gendered Contours and Complexities of Resistance

* Stephanie M. H. Camp, "The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830-1861," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Aug., 2002), pp. 533-572. **(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)**

* Annette Gordon-Reed, ed., *Race on Trial: Law and Justice in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 3—"Celia's Case (1857)," 48-60. **(AVAILABLE ONLINE VIA CLIO AS AN E-BOOK)**

* Hugh P. Williamson, "Document: The State Against Celia, a Slave," *Midwest Journal* Vol. 8 (spring/fall 1956): 408-420. **(RECOMMENDED)**

* Harriet A. Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000, c1861). **(RECOMMENDED)**

October 18: "Let Your Motto Be Resistance! Resistance! Resistance!"

* Walker, *David Walker's Appeal* (1829).

* Marilyn Richardson, ed., *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Introduction, "Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall" (1832) and "An Address Delivered Before the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of America" (1832). **(AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)**

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 6—"The Northern Black Freedom Struggle and the Coming of the Civil War, 1830-1860." **(RECOMMENDED)**

* View Episode 6 of *Enslaved* documentary series ("Abolition") **(RECOMMENDED)**

HOME MIDTERM: I will post the midterm to the CANVAS WEBSITE and email it to all of you on Wednesday, October 18th. You will submit your completed midterm to me via email or upload it to the Canvas website by Sunday, October 22nd by 11:59 p.m.

Week 8:

October 23

* Discussion of *Descendant* documentary and African Burial Ground.

October 25: Free at Last?

* Michael Perman, ed., *Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction: Documents and Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2nd edition, 1998), 277-310.

NOTE: Chapter 10—"Emancipation" (**AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* Leon F. Litwack, "'Blues Falling Down Like Hail': The Ordeal of Black Freedom" in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America*, eds., Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 109-127.

(**AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, Chapter 6—"From Slavery to Freedom."

(**RECOMMENDED**)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 7—"Freedom Rising: The Civil War, 1861-1865." (**RECOMMENDED**)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 8—"Reconstruction: The Making and Unmaking of a Revolution, 1865-1885" and Chapter 9 "Black Life and Culture during the Nadir, 1880-1915." (**RECOMMENDED**)

Week 9

October 30: The Color Line and Jim Crowism

* Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, "Two Thousand Miles for a Five-Minute Speech" and "The Atlanta Exposition Address." (**AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*—"The Forethought," and "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others." (**AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Booker T. Washington and His Critics," reprinted from *World Today*, Vol. 6 (1904): 518-521. (**AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* Before the class, view Equal Justice Initiative short (2-minute) video, "[The Legacy of Racial Injustice](#)," (2020).

* Before the class, view [Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice](#) (1989, 58 minutes).

* Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, "[For Black Suffragists, the Lens Was a Mighty Sword](#)," *New York Times*, August 12, 2020. (**RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* Treva B. Lindsey, "[The Problem with Celebrating the 19th Amendment](#)," CNN.com, August 18, 2020. (**RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE**)

* Before this class, view [Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind](#) (2002, 120 minutes). (**RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE**)

* Equal Justice Initiative, [Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror](#), 3rd edition, 2017 and [Reconstruction in America: Racial Violence after the Civil War, 1865-1876](#) (2020). (RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Keith Schneider, "[Revitalizing Montgomery as it Embraces Its Past](#)," *New York Times*, May 21, 2019. (RECOMMENDED)

* Southern Poverty Law Center, "[Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy](#)," February 1, 2019. (RECOMMENDED)

November 1

* **Cont. The Color Line and Jim Crowism**

Week 10:

November 6: NO CLASS TODAY (ACADEMIC HOLIDAY)

November 8: World War II at Home and Abroad

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 10—"The New Negro Comes of Age, 1915-1940" and Chapter 11—"Fighting for a Double Victory in the World War II Era, 1939-1945."

* Maggi M. Morehouse, *Fighting in the Jim Crow Army: Black Men and Women Remember World War II* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), Chapter 1—"We're in the Army Now," Chapter 4—"The 'Good Fight'" and Chapter 5—"Coming Home." (RECOMMENDED)

* *Invisible Warriors: African-American Women in World War II* (RECOMMENDED)

* [The Negro Soldier](#), Mad Phat Enterprises, 2009. Issued in 1944 by the War Department as a 16-mm. motion picture. (RECOMMENDED—AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)

Week 11:

November 13: Civil Rights Movement(s)

* James Baldwin, "[A Letter to My Nephew](#)," *The Progressive Magazine*, December 1, 1962. NOTE: This is also the first essay, "My Dungeon Shook--Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation," in *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dial Press, 1963). (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Before this class, view *I am Not Your Negro*, Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2017, 94 minutes. (AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX—PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE ACCESSING THIS DOCUMENTARY)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 12—"The Early Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1963." (RECOMMENDED)

November 15:

* Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*.

* [Speech by the late U.S. Congressman John Lewis](#), March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1963, Washington, D.C. (7 minutes)

* *Eyes on the Prize*, Part 4 "[No Easy Walk](#)." (RECOMMENDED)

Week 12: Black Power, Black Panthers, Black Feminism(s), and Black Queer Identities

November 20:

* Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed., *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: New Press, 1995), Introduction—"The Evolution of Feminist Consciousness Among African American Women," 1-22; "The Combahee River Collective," 231-240; Cheryl Clarke's "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance," 241-252; Barbara Smith, "Some Home Truths on the Contemporary Black Feminist Movement," 253-267; bell hooks, "Black Women: Shaping Feminist History," 269-282, and Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," 283-292. (AVAILABLE ON CLIO AS AN E-BOOK)

* Before class, view *Tongues Untied*, Marlon Riggs and Brian Freeman, 1989, 55 minutes. (REQUIRED—AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)

* Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), Chapter 5—"This Battlefield Called Life': Black Feminist Dreams," 135-156. (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* Selections regarding the Black Power Movement, Black Panthers, and Combahee River Collective (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS WEBSITE)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 13—"Multiple Meanings of Freedom: The Movement Broadens, 1961-1976." (RECOMMENDED)

November 22: NO CLASS TODAY FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13:

November 27: NO CLASS TODAY DUE TO POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

November 29

The Vietnam War—On the Homefront and on the Front Lines

* Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans*.

