

History 320 Comparative Slavery  
Dr. Olsen Stalker Hall 104A  
Office Hours: M, W, F, 11:00-12:00 and by appointment  
237-2712 or [colsen@indstate.edu](mailto:colsen@indstate.edu)

Fall 2009

### Course Description:

This course is designed to familiarize you with some of the main themes in the history of world slavery, although focusing on the western hemisphere. We will begin with a brief look at classical slavery in Europe and Africa, and then proceed to a more in-depth examination of African slavery in the Americas between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Finally, we will look at emancipation and the transition to freedom in comparative perspective, including the related question of race relations after the end of slavery. Throughout the course we will discuss several common themes in the history of unfree people: legal status; demographics and work routines; treatment or “conditions of life;” community and culture; access to freedom; relationship to the culture and society of free people (whether of the same or another racial background); and life after emancipation. We will also be discussing contemporary slavery as we read and discuss Kevin Bales’s *Understanding Global Slavery*.

Our readings and discussions in much of the course will focus on the conditions and culture of slavery in the western hemisphere, detailing the interaction of three cultures: European, African, and American Indian. Of course within those broad racial categories there were actually hundreds of different cultures, language groups, and ethnic divisions. In particular, we will consider the question of how the nature of slavery in various parts of the world affected race and class relations after emancipation. This debate dates back to the 1930s and 1940s, at least, when several historians argued that race relations were “better” in Latin America (particularly in Brazil) because slavery in those parts of the world was “less harsh” than in the United States. Thus, America’s especially miserable record of race relations in the twentieth century could be traced to the nature of slavery in the nineteenth-century southern United States. More recently, other scholars have disagreed vigorously with this position, and we will consider the relationship between slavery and race from a comparative perspective. Our reading in this area will include work by journalists, historians, sociologists, artists, and novelists, among many others.

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History 320 is an interdisciplinary course that meets the **Upper Division Integrative Elective requirement for Foundational Studies 2010**. As an Upper Division Integrative Elective, this course requires that students engage the material through multiple “ways of knowing.” Within the Foundational Studies program, this means ways of knowing about the world or ways of solving problems. Most courses in the Foundational Studies program teach from a particular perspective or “way of knowing” about the world and human behavior. The Upper Division Integrative Electives then allow you to make use of multiple ways of knowing to examine a particular topic or theme. In History 320, we will employ the following ways of knowing on a regular basis: 1. Historical studies; 2. Social and behavioral sciences; 3. Literary studies; 4. Global Diversity and Cultural Perspectives; and 5. Ethics and social responsibility. In addition, the course requires that students make use of, and improve, their communication and composition skills through in-class discussion and multiple writing assignments.

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**Learning Outcomes of Foundational Studies courses [referred to as FSO 1-10] include:**

1. Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
2. Critically evaluate the ideas of others;
3. Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history);
4. Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts;
5. Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies;
7. Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions;
9. Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness;
10. Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

**Learning Objectives of the Integrative Upper-Division Electives category [referred to as LO 1-3 throughout the syllabus] in the Foundational Studies program are:**

1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing;
2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue;
3. Analyze and write at an advanced level.

**Skill Applied Learning Requirements of the Integrative Upper-Division Electives category [referred to as SALR 1-5 throughout the syllabus] in the Foundational Studies program are:**

1. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop critical thinking skills
2. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop information literacy skills
3. Include a graded writing component, which whenever possible is developmental
4. Must incorporate opportunities for students to critically read and analyze sophisticated, complex text, and to write intensively.
5. Must include assignments that apply information from within and across various “ways of knowing”

**Content Learning objectives specific to HIST 320 are: [FSO, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10; LO, 1, 3; SALR, 1, 3, 4, 5]**

1. Understand the socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions that support slavery in different places and times.
2. Understand the Old World (African and European) and New World (American) conditions and developments that gave rise to the expansion of African slavery into an international system.
3. Analyze the economic conditions in the Americas that determined when and where slavery came to dominate as an agricultural labor system.
4. Analyze how slaves were able to form communities in the Americas; communities helped African and African American slaves create a syncretic culture that combined elements of African, European, and American Indian traditions.
5. Understand how living in a slave society affected free people: attitudes, behavior, and culture.
6. Explain how and why the movement against slavery evolved in the eighteenth century, after hundreds of years in which nearly everyone accepted slavery as part of everyday life.
7. Analyze the economic, political, and cultural legacies of slavery, focusing on racial attitudes among people of the Americas.
8. Understand the re-emergence of modern-day slavery as an international human rights issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
9. Analyze the conditions in the world today that tend to support slavery in different cultures.
10. Consider the contemporary movement against slavery and what all people can do to fight for the freedom of all people.

