

History 4130H  
Slavery in Fact, Fiction, and Film

Fall 2010  
Tu/Th 3:30 – 4:45 pm  
LeConte 321

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Office hours: TBA

In this course, we will explore the variety of ways in which the institution of slavery in the American South has been depicted and interpreted by fiction writers, dramatists, and film makers; we'll also examine both the historical realities of slave life on which those authors and filmmakers drew and the sources they used to determine those realities. In doing so, we will assess how they both deviated from and enhanced those realities, especially in capturing the emotional and psychological "truths" of slavery for both slaves and as slaveholders, and examine the myths and popular perceptions that have been perpetuated by these more creative renditions of slavery. Much of the work on which we'll focus proved controversial either at the time it appeared or since, and we'll make those contentious issues another major point of departure in examining these readings and films.

The content of the course will include four novels, four films, a play, several novellas and short stories, and historical documents of various sorts. The only purchases you need to make are the four novels. All four are available in the bookstore, but you're free to get them anywhere; any edition will do. The other readings will be available either on the library's web reserve (password "pecan"); or on regular reserve (where copyright issues kept me from putting them on web reserve). The films – and excerpts of other films – will make up a large part of the course content. Most of these will be viewed during class hours, though one or two may be put on reserve for you to view on your own time.

Books required that should be purchased:

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*  
William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*  
Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

The course requirements and grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm and final:	40% (20 % each)
Papers	30% (15% each)
Quizzes/In-Class writings	15%
Attendance/Participation	15%

**Papers:** Two papers will be required over the course of the semester. One will be a research paper dealing with the historical context or background of one or more of the works assigned. The second will be a comparative analysis of an outside novel or other work, to be discussed in relation to one or more of the works assigned. A list of topics and guidelines for these papers, including due dates, will be distributed early in the

semester. You'll be expected to present your findings for the first paper to the class at appropriate points along the way.

**Attendance and participation:** The level of classroom discussion and participation by all members of the class is a major part of any honors course, and will be for this one. All students are expected to have read and be fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings and/or films on the day they are assigned. To do so, of course, you must be in class. Attendance is mandatory, and any more than three absences from class will result in a drop in your final grade.

**In-Class Writings:** A variety of writing assignments, including quizzes, based on the assigned reading, will be a regular part of classroom activity and an important part of your final grade. Permission to make up a missed in-class assignment must be sought from the instructor in advance, and made be granted only once.

#### CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to adjustment ):

- 8/17 Introduction
- 8/19 Fugitive Slave Narratives  
Read: *Autobiography of Josiah Henson*, Chapters I-XI (library reserve)
- 8/24 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)  
Read: Chapters 1-11
- 8/26 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
Read: Chapters 12-25
- 8/31 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
Read: Chapters 26-38
- 9/2 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on Stage and Screen  
Read: Chapters 38-45  
Film: silent film version (1927) and excerpts from other versions
- 9/7 Slave Revolt at Sea  
Read: Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno* (1856) (library reserve)  
Delano, *A Narrative of the Voyages and Travels...*(1817) (web reserve)
- 9/14 Slave Revolt at Sea by Spielberg  
Film: "Amistad" (1997)
- 9/16 Slave Revolt at Sea by Spielberg  
Film: "Amistad"

- 9/21 Racial Conversion via Raft  
Read: Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Chapters 1-19
- 9/23 Racial Conversion via Raft  
Read: Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, Chapters 20-43  
Carter, "Getting Past Black and White" (web reserve)
- 9/28 Controversies: Race, Censorship...even Sex?  
Read: Choose from a variety of critical essays from a list  
to be distributed in class
- 9/30 Plantation Slavery Romanticized  
Film: excerpts from "Gone With the Wind" (1939)  
Read: excerpts from Molly Haskell, *Frankly My Dear* (web reserve)
- 10/5 MIDTERM EXAM
- 10/7 Slavery by Joel Chandler Harris  
Read: Excerpts from *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (1880)  
Alice Walker, "Uncle Remus, No Friend of Mine" (all web reserve)
- 10/12 Slavery by Walt Disney  
Film: "Song of the South" (1946)
- 10/14 Slavery by Walt Disney  
Film: "Song of the South"  
Read: Bernstein, "Nostalgia, Ambivalence, and Irony" (web reserve)
- 10/19 Slavery's Legacy in Mississippi  
Guest Speaker: Victoria Bynum, Gregory Visiting Lecturer  
Read: Bynum, "Misshapen Identity" (web reserve)
- 10/21 Slave Revolt in First-Person Once Removed  
Read: Styron, *Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967), Parts I and II
- 10/26 Slave Revolt in First-Person Once Removed  
Read: Styron, *Confessions of Nat Turner*, Parts III and IV
- 10/28 Turner, Styron, and Historical Truth  
Read: Nat Turner, "Confessions" (web reserve)  
Styron, "Afterword" to *Confessions of Nat Turner*  
Excerpts from *Styron's Confessions of Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (web reserve)
- 11/2-5 No Class

- 11/9 Slavery in Appalachia  
Film: "Journey of August King" (1995)
- 11/11 Slavery in Appalachia  
Film: "Journey of August King"  
Read: Faulkner, "Mountain Victory" (web reserve)  
Inscoc, "Between Bondage and Freedom" (web reserve)
- 11/16 Slavery as Ghost Story  
Read: Morrison, *Beloved* (1987), Part One  
Read: Weisenburger, Prologue to *Modern Medea* (web reserve)
- 11/18 Slavery as Ghost Story  
Read: Morrison, *Beloved*, Part Two  
Morrison, "The Site of Memory" (web reserve)

#### THANKSGIVING

- 11/30 Slavery Survives the Civil War: What If . . . ?  
Film: "CSA: The Confederate States of America" (2005)
- 12/2 Catch-Up / Review
- 12/9 FINAL EXAM, 3:30 – 6:30 pm