

# *HISTORY 541*

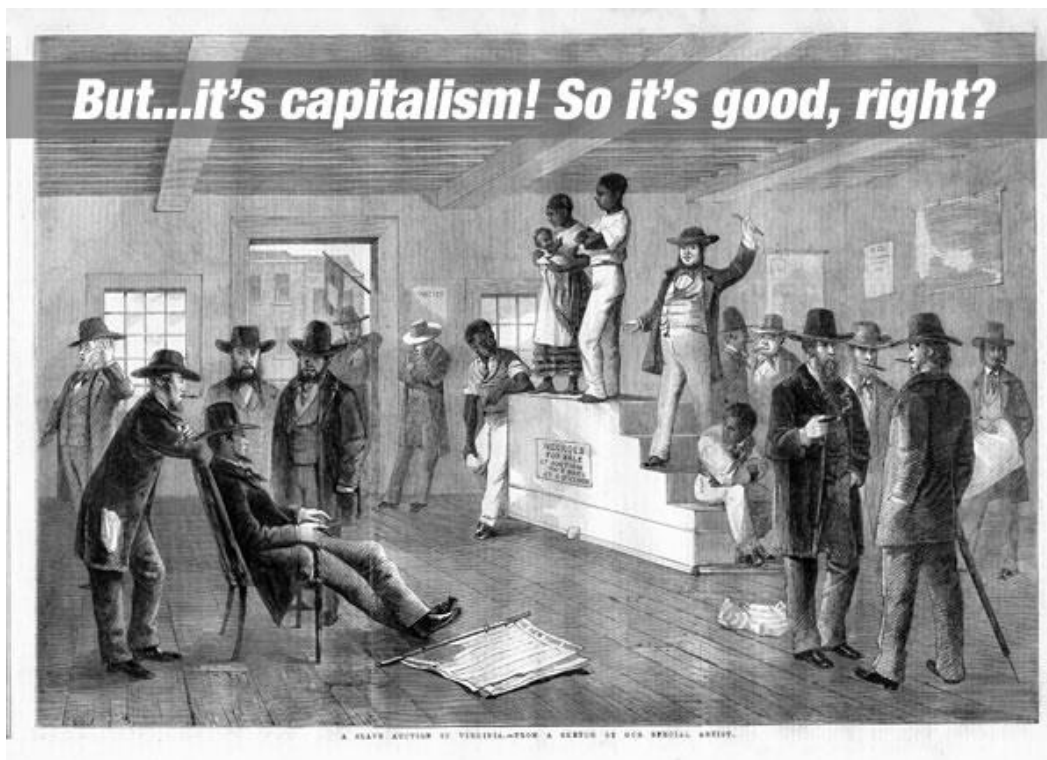
## *Capitalism and Slavery in Early America and the Atlantic World, 1600-1860*

Dr. Chris Magra  
Office Hours: T R 11-12:30  
Office: Dunford Hall, 6th floor, Room 2622

Class Time: T 12:40-3:25  
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### SPRING 2017 COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students make sense of the relationship between capitalism and slavery in early America and the Atlantic World before and after the Industrial Revolution. What were the connections between the global countryside and centers of manufacturing? Did profits from plantation agriculture support industrialization? Can slaves be thought of as members of a working class? Were planters capitalists? This course will help you answer these questions and more.



### COURSE GOALS

- To introduce graduate students to recent and important scholarship on capitalism and slavery
- To introduce graduate students to innovative theories and methods for writing historical analyses
- To discuss issues pertaining to the pedagogy of early American history
- To give graduate students the opportunity to write a historiographical essay

## BOOKS TO BUY

1. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).
2. Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2014).
3. Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).
4. **(FREE ONLINE)** Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944).
5. Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Verso, 2010).
6. Greg Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, Reprint Ed., (New York: Picador, 2015).
7. David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
8. Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).
9. **(FREE ONLINE)** Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Economic Development* (LSU Press, 2013).
10. Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Slavery*, Revised Ed., (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995).
11. Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
12. Joseph Inikori and Stanley Engerman, eds., *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies and Peoples in Africa, The Americas and Europe* (Duke University Press, 1992).
13. \*\*\* Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Harvard University Press, 2013).\*\*\* (Late add to the course. The campus bookstore may or may not get this in time. You might have to order it online.)