## **Class Rules and Suggestions:**

Plagiarism: borrowing sentences or even phrases from the text, the internet, or from another student without quotes and citation is against university rules and will not be tolerated in the class. I will enforce ISU's stated policy on academic dishonesty at: <<http://web.indstate.edu/sjp/docs/code.pdf>>.

Writing Standards: Writing (grammar, spelling, organization, clarity, style, etc.) is an important part of your grade. It is your responsibility to make sure that all papers you turn in meet minimal writing standards; please take advantage of the Writing Center in the Cunningham Memorial Library; the Center is not just for remedial work; it is also for those who desire to excel in their writing.

Class Decorum: Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices before coming to class. If you have to leave class early, please sit close to the back door so that you don't disturb the class as you leave.

ADA: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with diagnosed disabilities are entitled to evaluation and consideration in their course work. All accommodations, however, including those for students with learning disabilities, must be made through the Student Academic Service Center (<http://www1.indstate.edu/sasc/dss/index.htm>). Any accommodations must be made known to me at the beginning of the semester.

Academic Freedom: According to the American Association of University Professors, "Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject; college and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. . . [T]hey should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

Laptop Usage Forbidden: While the university has chosen to require laptops of its students, the university also recognizes and respects the right of faculty to conduct their classes as they deem appropriate. In this course, no laptop may be used. Failure to comply with this direction is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Students are expected to read all of the material carefully, attend class regularly, and be prepared to discuss the issues raised in the reading. I will not hesitate to call on you during class.

## Assignments and Grading:

Attendance, class participation, and article presentations <sup>1</sup>	200 points
In-class exams (x3)	450 points
rough draft of paper/project	100 points
final paper/project	250 points

Scale: A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-88
B	87-82
B-	81-80
C+	79-78
C	77-70
C-	69-68
D+	67-65
D	64-60
D-	59-55

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<sup>1</sup> Each student presents at least two articles on contemporary slavery. They deal with a wide range of issues: trafficking; sex slavery; industrial workers; domestic slavery, particularly in the United States; and so forth. Nearly all of these articles are available online, and we discuss how to evaluate web sites for journalistic integrity. Another issue is the difference between investigative journalism and a blog, something that experience tells me is not so evident to students. After the first time teaching this course I added this discussion when so many students presented blogs as “articles.” In this way we address a portion of the information literacy requirement. (**SALR 2**)

## Required Readings:<sup>2</sup>

Herbert Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*

Kevin Bales, *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader*

slave narratives and additional readings available on Blackboard (Bb) (historical and contemporary)

## Weekly outline: issues, topics, *due dates*, and assigned readings (tentative)

Week of 8-26: What is slavery? Classical slavery in Greece and Rome.<sup>3</sup>  
Bales, 40-68

Week of 8-31: European expansion into the western hemisphere. Use of indentured servants, American Indians as slaves, and the transition to African slaves.  
Thornton, 1-42  
Klein, to 16  
Bales, 154-171

Weeks of 9-9 & 9-14: The international African slave trade.<sup>4</sup>  
Thornton, 72-128; 183-205  
Bales, 126-153

Weeks of 9-14 & 9-21: Brazil & the Caribbean islands – sugar: the economics and demographics of African/African-American slavery, and work routines among slaves.  
North America – tobacco and cotton: the economics and demographics of African/African-American slavery, and work routines among slaves.  
Thornton, 129-182  
Klein, 17-118