NOTE: While I encourage you to read the entire book, I understand that depending on your coursework at this time, it may be difficult. Thus, in preparation for class, you must read *at least* 8-10 chapters/narratives of your choice.

* Before this class, view [No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger](#), Cinema Guild, 1968, 68 minutes. (AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)

Week 14: The Politics of Progress and Poverty at the End of the Twentieth Century

December 4:

* Jones and Newman, *Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago*.

* [Interview with LeAlan Jones, Lloyd Newman, and David Isay with Charlie Rose](#), June 26, 1997, 20 minutes. (RECOMMENDED)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 14—“Racial Progress in the Era of Backlash and Change, 1967-2000.” (RECOMMENDED)

December 6: The Twenty-First-Century “Color Line” in the Age of Presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden # BlackLivesMatterMovement, # SayHerName Campaign, Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), and COVID-19 (“Rona”)

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 15—“African Americans and the New Century, 2000-Present.” (RECOMMENDED)

***TBD BY STUDENTS—SUGGESTED ARTICLES ON CANVAS WEBSITE ***

Week 15:

December 11: Last Day of Class—“Show and Tell” Class Discussion

Each student will share with your classmates one item (poem, photograph, song, article, etc.) and briefly discuss (2 minutes max), or submit a 1-page written statement (attached to the selection), why the item reflects this moment in the history of Blacks in the U.S.

NOTE: ALL STUDENTS WILL E-MAIL THEIR RESPECTIVE ITEMS TO ME BY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9th. I WILL THEN SHARE THEM ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th VIA E-MAIL WITH ALL STUDENTS IN THE CLASS.

General Guidelines Regarding the Midterm and Final Exam

Both the midterm and the final exam will be in the format of essays. For the midterm, I will provide 3 questions, and you will select and answer 1 of those questions. For the final, I will provide at least 6 questions, and you will select and answer 3 of those questions. Both the midterm and final exam will be “take home” exams. You will have 75 minutes (the length of our class period) to work on the midterm, and you will have 3 hours to work on the final exam. Invoking the honor code, you agree to only work on these exams for the respective time periods allowed (in one sitting or over multiple periods as you desire). Students with accommodations who have an extended time period on exams will be able to work on these exams for their respective full extension periods.

The length of your midterm should be around 1,000 words; it can be a little shorter or longer than that (just not 700 words or 2,000 words). The final exam should be around 3,000 words (with each essay being approx. 1,000 words). For these “take-home” exams, choose a venue or venues that you think will be the most easeful for you. You should keep track of your time—whether you are working on the exam in one sitting or breaking it up into multiple time periods over the course of a couple of days. You need to include references to at least one primary source and one secondary source from the required class materials for the midterm, though you may well require additional references to present your arguments in your midterm essay. You do not need to include required materials **not** listed in the syllabus to successfully complete the midterm or the final. In order to be as efficient as possible, for the midterm and the final exam, you do not need to include complete citations for references, end notes/footnotes or a bibliography. Instead, please use parenthetical citations (e.g., Jennifer Morgan’s essay, Olaudah Equiano’s narrative, Maria Stewart’s speeches, etc.). When you are quoting directly from any source (primary or secondary), make sure to include quotation marks. Please submit your midterm and final exam in PDF format (docx format if necessary) by uploading your exam to the Canvas/Courseworks website using the section in the Assignments folder.

Overall, there is no exact number of quotes, sources, or citations that will translate to an A exam, a B exam, etc. Papers in most disciplines in the humanities and social sciences are not mathematical equations. A student could include 5 different quotes with no analysis of the meanings or significance of the quotes and receive a low grade on an exam, and another student could use less quotes but present a thoughtful, generative analysis and receive a much higher grade.

In addition to crafting a thesis statement, it is often fruitful to have an introduction to provide an overview of your essay. However, in order to save words related to the word count, you can certainly begin with the core of your essay without including an extensive introduction. Your conclusion should not serve to summarize and reiterate the points you have already made in the rest of your exam; rather, it should offer some concluding statements (and possibly even a couple of concluding questions) that convey the importance of your arguments presented in your exam.

For each exam, ideally you would incorporate both primary and secondary sources in your midterm and final exam responses. Again, though, it is not solely about adding a litany of quotes. It is important to be selective about the quotes you choose (and include

the particular part of the quote that demonstrates your point), as well as to present your analysis of the quote as it pertains to your points/arguments on a specific topic, issue, etc.

You want to include as many sources as necessary to demonstrate your argument/point AND all of your citations/sources should not be so many that you are including quote after quote after quote without any analysis of the quotes/sources (or very limited analysis of the quotes/sources). Please remember that a summary of a quote is a description not an analysis of the quote (e.g., the meanings of the quote, the significance of the quote, etc.). Consider asking yourself why is this quote/point important and why does this quote/point matter? When describing we usually answer the questions of what, who, when, and where. When we ask why (and oftentimes how) we move more in the direction of the purpose, significance, and meanings.

As I am your reader and familiar with the sources, you are not writing your essays with a general reader in mind. As a result, you do not have to introduce the sources to me, or incorporate biographies of specific individuals, etc. Instead, you are to focus on analyzing the content and significance of the quotes/sources and any relevant contexts of your respective sources.