Syllabus
History 405: African Americans and the Civil War and Reconstruction
Spring 2008
Clough Hall 313
Thursday 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Instructor: Brian D. Page
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Course Description

“The most dramatic episode in American history,” W. E. B. Du Bois wrote, was the emancipation of the nation’s four million African American slaves. This course will examine the African American experience in the southern United States during the Civil War and Reconstruction era. Students will read primary and secondary sources that demonstrate the central role African American men and women played in shaping the issues and debates that defined this era in American history, as well as the social and cultural processes that took place among African Americans during the transition from slavery to freedom. As a result, while the political divisions and military struggle between the North and South are important during this period, emphasis will be placed on the daily lives of freedpeople. Course topics include antebellum slave life and slave resistance, the emancipation process, competing views of freedom, black labor and politics, and race, class, and gender relations in African American communities after the Civil War.

Course Requirements

All requirements/assignments are mandatory.

Attendance: Students must attend class. If you miss a class you must contact me as soon as possible. If you miss more than one class your grade will be adversely affected (10 point deduction for each absence). Please keep this policy in mind when making travel arrangements, doctor’s appointments, etc.

Quizzes/Assignments/Participation (15%): Students must complete all assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them in class. Every week three students will be in charge of leading class discussions (introducing questions, identifying common themes, etc.) of the required readings. In addition, in-class quizzes and short written assignments may be given periodically throughout the semester.

Essays (45%): Students will be required to write three 6 page essays responding to historical questions and arguments. These essays will be based on required readings and in-class discussions.
Research Paper (40%): Students will be required to write a brief proposal, submit a short literature review and/or historiographical essay, and a 15 page research paper based on primary and secondary sources.

Deadlines: Deadlines are not negotiable. All papers/assignments must be typed/double spaced and turned in at the beginning of class.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about this course.

Required Books:


* For additional required readings see the course outline. Unless otherwise noted all articles may be located in the library’s online journals.

Course Outline (The following schedule of assignments remains subject to revisions)

Week One  
1/10/08  
*The Meanings of Freedom*

Course Introduction

Required Readings:


Primary Source:


Week Two
1/17/08

The Expansion of Slavery in the Nineteenth Century

Required Readings:


Camp, Closer to Freedom, Introduction, Chapter One, 1-34.

Primary Sources: (Please note Twelve Years a Slave is an entire slave narrative)


Week Three
1/24/08

African American Communities and Slave Resistance

Paper Topic Due in Class.

Students should begin researching primary sources and reading historical literature relevant to their topic.

Required Readings:


Camp, Closer to Freedom, Chapters Two and Three, 35-92.
Primary Sources:

The slavery code of the District of Columbia (American Memory)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/sthml/lstbibtitles01.html

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2921t.html

Week Four Slaves, Fugitives, and the “Grapevine” of Information
1/31/08

Required Readings:

Camp, Closer to Freedom, Chapter Four, 93-116.

Hahn, A Nation Under Our Feet, Prologue, Chapter One, 1-61.

Also begin reading for week five.

Primary Sources:

Sarah Bradford, Harriet Tubman, The Moses of Her People, Incident in Troy, New York
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2947t.html

Anthony Burns Speaks (Africans in the Americas)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2916.html

Letter from Anthony Burns to the Baptist Church (Africans in the Americas)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2917.html

Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Excerpt (Africans in the Americas)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2924t.html

Week Five The Wartime Movements of Enslaved People
2/01/08

Research Paper Proposal due in Class.

Required Readings:

Berlin, Free at Last, Chapter One, Chapter Two, 1-165, and Chapter Five, 333-434.

Camp, Closer to Freedom, Chapter Five, 117-138.

Hahn, A Nation Under Our Feet, Chapter Two, 62-82.
Additional Primary Sources (Not Required):

Abraham Lincoln Papers in American Memory
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/mal.home.html

Abraham Lincoln to Henry J. Raymond, Sunday, March 9, 1862 (Lincoln’s Plan for Compensated Emancipation)

Abraham Lincoln to Congress, Wednesday, April 16, 1862 (Compensated Emancipation in the District of Columbia)

Week Six Fighting the Civil War
2/14/08

First Essay Due in Class.

Required Readings:

Berlin, Free at Last, Chapter Six, 435-540.

Hahn, A Nation Under Our Feet, Chapter Two, 82-115.


Week Seven The Wartime Experience Behind Union Lines
2/21/08

Required Readings:

Berlin, Free at Last, Chapter Three, 167-240.


Week Eight From Slavery to Free Labor?
2/28/08

Literature Review/Historiographical Essay Due in Class.
**Required Readings:**

Berlin, Free at Last, Chapter Four, 241-332.


**Primary Sources:**

Freedmen’s Bureau Online
http://www.freedmensbureau.com

Records Relating to Freedmen’s Labor

Week Nine: Spring Break

Week Ten  
*The Struggle for Civil Rights*  
3/13/08

**Required Readings:**


**Primary Sources:**

The Freedmen’s Bureau Online  
http://www.freedmensbureau.com

Records Relating to Murders and Outrages:
Affidavits related to the 1866 Memphis, Tennessee Riot; Freedmen’s Bureau Report of the 1866 Memphis, Tennessee Riot; Complaint Book of the Freedmen’s Court in the Memphis District

Week Eleven  
Family Life in the Age of Emancipation  
3/20/08

Required Readings:


Laura F. Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion, Chapter One, 1-65.


Primary Sources:

The Freedmen’s Bureau Online  
http://www.freedmensbureau.com

Freedmen’s Bureau Marriage Records: Reports and Registers of Marriages in Washington D. C.

Week Twelve  
Black Political Reconstruction  
3/27/08

Second Essay Due in Class.

Required Readings:

Hahn, A Nation Under Our Feet, Chapter Four, Chapter Five, 163-215, 216-264.


Week Thirteen  “Uplifting the Race”  
4/03/08

Required Readings:


Week Fourteen  *Southern Violence, Black Rights, and Redemption*  
4/10/08

Required Readings:


Week Fourteen  *Lives and Labors in the Late Nineteenth Century*  
4/17/08

Required Reading:


Week Sixteen  Slavery and Emancipation in the Atlantic World
4/24/08

Required Readings:


Friday 4/25/08 Final Research Paper and Bibliography due by Noon. No email papers or late papers will be accepted.

Friday 5/01/08 Third Essay due in class at 3:30 P.M.