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<sup>2</sup> The readings in HIST 320 draw primarily on the disciplines of history, economics, anthropology, and sociology. Klein's work is an historical monograph that draws heavily on the social sciences, emphasizing economics and political economy in shaping slavery in the Americas. Thornton's path-breaking monograph examines the history of Africa, in particular, relying on anthropological evidence, "traditional" textual primary sources, and oral tradition or folklore. It is, therefore, a historical monograph, but one that is particularly interdisciplinary in its focus and use of sources, combining historical texts with anthropology and other social sciences, as well as literature and folklore. In short, in one text he employs at least three "ways of knowing": historical studies, social sciences, and literary studies. He was also a pioneer in using the notion of the Atlantic World as an analytical model, and his work emphasizes the cultural interactions within the Atlantic World that produced an African-European-American culture as a result of international slavery. Both Klein's and Thornton's books are written at an advanced level and demand that students practice their critical reading and analysis skills. Kevin Bales, president of Free the Slaves, is a sociologist by training and one of the leading experts on slavery today. This book—one of his many publications on modern-day slavery—combines history, sociology, legal studies, gender studies, and other methodologies and theoretical perspectives to the study of slavery. Most of all he brings his unparalleled first-hand experience as an investigative journalist and activist with slaves and slaveowners. Additional readings include many slave narratives and first-hand accounts from slaves past and present. The additional readings are available via Blackboard. The course will be taught on-line in summer, 2010 for the first time in that format. [LO, 1, 3; SALR, 1, 2, 4]

<sup>3</sup> In this week we discuss classical slavery and a number of "timeless" aspects of slavery, including gender and sexual abuse, religion, the law, free people in a slave society, economic roles, access to freedom or manumission, and rebellion, among others. As an example of what the additional readings are like, in this week we read very short selections (2-3 pages) on the theoretical nature of slavery from an historian (Eugene Genovese, drawing on Antonio Gramsci), a sociologist (Orlando Patterson), a philosopher (Georg Hegel), and a former slave (Frederick Douglass). [LO, 1, 3; SALR, 1, 4]

<sup>4</sup> These three weeks combine history with a variety of social sciences, particularly economics, anthropology, geography, and demographics, to study the expansion of the international slave trade and work routines in the Americas. We also consider art and advertising as sources, focusing on public representations of slaves and their work, and how these images affected Europeans' understanding of African people.

Weeks of 9-28, 10-5, 10-12, & 10-19:

The slave community and slave culture: marriage, family, women and gender, and religion.

Thornton, 206-271

Klein, 119-164

*Exam 1 – October 2<sup>5</sup>*

The slave community and slave culture: resistance, runaways, and rebellions.

Thornton, 272-303

Klein, 165-192

Week of 10-26:

Free people in a slave society: How did living in a slave society affect people? What was the role or impact of race?

Klein, 193-226

Bales, 24-39

*Exam 2 – October 30*

Week of 11-2:

Trip to Underground Railroad and Freedom Center in Cincinnati<sup>6</sup>

Week of 11-9:

Abolition and emancipation.

Klein, 227-246

Weeks of 11-16, 11-23, & 11-30:

The legacies of slavery<sup>7</sup>

Thornton, 304-334

*Rough draft of final paper – November 23<sup>8</sup>*

Race relations after slavery, focusing on Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States. Did the nature of slavery affect post-emancipation race relations? What is the racial legacy of slavery?

readings posted to Blackboard

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<sup>5</sup> Exam questions are all essay and designed to make students engage the sophisticated reading in a critical way. A sample question from the first exam is: “John Thornton argues that Africans exercised a significant influence over the evolution of the international slave trade. According to Thornton, what were the most important factors that allowed them to determine how the trade developed? You do not need to be limited to these topics, but be sure to address African slavery, African naval power, and the dynamics of trade within Africa.” [LO 3; SALR, 1, 3, 4, 5]

<sup>6</sup> Each time I have taught this class I’ve taken the students to Cincinnati to visit the Underground Railroad Museum and Freedom Center. This unique museum combines the historical study of runaways and rebellions in the United States with a large wing devoted to contemporary slavery and racism. In this way it is a perfect fit for the content of the class, and normally a highlight for students in the class.