There are a variety of readings for this course. It is recommended that you purchase the books listed above through the campus bookstore and online. We will be reading extensively in each work. Readings listed below with “**JSTOR**” can be accessed on-line through the Library’s databases under jstor.

Most of the readings will focus on particular topics. If you would like some background material on these topics, or you need a broad overview, then see Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (2012); or Daniel Vickers, ed., *A Companion to Colonial America* (2003).

CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week One 1/17

- Greg Grandin, "Capitalism and Slavery," Blog for *The Nation* (May 1, 2015): <https://www.thenation.com/article/capitalism-and-slavery/>
- *The New York Times* article on the relationship between the insurance industry and slavery (December 18, 2016): <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/12/18/us/insurance-policies-on-slaves-new-york-lives-complicated-past.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&r=0&referer=>

PART ONE Semi-Global and Global Contexts

Week Two 1/24

- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). Available **online and free**: <https://archive.org/details/capitalismandsla033027mbp>

Week Three 1/31

- Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman, *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Week Four 2/7

- Joseph Inikori and Stanley Engerman, eds., *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies and Peoples in Africa, The Americas and Europe* (Duke University Press, 1992).

Week Five 2/14

- Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Verso, 2010).

Week Six 2/21

- Greg Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, Reprint Ed., (New York: Picador, 2015).

Week Seven 2/28

- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2014).

Week Eight 3/7

- David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

## PART TWO      Shifting The Focus To North America

Week Nine 3/14

- **SPRING BREAK**

Week Ten 3/21

- Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

Week Eleven 3/28

- Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

Week Twelve 4/4

- Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Slavery*, Revised Ed., (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995).

Week Thirteen 4/11

- **(FREE ONLINE)** Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Economic Development* (LSU Press, 2013).

Week Fourteen 4/18

- Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Week Fifteen 4/25

- Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

Week Sixteen 5/2

- **Final Papers Due By Noon By Email**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to have read assigned materials before each class, and should be prepared to ask questions and engage in discussion. Our discussions should be lively, but always respectful. Personal attacks and/or disrespectful remarks will not be tolerated at any time. Please do not walk out in the middle of class or go home at the break without speaking to me ahead of time. I consider this to be disrespectful classroom conduct. Also, please turn off all cell phones and pagers while you are in class.

Attendance will be taken at every meeting. Students are expected to attend each class and to arrive on time. More than two absences (for any reason), or repeated lateness, will result in a failing grade for the course. If you miss any class, then you must submit a 3-page summary and analysis of the readings for that week before the next class begins.

Especially note that the due-dates for all assignments are printed above. Late assignments will not be accepted without a University-approved excuse. All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course. Bring your reading materials with you to each class.

Do not use other people's work without proper citation in this course. Presenting material other than your own as your own is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism or cheating (as laid out in the policy printed in the student guide, Hilltopics) on any of the class assignments or examinations will lead to an immediate failing grade for the course as a whole and referral to university authorities. If you have any doubt whether you have cited sources properly, then please contact me.

Disabilities: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

\*\* The instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule or assignments. Students will be given adequate notice of any changes. \*\*

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

30% Final Paper: Each of you will submit a 20-page historiographic essay. Discuss particular issues or problems in the secondary sources related to the relationship between capitalism and slavery. You should make liberal use of the assigned readings. Your essays should also reflect a substantial amount of outside reading. In choosing your topic, you are free to write on anything within the broad parameters set by the seminar's syllabus. Work on grouping scholars in "camps." Do not write a book review of each author and each book. This should occupy the first 15 pages. Finally, you should provide some reflection in the last 5 pages of your papers on the current state of academic research on your topic. Also, let us know where you think this research is headed in the future (this could mean future directions outward or inward, or future problems that need to be solved). The paper should be typed (double-spaced) with footnotes and a bibliography. The bibliography is not included in the page count.

20% Critiques: Everyone will write a critique of the reading for week two. Each student will then choose to write **ten** critiques of the weekly readings starting week three. The critiques should be two pages in length, double-spaced. These critiques should include four paragraphs. The first page should be comprised of paragraphs one and two.

