

Slavery:

its role in capitalist development and continuing effects on our economy and society

Course description: It is impossible to understand our country without incorporating the role of slavery in its history. Slavery shaped its institutions, legal and voting systems, labor relations, social welfare and much else. This course will first look at that history, and then assess the extent of the remaining injustice to the descendants of those enslaved. Some references are listed, to give presenters a start on their research. 2 terms; proposal by June Zaccone, with significant additions by Richard Byrd and recommendations by Diane Crothers, Sheryl Harawitz, and Diane Reynolds

Session 1. SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE SYSTEM Devastation of African communities from which slaves were captured; the ocean journey--Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship*; slavery and the Revolution Gerald Horne, *Counterrevolution of 1776*—"the abolition of slavery seemed all but inevitable in London, delighting Africans and outraging slaveholders, sparking the colonial revolt." [From a review in AHR v. 120, 2/2015, 235: "...the argument remains one among many, and although Horne's case is well argued one still feels that there were many American revolutions and many reasons for independence. The value of Horne's work is that he reminds us that slaves and slavery were central pillars in this process." See also <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/03/06/1619-project-new-york-times-mistake-122248> Black participation in the Revolution.

- a. What made slavery in the Americas different from previous slavery? American slavery, unlike other ancient slave systems, was based on race, and left people without citizens' rights as an inherited condition. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-12-12/americas-original-sin> Though previously some slaves had been used in production, capitalist production significantly expanded their use to millions, and their cheap, coerced labor was a significant source of the cotton trade's profitability.

Session 2. ROLE OF SLAVERY IN US CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT:

"the role that coercion played in bringing about a modern market system that is more typically identified with freedom." Slavery and the rise of the US as a global power. The range of businesses, north and south, profiting from slavery—banks, shippers, manufacturers; and wage labor lost

[Julia Ott – "Slaves: The Capital That Made Capitalism"](#)

Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* and video <https://www.c-span.org/video/?324267-1/empire-cotton>; Beckert and Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism*;

Session 3. EXPANSION OF SLAVE PRODUCTION; SLAVE FAMILIES AND THEIR CONDITION; Slave Resistance And Rebellion—In Africa And Here <http://abolition.e2bn.org/resistance.html>; <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinnslaem10.html>; Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*; role of fugitive slaves in Civil War:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/books/review/andrew-delbanco-war-before-the-war.html> Plight of women: <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2015/03/27/remembering-women-slavery> [Slave narratives from the Federal Writers' Project](#); Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*

[Keri Leigh Merritt, Masterless Men: Poor Whites & Slavery in the Antebellum South](#) [interview:

<http://www.aaihs.org/masterless-men-a-new-book-on-poor-whites-and-slavery/>; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*, Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*

Session 4. EFFECT OF SLAVE STATE POWER ON GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS--THE CONSTITUTION AND LEGAL SYSTEM:

[David Waldstreicher](#) and [Robin Einhorn](#). The major effect of slavery on US economic development came through its influence on legal and political institutions. A central problem of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 was creating a legal and political framework uniting the Southern slave states with Northern states in the process of abolishing slavery. The slave states were concerned that a strong federal government dominated by Northerners might tax their slaves or even abolish slavery. The solution was to increase Southern power at the federal level through the three-fifths clause. And reserve most fiscal and economic policymaking for the states: federal taxing and regulatory power was restricted to

international and interstate commerce. Federal power to tax slave imports and exports was limited or prohibited, and its power enhanced to enforce their property claims to fugitive slaves: the “fugitive slave clause.”

Electoral College: to protect slave states “In a direct election system, the South would have lost every time.” by [Sean Illing](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/12/13598316/donald-trump-electoral-college-slavery-akhil-reed-amar) <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/12/13598316/donald-trump-electoral-college-slavery-akhil-reed-amar>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/11/electoral-college-racist-origins/601918/>

“At the Philadelphia convention, the visionary Pennsylvanian James Wilson proposed direct national election of the president. But the savvy Virginian James Madison responded that such a system would prove unacceptable to the South: “The right of suffrage was much more diffusive [i.e., extensive] in the Northern than the Southern States; and the latter could have no influence in the election on the score of Negroes.” In other words, in a direct election system, the North would outnumber the South, whose many slaves (more than half a million in all) of course could not vote. But the Electoral College—a prototype of which Madison proposed in this same speech—instead let each southern state count its slaves, albeit with a two-fifths discount, in computing its share of the overall count. <https://time.com/4558510/electoral-college-history-slavery/>

