

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

Spring 2017
W, 4:30-7:10
Innovation Hall, Room 323
Office Hours: MW 2-3

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HISTORY 300-002

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL METHOD: SLAVERY, RESISTANCE, AND REBELLION IN VIRGINIA

This course introduces History majors to the practices and methods of researching, interpreting, and writing history by focusing on the history of slavery in Virginia, and particularly three key moments of resistance and rebellion: the American Revolution, Gabriel's Conspiracy of 1800, and the Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831. By exploring these and other arenas in which enslaved people contested the terms of their bondage, students will develop skills in historical imagination and empathy, framing historical questions, working creatively with sources, dealing with ambiguity and silences in the record, and presenting the results of research in oral and written forms.

History 300 fulfills in part the **Writing-Intensive (WI)** requirement in the History major and for the university. It does so primarily through a 500-750 word (2-3 page) primary source analysis and a 3,000 word (10-12 page) research paper. The research paper will be completed through a series of required, iterative steps, from drafting a topic proposal, developing and annotating a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, crafting a thesis statement, creating an outline, writing a complete draft, and revising that draft into a final, polished paper. The due dates for these assignments are on the syllabus, but the most important due dates are for the draft, on April 12, and the final paper, by 5pm on Thursday, May 11.

History 300 is also identified as a *Students as Scholars* **Scholarly Inquiry** course, where students learn about the recursive process of scholarly inquiry through studying previous scholarship and participating in an original scholarly project. To learn more about *Students as Scholars*, visit oscar.gmu.edu. In this class, students will learn to evaluate and assess existing scholarship, formulate a relevant research question in the context of that scholarship, identify relevant primary and secondary sources, analyze these sources and construct a historical argument based on those sources, and present that argument in oral and written forms that conform with the disciplinary expectations of the field of history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Participation	10%
Exercises & Short Projects	10%
Primary Source Analysis	10%
Research Paper*	70%
Topic	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Thesis/Outline	10%
Draft	25%
Oral Presentation	5%
Final Paper	10%

*You cannot pass the course without completing each element of the research paper

NOTE: BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THIS COURSE, THE NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS, AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY BUILD UPON ONE ANOTHER, NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THAT YOU COMPLETE YOUR WORK AND TURN IT IN ON TIME.

In general, if you have any kind of problem that interferes with your work for the class, please consult with me as soon as possible.

A FURTHER WORD ON IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR AND LAPTOPS:

Behaviors such as frequent tardiness, leaving early or packing up to leave before class is over, sleeping, eating, talking when others are speaking, texting, checking email, using social media, and doing work for other classes are signals to me and to the rest of the class that you do not take the course seriously. All of these will adversely affect your grade.

While the use of laptops is permitted and may even be encouraged for parts of this class, I ask that you use them in a way that is consistent with class goals and avoid distraction. I reserve the right to ask people to close their computers for periods of the class (such as discussion), to switch seats, or to turn off their computers if they prove distracting to you, me, or your classmates.

HONOR CODE STATEMENT

All work in the course is governed by the George Mason University honor code:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.**

More information can be found at the GMU [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

All work submitted in this course must be your own. Any uncredited use of words or ideas not your own (including those of your classmates, from published works, or from the internet) constitutes plagiarism, and will result in failure of the assignment or the course.

You are responsible for avoiding plagiarism. If you have questions, please contact me BEFORE the assignment is due. **All cases of suspected plagiarism will be presented to the Honor Board.**

OTHER POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Administrative Dates

Last day to add & to drop with no tuition penalty: Monday, January 30

Last day to drop with 33% tuition penalty: Monday, February 13

Final Drop Deadline, with 67% tuition penalty: Friday, February 24

Selective Withdrawal Period (undergrads only): Monday, February 27-Friday, March 31

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.gmu.edu) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must use their Mason email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

Useful Resources

Writing Center (writingcenter.gmu.edu): A114 Robinson Hall, (703) 993-1200

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu): SUB I, Room 3129, (703) 993-2380

University Catalog: catalog.gmu.edu

Other university policies: universitypolicy.gmu.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are required reading for this class:

- Greenberg, Kenneth, ed. *The Confessions of Nat Turner, with Related Documents*. 2nd Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, et al. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Additional required readings listed on the syllabus are available via Blackboard, freely online, or through GMU's subscriptions to various online databases, which can be accessed via the GMU Library's homepage (library.gmu.edu).