<sup>7</sup> In these weeks we combine literature, history, journalism, and art, among many other disciplinary approaches, to examine the legacies of slavery. As one example, we view parts of a documentary on *quilombos* in Brazil. The descendants of runaway slaves, *quilombos* in contemporary Brazil extend and embody the legacies of slavery through their clothing, food, dance, work routines, and art. We discuss these legacies within the context of contemporary economic, political, and legal challenges in Brazil. [LO, 1, 3; SALR, 1, 3, 4, 5]

<sup>8</sup> The final project is a developmental writing assignment that asks students to complete a significant research project that can be presented in a combination of written text or visuals. Many students combine a research paper with a PowerPoint presentation. They are required to choose an aspect of slavery that is timeless—that is, something that was a factor in historical slavery and is still an issue today. Using a combination of primary and secondary sources, students use history, sociology, economics, literature, art, and legal studies, as well as numerous articles by journalists. Perhaps most of all, the projects involve significant use of first-hand accounts from slaves and slaveowners themselves. [LO, 2 3; SALR, 2, 3, 4, 5]

*Exam 3 – December 4*

Week of 12-7: Slavery in the twentieth century and today.  
Bales, 1-23; 69-125; 172-174  
articles from throughout the course

*Take-home final project due by December 15, noon*

**Trip to Cincinnati:**

We should be able to make a trip to the Underground Railroad Museum and Freedom Center in Cincinnati. This is a unique institution that combines the historical study of slavery in the United States with significant coverage of slavery around the world today. When it opened it was also celebrated as one of the first “interactive” museums, which are now popular across the country. Visitors are taken into the time period through character role playing, for instance, and also through interactive videos.

Obviously I hope that everyone can make the trip, but that probably won’t be possible. If you absolutely cannot make it, I’ll have an alternative assignment that will substitute for the trip. In the first two weeks we’ll schedule the trip for one day of the week of November 2. That will be our only class meeting for the week.

**Articles on contemporary slavery:<sup>9</sup>**

Throughout the course we’ll be reading about and discussing slavery in the world today. To better inform ourselves, everyone is going to find and present to the class several articles about contemporary slavery. They can be from a variety of sources: newspaper, magazine, book, etc. Many of these will be available on the Internet, and our text by Kevin Bales lists some reputable web sites where you can begin reading. If you choose something from the Internet, however, be sure it is recommended or linked to a reputable site. Also, please provide me with a citation or paper copy at least two days before you are scheduled to present to the class. I’ll post the link or a pdf of the article on the course’s Blackboard site.

We’ll make a schedule and everyone can choose what days he/she will present. Each presentation will be a very brief summary of the article and include time for a few questions. The total time for each article will be 5-10 minutes.

**Final project or paper:**

The final assignment is a semester-long research and writing project that will examine one aspect of slavery that is “timeless”— that is, something that was an aspect of slavery in the past and remains so today. Examples might be the place or roles of children as slaves, sexual abuse, trade and trafficking, cultural isolation, and so forth. The final project can be a combination of PowerPoint or some other visual form – feel free to be creative – but it must include a written

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<sup>9</sup> Each day one or two students present articles dealing with contemporary slavery in various parts of the world. As a class we discuss numerous issues that are common to forms of slavery around the world, linking today’s issues to the historical forms of slavery about which we’re reading and talking. This part of the course requires students to find appropriate articles and analysis, most of which are available on-line. Occasionally someone will find a dishonest or intentionally misleading site, which also offers the chance to discuss Internet sources and the appropriateness of some seemingly legitimate sites. As an example, last year one student presented an article from the “Weekly World News” that contained clearly fabricated information. Other students present blogs and editorials, which offer another chance to talk about evidence and critical evaluation of writing and scholarship.

Finally, of course, our many discussions of contemporary slavery involve issues of cultural diversity and ethics and social responsibility. We debate, for instance, how the notions of childhood and the age of consent varies from one culture to another, sometimes even leading to parents selling their own children into slavery. Throughout our reading and discussion of Bales, *Understanding Global Slavery*, students must balance the issues of cultural relevancy and social or ethical responsibility. Should the United States or the United Nations tell other countries that 10 or 12 years old is not an acceptable age of consent? Is it ethical for the U. S. to impose its cultural priorities and definitions on other parts of the world? [LO, 1, 3; SALR, 1, 2]

portion of at least 10 pages (double-spaced). You should use a minimum of 15-20 academic or scholarly sources (monographs, investigative articles, etc.) and write using the MLA or Chicago Manual of Style forms of citation. As a general schedule, you should have a topic chosen and submitted to me by the first week of October, an outline and full bibliography by the end of October, and a rough draft that is due before the Thanksgiving break. I will be keeping track of everyone's progress as the semester goes on, and will ask you for periodic updates either in person or via e-mail.