

## **History 4485/5485: Abolitionism in the Atlantic World**

### **Fall 2008 W 5:30p-8:00p**

Instructor: Dr. Colleen A. Vasconcellos

Office Hours: MW: 11a-12:30p; T: 10a-1p; W: 3:30p-5:30p

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#### **Course Objectives:**

This semester, we will explore the major social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of the Abolitionist Movement that took place in the Atlantic World from 1750 to 1888. Over the course of the semester, we will not only discuss the abolitionist movement and the abolitionists themselves, but we will explore the larger issues of slavery and the slave trade in order to understand what motivated the abolitionists in their work. We will also discuss the various theories surrounding that motivation, posited by Eric Williams, Seymour Drescher, and the like.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

Learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

- \* To provide students with an overall knowledge of the Abolitionists and the Abolitionist Movement since 1750, and how that history changed over time
- \* To teach students how to analyze and understand the events and people that had significant impact on the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the Atlantic World
- \* To provide students with the historiographical framework surrounding the abolition of slavery and the slave trade and the various theories that comprise that framework
- \* To teach students how to make connections between course readings, materials, and lectures and how to communicate these findings in written assignments and in class discussions.

These learning outcomes will be assessed through the evaluation of two examinations, two small papers, one larger paper, and overall class participation.

#### **Textbooks: (on reserve in the library and for sale in the bookstore)**

Thomas Bender, ed. *The Antislavery Debate*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

Olaudah Equiano. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*.

Sue Peabody and Keila Grinberg, eds. *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Library Textbook Course Reserve Password is 173473

#### **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

##### **Exams: 30%**

You will have two exams over the course of the term, with each exam consisting of 15% of your final grade. Each exam will consist of a few essay questions. These exams will be take-home exams, and you will be given the questions well in advance of their due date. Exams must be turned in to my office by 5p on the date that they are due. One letter grade will be deducted from your exam grade for every day that your exam is late. Email submissions will not be accepted.

### Paper: 20%

Each student, graduate and undergraduate, will write a paper to be turned in at the end of the semester. For undergrads, this paper will be 6-8 pages in length. **For graduate students, this paper will be 10-12 pages in length.** You have two options here.

- Option #1: Write a position paper that argues either for or against the abolitionist cause using primary sources to support your argument, and applying one or more theories given by those historians we discuss in class.
- Option #2: Write a formal research paper on some topic covered over the course of the semester.

**Topics are due to me on September 10, along with a brief bibliography.** While online excerpts from primary sources are acceptable, no other online source will be allowed for this paper unless previously approved by me. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style and/or Kate Turabian's guidebook as a model for your footnotes/endnotes and works cited pages. **Papers will be due at the beginning of class, Dec 3.** One letter grade will be deducted from your grade for every day that your paper is late. Email submissions will not be accepted

### Book Reviews: 30%

Each Student will write a 3-5p book review on *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* and Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. **For graduate students, this paper will be 5 pages in length.** Each review will consist of 15% of their final grade. Rather than write a more traditional book review of these works, you will instead write a review paper that follows a certain list of questions provided by me. Please see the syllabus for appropriate due dates. Papers are due at the start of class, and we will then spend the class period discussing the papers and your reactions to the narratives. One letter grade will be deducted from your grade for every day that your exam is late. Email submissions will not be accepted

### Class Participation: 20%

Although there will be class lectures throughout the semester, the majority of the course will be a seminar where each student is expected to participate actively in and at times carry the course of the conversation. You will also be expected to participate in group activities from time to time. All reading assignments must be completed before the start of class, so that you will be ready to engage in class discussion, debate, and analysis. ***Class participation is not attendance, but actual participation in the class discussion of the day.*** Therefore, even if you come to class everyday, but don't say a word, you will not receive the full 20% for your class participation grade. At most, you will be given an 80. While you are expected to speak up in class and ask questions, you are also expected to respect your fellow students' opinions. I will not tolerate disrespect of any kind, and you will be asked to leave. If disruptive behavior continues, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of the course, and you will not be allowed to finish any assignments or take any exams that follow. In other words, you will fail the course.