Other readings may be handed out in class or distributed electronically, and those will also be considered part of the required reading.

You should always bring a paper copy of the reading to refer to in class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(NOTE: Because of the nature of the work for this class, this syllabus is fairly fixed. It may, however, have to be adjusted in the event of inclement weather or other emergencies. Any necessary changes will be announced via email and on the Blackboard site, and an updated syllabus will be uploaded to Blackboard. Please make sure to keep informed about any changes.)

W, Jan. 25: Course Introduction: Slavery and Resistance in the Revolutionary Era

W, Feb. 1: Thinking about Agency and Resistance

Reading:

- Turabian, chs. 1-2.
- Stephanie M.H. Camp, "The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830-1861," *Journal of Southern History* 68:3 (August 2002): 533-572.
- Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37:1 (Autumn 2003): 113-124.
- M.A. Dodge, "The Search for Resistance: A Layperson's Reflections on the Historiography of Slavery in the African Atlantic," *The History Teacher* 47:1 (November 2013): 77-90.

Runaway Slave Advertisement Exercise (in class)

W, Feb. 8: The American Revolution

Reading:

- Sylvia Frey, "Between Slavery and Freedom: Virginia Blacks in the American Revolution," *Journal of Southern History* 49:3 (August 1983): 375-398.
- Woody Holton, "Rebel against Rebel: Enslaved Virginians and the Coming of the American Revolution," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105:2 (Spring 1997): 157-192.
- Cassandra Pybus, "Jefferson's Faulty Math: The Question of Slave Defections in the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62:2 (April 2005): 243-264.

Historiography Exercise Due

W, Feb 15: Library visit—meet in Fenwick 1014B

Bring preliminary ideas for a topic, so that you can begin researching it. You will need to find a primary source related to your topic to write about for the following week, and at least two reputable books relevant to your topic.

Reading:

- Turabian, chs. 3-4.
- Listen to Podcast: Ben Franklin's World, Episode 70: Jennifer Morgan, How Historians Research: <http://www.benfranklinsworld.com/episode-070-jennifer-l-morgan-how-historians-research/>

W, Feb. 22: Individual Meetings to Discuss Topics 3PM-7:10PM (you will sign up for a specific time)

Primary Source Analysis Due

W, Mar. 1: Gabriel's Conspiracy

Reading:

- Douglas R. Egerton, "Gabriel's Conspiracy and the Election of 1800," *Journal of Southern History* 56:2 (May 1990): 191-214.
- Michael L. Nicholls, *Whispers of Rebellion: Narrating Gabriel's Conspiracy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), pages TBA.

Topic Statement Due

W, Mar. 8: Nat Turner

Reading:

- Greenberg, pp. 1-56, and additional pages TBA.
- Turabian, ch. 5

Annotated Bibliography Due

W, Mar. 13: Spring Break—No Class

W, Mar. 22: Writing and Planning a Draft

Reading:

- Turabian, chs. 6-14.

Thesis Statement and Outline Due

W, Mar. 29: The Challenges of Interpreting Conspiracies

Reading

- Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," *William and Mary Quarterly* 58:4 (October 2001): 915-976)
- Responses from other Historians TBA

Weighing Competing Claims Exercise Due

W, Apr. 5: Writing Day—No Full Class Meeting

W, Apr. 12: Representing Rebellion

- Watch and discuss in class: "Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property"

Full Draft Due

W, Apr. 19: TBA

W, Apr. 26: Oral Presentations

Attendance is required

W, May 3: Oral Presentations

Attendance is required

FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5PM, THURSDAY, MAY 11