- **Keep paragraphs 1 and 2 entirely in your own words. Do not use quotes.** The first paragraph should situate the reading in some historiographic context by relating it to some aspect of the previous readings. Keep this section brief and to the point. Leave room for section 2
- The second paragraph should concisely summarize the book for your reader. Identify a common thread that runs through the chapters of the reading. Then, discuss how this thread runs through the book. Finally, note some of the important conclusions the authors reach about this thread.
- The second page of the critique should have two paragraphs of equal length. The first should identify a single overarching strength of the book, and it should provide examples from the book to make this case. The second should do the same for an overarching weakness of the book. **Use parenthetical citation (author's last name, pg. #) in paragraphs 3 and 4.**

Your grade for these critiques will reflect your ability to step back from the book. Separate the enthusiasm you had while reading the book from your clinical evaluation of the merits and faults of the book. If you cannot first step back from the book, then you cannot write a good academic critique. These critiques must be emailed to me in Word format by noon the day before our class meets. I will then email all the critiques I receive to the class. We will discuss these critiques in class, so be sure to read them and bring them with you. Each student should prepare 2-3 questions for other students based on the other students' critiques. The critiques will be scored on a 1-10 point basis. The average score will then be doubled for the purposes of your final course grade.

30% Participation: Class participation is an essential part of this course. I expect you to come to each seminar having completed all the reading and prepared to engage constructively in discussions. I will evaluate the quantity and the quality of your active participation in weekly discussions. Each of you will also have the opportunity to lead one of the discussions beginning with week six. You will choose one of the classes starting this week. You will write a five-page review essay of the week's assigned reading (discussed below). You will give a 10 minute oral presentation to the class based on this essay. In consultation with me, you will also lay out questions that the other members of the seminar can discuss. I will evaluate your presentation on a system of "checks," with a "check" signifying full credit, a "check plus" outstanding work, and "check minus" work that is carelessly prepared or substandard in any other way.

20% Review Essay: Prior to the class when you make your presentation, you are each expected to write a 5 page, double-spaced review essay on the assigned reading for that week. You may choose to summarize the arguments of the weekly reading. You may use your essay to respond to questions that the books and articles seem to raise. You may relate the assigned readings to issues and topics from other weeks. The important thing is to write a coherent, well organized essay that engages with the readings in a lively and analytical fashion.

#### GRADING CRITERIA

Essays that receive an A involve superior analysis of the questions asked. They begin with an introductory paragraph that states a clear, convincing, and original argument. The introduction is followed by a series of carefully organized paragraphs that support this argument by a critical evaluation of the relevant evidence, drawn from—as appropriate to the assignment—lectures, readings, and/or class discussions. These paragraphs succinctly and clearly develop the argument through a logical progression of ideas. Superior essays conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the most salient evidence in support of the argument. Everything that is in the essay is there in support of the argument. The prose is crisp and lucid. The writing is free of grammatical errors.

Essays that receive a B are well argued and thorough in the presentation of evidence. They are similar to those in the A category, but deficient in some respects. Generally speaking the examination or paper demonstrates a solid command of the material, but the argument may be somewhat lacking in originality, the written exposition may not be quite so crisp and elegant, the evidence may be less thorough or convincing, it may not be entirely germane to the question asked, or it may not be evaluated critically enough. In general, B essays tend to answer the question less effectively than those that earn As.

Essays that receive a C demonstrate real effort and make a clear argument. They support their argument with evidence, but either they do not produce enough evidence to establish the argument or they fail to evaluate the evidence critically. Some possibly significant limitations and errors may be evident. The writing may be weaker than a B essay, but not so poor as to obscure the argument.

Essays that receive a D fail to make a coherent argument or to cite the appropriate evidence. They may make significant factual errors or are so awkwardly written that the clarity of the argument is impaired. Nevertheless, the writing should be of sufficient quality so that the essay can be readily understood.

Essays that receive an F fail to make an argument or answer the question asked. They contain serious errors of fact and deploy extremely limited evidence. The amount written may be inadequate, inconsistent, or contradictory. The paper may also be extremely convoluted in presentation and organization.