

HIST 499 001: Senior Seminar in History

Spring 2024

Enslavement, Abolition and the Underground Railroad

Spring 2022

Prof. Spencer Crew

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Office: East Building room 207B

Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30 – 5:30 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

History 499 provides the opportunity for history majors to write an original major research paper. In addition, it fulfills 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 these activities and their operation. Enslavement and its abolition was one of the major issues in the United States leading up to the Civil War. Southerners saw enslavement as a positive good for themselves and for the enslaved people they controlled. Abolitionists saw enslavement as a blemish on the nation and were committed to bringing it to an end. The participants of the Underground Railroad took direct action to undermine enslavement by aiding enslaved people seeking freedom. Reading the ideas and stories about these topics, investigating how they functioned, and examining how historians have assessed this movement will provide the foundation for the research conducted by class participants.

The Underground Railroad was a complex operation which over the years has had many myths connected to it. Sorting the myths from reality will enable students to better understand how historians assess research material and craft a thesis for their work. They will then apply these insights to the writing of their own research paper for the class. You do not need to have previous knowledge about enslavement, abolition or the Underground Railroad 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 apply that knowledge and to hone your skills as a historian by producing a well-researched and thoughtfully crafted 20-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: Tuesday, January 23

Last Day to Drop: Tuesday, January 30

Selective Withdrawal Period: Wednesday, Feb.21 – Monday, March 25

Required Texts:

Henry Box Brown *Narrative of The Life of Henry Box Brown*

Scott Christianson *Freeing Charles*

Levi Coffin *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad*

Ellen and William Craft *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*

Larry Gara *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*

Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Kate L. Turabian *A Manual for Writers*

Betty Wood *The Origins of American Slavery*

Grading:

25% Attendance and class participation

5% Bibliographic essay

5% Rough Draft outline of paper

Final paper presentation (Pass/Fail)

65% Final paper

Failure to complete any of the written assignments will result in automatic failure of the class. Each student also will 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-quarter grade for each day after the due date. 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 prepared to answer and ask questions regarding the readings. 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:

January 17	Wood	<i>The Origins of American Slavery</i>
	Turabian	A Manual for Writers, pp. 3 – 23, 129 -130.
January 24	Levi Coffin	<i>Reminiscences of Levi Coffin</i> (Introduction thru chapter 10)
January 31	Henry Brown	<i>Narrative of The Life of Henry" Box" Brown</i>
	Crafts	<i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i>
	Turabian	A Manual for Writers, pp.24 - 47
February 7	Levi Coffin	<i>Reminiscences of Levi Coffin</i> (Chapters 11 thru 20 and memoir of Calvin Fairbanks)

Turn in no more than one-page description of your paper topic and the titles of at least three books that you will use in proper bibliography format (Chicago manual of style format www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)

February 14 Gara The Liberty Line

"Light on the Underground Railroad," Wilbur H. Siebert, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Apr., 1896), pp. 455-463, Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the American Historical Association.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1833723>

February 21 Christianson Freeing Charles

February 28 In class paper topic discussion - Student will bring bibliographic essay highlighting eight to ten sources they intend to use for their paper. The essay will provide one or two sentences describing the content of each resource and how it will support the paper of the student. The essay should include at least two primary sources.

March 5 SPRING BREAK

March 12 Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

March 19 "Perspectives on the Motives for the Migration of African-Americans to and from Ontario, Canada: From the Abolition of Slavery in Canada to the Abolition of Slavery in the United States" by Sigrid Nicole Gallant, *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (summer, 2001), pp. 391-408; Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1562457> (blackboard)

"Detroit to the Promised Land," Karolyn S. Frost (blackboard)

"Canada: The Promised Land for U.S. Slaves," Renford Reese (blackboard)
http://ww2.justanswer.com/uploads/ST/stayathomemomof2/2014-04-26_004032_canada.pdf

March 26 Research week.

Turabian A Manual for Writers, pp.98 - 128

April 2 Individual student meeting with professor to discuss their paper topic. You are to prepare and bring a one to two-page outline of the ideas which will be the basis of your paper. You will turn in the outline at the end of the discussion.

Turabian A Manual for Writers, pp. 48 -81No Class

April 9 Class Presentations

April 16 Class Presentations

April 23 In class review of your draft with classmates

April 30

Final papers due