Another view: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/opinion/the-electoral-college-slavery-myth.html>

Second Amendment and slavery: the influence of racism in arming whites. "[The 'Right to Bear Arms'... Against Slave Revolts?](#)" Steve Goss; "The Hidden History of the Second Amendment." Carl T. Bogus

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*, <https://www.historynet.com/the-confederacy-americas-worst-idea.htm>

Session 5. ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SLAVERY CONTINUED BY OTHER MEANS

Reconstruction; Black families after slavery abolished, Glymph: "Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household;" share-cropping system; Racial Law: increasing punishment for crime; vagrancy laws, [convict leasing and prison labor for industry](#);

<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/black-women-incarceration-convict-leasing-prison-forced-labor>; <https://www.aaihs.org/emancipation-and-the-birth-of-the-professional-police-force/> the carceral state; lynching

“Criminal justice institutions are the last public institutions standing in many low-income communities. And if police forces are the foremost representation of the state in the lives of poor people of color, then we must rethink the way we see the state and its ties to mass incarceration and criminalization.” Michelle Alexander, *New Jim Crow*; Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-origins-carceral-state-elizabeth-hinton>

Session 6. Strong property protections, weak regulatory and taxing power were required to protect slavery, so policy constraints, helped shift American capitalism to the low road. [How Slavery Shaped American Capitalism](#) John Clegg; Interlandi, “Why doesn’t the United States have universal health care? The answer has everything to do with race.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/universal-health-care-racism.html>

Session 7. BLACK STRUGGLE--The Civil Rights Movement; its demands--successes and failures; changes it created. Connections of that movement to the African freedom struggle and other domestic movements;

Second term

Session 1. DEBATES ABOUT STRATEGY FOR BLACK PROGRESS: Booker T. Washington; W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey and the NAACP; Rev. M.L. King vs. Malcolm, Black Power Movement, [What happened to the Congressional Black Caucus?](#)

Session 2. THE STATE VS BLACK ACTIVISTS: Marcus Garvey And His Movement--Hounded By Hoover <https://genius.com/Federal-bureau-of-investigation-marcus-garvey-neutralization-memo-annotated>]; Black Panthers destroyed; [Paul Robeson](#); [Muhammad Ali](#); The Rev. Martin Luther

King, Jr.; FBI program COINTELPRO <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/02/history-surveillance-and-black-community>

Session 3. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE BLACK POPULATION—How far still to go: housing, income and wealth; health, longevity; comparative condition black and white workers;

[It's Not Obesity. It's Slavery. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/racial-differences-doctors.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/racial-differences-doctors.html); [Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care](#); mental health: [Psychiatry under the shadow of white supremacy](#); [Black patients were losing limbs at triple the rate of others.](#)

Katznelson: *When Affirmative Action Was White*; environmental justice: Robert Bullard, <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/why-race-matters-when-we-talk-about-the-environment/>

Session 4. PSYCHOLOGY OF RACISM https://www.huffpost.com/entry/social-psychology-racism_n_7688910 ; <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/nurturing-self-compassion/201709/the-psychology-behind-racism> Racism and its effects on education, [How Well-Intentioned White Families Can Perpetuate Racism](#); impoverished safety net—welfare repeal and TANF: [“Mississippi is rejecting nearly all of the poor people who apply for welfare”](#); medical care: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/10/us/coronavirus-african-americans-bias.html>, policing; Racism, Violence and Exclusion—St Louis: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/books/review-walter-johnson-broken-heart-of-america-st-louis.html>

Session 5. Populist movement; black-white labor cooperation: Southern Tenant Farmers' Union; how racism has hindered labor; right-to-work laws, <https://socialistworker.org/2012/04/27/the-promise-and-failure-of-populism> [Organizing the South](#) <https://www.facingsouth.org/2012/12/the-racist-roots-of-right-to-work-laws>

Session 6. Foreign policy—influence of Southern control of the national government: Mathew Karp., [This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy](#). Race and international relations: In 1922 *The Journal of Race Development* became *Foreign Affairs* [The Racial Empire of International Relations](#) Haitian Revolution ending slavery and US response

Session 7. Reparations? Why or why not. [Ta-Nehisi Coates Atlantic Arguments Against Reparations](#) and Adolph Reed, Jr., et al in <https://editions.lib.umn.edu/reparations/sections/> Alternatives: [Darity and Hamilton](#), Baby Bonds; [People of Color Bill of Rights](#); social democracy—social goods for all