

Syllabus  
Southern Women and Slavery  
History 511-A, Fall 2001  
Professor Schweninger

The purpose of this course is to write a research paper, using primary sources, on a topic concerning Southern Women and Slavery. The paper is due on Thursday, December 6, 2001. Late papers will not be accepted. For undergraduates it should be no longer than seventeen pages, and for graduate students no longer than twenty-five pages, including foot- or endnotes.

To choose a topic, the first four weeks of the course will be devoted to four books: Deborah Gray White's *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985 [1999]) [hereafter AIAW]; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and white Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) [hereafter WPHH]; Loren Schweninger, editor, *The Southern Debate Over Slavery: Volume 1, Petitions to Southern Legislature, 1778-1864* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001) [hereafter SDOS], and Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, third edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001).

Undergraduates will be expected to read any three chapters from AIAW and any three chapters of WPHH, along with the introduction and any ten petitions relating to women in SDOS; graduate students will be expected to read AIAW, any five chapters from WPHH, along with the introduction and any twenty petitions relating to women in SDOS. Both graduates and undergraduates should read chapters 3-5 in Rampolla's Guide.

During the first class session, assignments will be made so that each student can prepare a report to the class on a chapter in AIAW (August 30) and WPHH (September 6). During the fourth class session (September 13) students should read from SDOS as indicated above, peruse the website on historical sources created by librarian Kathy Crowe (<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/bibs/his511ws.html>), and examine (<http://history.uncg.edu/slaverypetitions>), the Race and Slavery Petitions Project website. We will spend September 13th in the library discussing sources and research methods.

Before the fifth class session (September 20) each student should have read the assigned chapters in Rampolla, and selected a topic for the semester's research. Rampolla's Guide contains information about how to take notes. We will discuss in class what you want to do and how you want to do it. You should keep in mind that historians (most of them) seek to distill information from a body of evidence and argue a thesis. Also historians make comparisons, especially in time and location, and, in our case, among whites and blacks, slaves and free people of color, men and women. Writing a research paper involves the ability to collect, analyze, and interpret evidence, and bring it together in an imaginative and innovative fashion.

You may, if you wish, rely principally on petitions to southern legislatures as a primary source. Approximately 3,000 petitions, mostly from Delaware, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Texas, have been compiled by the Race and Slavery Petitions Project. They are on microfilm in the documents section of Jackson Library, where photocopies can be made, and in the Petitions Project archives (Brown building, rooms 3 and 4, basement southeast corner, where there will be a sign up sheet for the microfilm reader). The petitions are searchable with the "Search Petitions" function of the Project website cited above, and with a 450-page printed guide. The website contains a PAR (Petition Analysis Record) number for each petition in the collection, and the printed guide contains the state and frame location of each petition. You may, if you choose, however, rely on other primary sources, including those on reserve in Jackson library, found on the web,<sup>1</sup> in the general library holdings, or at nearby archives at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University. If you choose petitions as your primary source, you should probably concentrate on one state and one time period.

On October 18, students should bring to class the notes they have taken from secondary and primary sources, an outline of their paper, including a thesis statement, and be prepared to discuss briefly their preliminary findings.

On November 1, students should bring to class a rough draft of their paper, and present

it to the class in summary fashion. At this session, undergraduates should pass out to fellow undergraduates, and graduates to fellow graduates, a copy of their paper. Students who would like the instructor to read and comment on this draft should provide him with a copy as well.

On November 8, undergraduates will meet to critique one another's papers.

On November 15, graduate students will do the same.

On the two above dates, the instructor will hand back rough drafts to those seeking his comments.

Criticisms should be rigorous and suggest weaknesses or flaws in an argument but should also be made in a positive and constructive manner.

Your final papers should include a bibliography of secondary sources, including for undergraduates at least ten books and/or articles and for graduates at least fifteen books and/or articles on your topic; and a bibliography of primary sources. The format for foot- or endnote citations for petitions should be as follows: Petition of Princess Green, Nancy Handy, and John Stanly to the North Carolina General Assembly, 1796, Craven County, microfilm reel 4, #0399, PAR #11679607, RSPP [Race and Slavery Petitions Project].

The final grade in the course will be the same as the grade on your final paper unless you have missed class or not completed the assignments as cited above. If you wish to have your final paper returned (at the beginning of the spring semester) please provide two copies. My office hours (240 McIver) are Thursdays between 2-4 or by appointment.