### Extra Credit:

Extra credit opportunities offered by the University will not be accepted in this class.

## **Class Policies**

Cell Phones: TURN THEM OFF!!!! I'm serious. I don't want to hear it, see it, even know that it exists. If you need them on for emergency purposes, please set the ring to vibrate only. If I hear a phone ring, you will be asked to leave the class, and don't even let me catch you talking on it. If you are caught talking on the phone in class (even checking voice mail) you will not be allowed to return to class.

### Attendance and Tardiness:

I will not be taking attendance in this class. You are all adults. Please keep in mind, however, that excessive absence will affect your class participation grade. If you aren't here, then you can't participate in the class discussion. Excessive lateness is disruptive to the class, affecting your fellow students as well as me. If for any reason, you need to leave class early, please let me know ahead of time. In short, come on time and stay for the whole class. If you miss class, I suggest you borrow notes from a classmate. My notes are not available.

### Academic Honesty:

I will not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty in this class, and any student found guilty will automatically receive a failing grade for the course. Your reaction papers will be written in your own words, and will not consist of information found on the internet or from any outside source. If you plagiarize a reaction paper, you will receive no credit for that paper and you will be ejected from the course. I will also recommend that UWG administration take action as well.

## **Tentative Course Outline and Readings Assignments**

Please be advised that this schedule is tentative, and could change at any time.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Wednesday, Aug 20: Introduction and Brief Overview to the Course

### **Week 2: The Enlightenment and the Atlantic World**

Wednesday, Aug 27: Davis Chapter 2-3, Bender Chapter 1

### **Week 3: Why Abolition? The Anti-slavery Debates**

Wednesday, Sept 3: Davis Chapter 12, Bender Chapters 4-5

### **Week 4: The Slave Trade and the Rise of Abolitionist Sentiment**

Wednesday, Sept 10: Davis Chapter 4, Peabody pp79-80, 148-150

*(Research Paper topics and bibliographies due)*

### **Week 5: Early Atlantic World Slavery: Latin America and the Caribbean**

Wednesday, Sept 17: Davis Chapters 5-6, Peabody pp31-56, 102-116, 134-148

### **Week 6: Atlantic Revolutions and the Early Abolitionists**

Wednesday, Sept 24: Davis Chapters 7-8, Bender Chapters 2-3, Peabody pp57-64, 68-74

### **Week 7: Equiano's Travels**

Wednesday, Oct 1: *Equiano Paper Due*

**Week 8: Take Home Midterm**

Class is cancelled for Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, so that you can work on your midterm examinations. Please turn in your midterm exams no later than 5p on Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. One letter grade will be deducted from your grade for every day that your exam is late. Email submissions will not be accepted.

**Week 9: North American Slavery**

Wednesday, Oct 15: Davis 9-10, Peabody pp81-97

**Week10: Resistance and Rebellion and the New Abolitionists**

Wednesday, Oct 22: Davis 11, handout to be provided before class.

**Week 11: The Defense of Slavery**

Wednesday, Oct 29: No readings, lecture and class discussion only. In class activity using primary sources to be handed out in class.

**Week 12: The politics of slavery in the US**

Wednesday, Nov 5: Davis 13-14, Peabody pp74-77

**Week 13: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass**

Wednesday, Nov 12: *Frederick Douglass paper due*

**Week 14: American Emancipation and the last vestiges of Atlantic World Slavery**

Wednesday, Nov 19: Davis 15 & Epilogue, Peabody pp95-101, 117-133, 156-166

**Week 15: Thanksgiving Break**

Wednesday, Nov 26: **Class Cancelled for Thanksgiving Holiday!!**

**Week 16: Evaluating the Abolitionists**

Wednesday, Dec 3: Bender 6-7, 9

*Final Papers are due at the beginning of class.* One letter grade will be deducted from your grade for every day that your paper is late.

**Final Exam**

Take Home Final Exam Due December 10 by 5pm. One letter grade will be deducted from your grade for every day that your exam is late. Email submissions will not be accepted.