

# History 300:001 Introduction to Historical Method

*The Underground Railroad, Enslavement and Abolition*

Fall 2023

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Office: East Building room 207B

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 – 1:00 and by appointment

This course is designated as a **Student as Scholars Scholarly Inquiry** course where students learn about the process of scholarly inquiry by examining prior scholarship and through the preparation of an original research paper. In this Scholarly Inquiry course students will:

Articulate a scholarly question

Engage in the key elements of the scholarly process

Situate the concepts, practices or results of scholarship within a broader context

As a History 300 course it introduces history majors to the process of writing an original research paper. In addition, it fulfills all or part of the writing-intensive requirement for the history major. In this course we will focus on researching enslavement, abolition and the Underground Railroad. Your research projects will grow out of your increased understanding of the operation of these activities and the many different people involved in them. The Underground Railroad story offers an opportunity to see how civil disobedience and interracial cooperation changed the way many people came to think about the institution of slavery and the people victimized by it.

You do not need to have previous knowledge about the Underground Railroad or enslavement for this course. You will gain that knowledge in the course of the semester. I do assume that you have experience in historical analysis and understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, can identify the main thesis of a scholarly work, and have previously used footnotes. This is your opportunity to take that knowledge and become a historian by producing a well-researched, thoughtfully presented and well-organized **10-12**-page research paper.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Drop/Add deadlines:**

Last Day to Add & Drop	Monday, Aug 28
Final Drop Deadline (no tuition penalty):	Tuesday, Sept. 5
Selective Withdrawal Period:	Wed. Sept 27 - Mon. Oct 23

**Required Texts:**

John N. Arnold, *History A Very Short Introduction*

Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan*

William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave*

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave*

Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*

William Still, *The Underground Railroad*

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*

**Grading:**

25% Attendance and class participation

10% In class essay paper (pass/fail)

5% Outline of paper (pass/fail)

10% Draft of paper (pass/fail)

50% Final paper

Failure to complete any of the written assignments will result in automatic failure of the class. Each student will also have a mandatory conference with the instructor; failure to have this conference will result in automatic failure of the class.

All assignments must be turned in during the class period designated by the instructor. Late materials will be penalized one-half grade for each day after the due date. Material received on the due date, but after the class period will be penalized one-half grade. After the due date has passed, late material must be turned in before 5:00 and verified by the program coordinator in the Robinson Office of the East Building in order to be counted for that day.

If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to an emergency, you must bring a written note from a doctor or the dean. If at all possible, contact me ahead of time so that we can arrange for an alternative time for you to complete the work.

The class participation grade will be based on the students' preparation for and contribution to class discussions. In preparing for class students should complete all the required readings and be ready to answer questions regarding the reading. A student's discussion grade will be evaluated not according to the amount of talking that student does, but rather according to whether that student contributes thoughtfully and constructively, based on a careful consideration of the readings. Students cannot contribute to class discussions if they are absent, consequently, repeated unexcused absences will be reflected in their participation grade.

**All plagiarism cases will be automatically submitted to GMU's honor committee.** According to GMU's honor code, plagiarism includes the following: **1.** Presenting as one's own words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement. **2.** Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

## Schedule:

**22 Aug** Thinking about the evolving meaning of history

Arnold Chapters 1, 4,5,7

All History is Revisionist-James Banner: [https://www.neh.gov/article/all-history-revisionist-history?utm\\_source=pocket-newtab&fbclid=IwAR3hp28CWQQEMGWtxMUDft\\_qnndOVoykxGGJQnr1H7FLrHUIYJSezSE6VbQ&fs=e&s=cl](https://www.neh.gov/article/all-history-revisionist-history?utm_source=pocket-newtab&fbclid=IwAR3hp28CWQQEMGWtxMUDft_qnndOVoykxGGJQnr1H7FLrHUIYJSezSE6VbQ&fs=e&s=cl)

What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?  
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05> (blackboard)

**29 Aug.** *Introduction to Slavery and the Underground Railroad*

Turabian, pp. 5 -47;

"The Genesis of the Underground Railroad", E. Delorus Preston, Jr., *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Apr., 1933), pp. 144-170 (blackboard)

Bordewich, Introduction thru chapter two.

*Journal Article analysis* article in blackboard

**Question:** How does Preston's description of the Underground Railroad differ from Bordewich's description? How has the historical view of UGRR evolved?

## LOOK AT SAMPLE PAPER TOPICS DOCUMENT IN BLACKBOARD

**5 Sept.**

*A Personal View of Slavery*

Douglass, all; Brown Chapters 1-7

Think about a tentative topic for your paper (A list of *suggested* ideas is on blackboard)

**Question:** What are the most important challenges faced by the enslaved? As an enslaved person how would you cope with enslavement?

**12 Sept.**

*Enslavement, escape, and the evolution of the Underground Railroad*

Bordewich, Chapters 3 and 4, Brown Chapters 8-14

**19 Sept.**

The evolution of the Underground Railroad

Bordewich, Chapters 5 – 8, Turabian, pp. 48-70

**Selecting a topic and setting goals for your paper:** In class discussion and collaboration

**26 Sept.**

*Thinking about history and thinking about sources*

Presentation by George D. Oberle III , History Librarian University Libraries

Library assignment

**3 Oct.**

**Essay discussion in class:** Prepare a 2 – 3-page essay explaining your ideas and arguments for your final research paper. You should indicate why you think this idea is important and how you expect to discuss it in your final paper. This paper should include at least **3** footnotes in proper form.

Turabian, pp. 70-81, 133-282

**10 Oct.**

**No Class Columbus Day**

- 17 Oct.** Visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture—review assignment of “Slavery to Freedom” exhibition
- 24 Oct.** William Still and the Underground Railroad  
Still, all
- 31 Oct.** *Outline Discussion* –individual conversations with the professor
- 7 Nov.** *Harriet Tubman*  
Larson, Introduction thru chapter 9
- 14 Nov.** Research and writing
- 21 Nov.** Draft of paper to bring to class for discussion
- 28 Nov.** Research and writing
- 5 Dec.** Turn in final paper