

Spring 2004  
McIver 222  
Thursday 6:00-8:50

**HIS 511:  
Southern Slavery and Abolition**

Instructor: Watson Jennison  
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In the mid-nineteenth century, black and white abolitionists became more and more vocal in their opposition to slavery, attacking the institution as a moral evil and depicting slaveholders as cruel and abusive masters. In response, southern slaveholders and pro-slavery ideologues fought back, representing slavery as a benevolent institution and slaves as child-like dependents. This class will examine the dynamic interplay between pro-slavery and anti-slavery ideology in mid-nineteenth-century America.

The main expectation of the course is that students will complete a seminar paper, with an approximate length of 15-17 pages for undergraduates, and 20-25 pages for graduate students. Each paper should be an original, primary source research paper that combines the elements of clear writing, clear organization, knowledge of the subject matter, and the ability to analyze and interpret the past. These research papers will be written in stages, with considerable opportunity for feedback from the instructor and from other students about the topic, organization, research design, and first draft.

Students will submit several preliminary writing assignments, including a proposal, bibliography, and outline. Because critiquing others' work often illuminates one's own, students will comment each other's writing assignments.

The class will be entirely discussion in format, based upon a program of readings completed in common. Students must read all three of the assigned books.

A basic requirement of this class is regular attendance; no absences will be excused except under very unusual circumstances. A single unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the student's final grade by a full letter grade; two unexcused absences will result in failure.

All students are expected to fulfill their class responsibilities in a professional manner. Such professionalism includes:

- \* Typing all assignments in a careful and legible manner;
- \* Taking care to present all written material in the best possible manner.
- \* Following deadlines as specified in the syllabus. (Late papers will be penalized).

Final Grade Composition:

- Class Participation 25%
- Research Paper (2 drafts) 60%
- Other Written Assignments 15%

**No incompletes will be given for this course.**

Books for this course are available at the university bookstore and Adam's University Bookstore.

Assigned Books:

- Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History With Documents* (2003)
- Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (1993)
- James B. Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (1997, revised edition)

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 (January 15): Introduction**

### **Week 2 (January 22): Overview of American Slavery**

Reading:

- Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, pp. ix-199

Assignment:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.

### **Week 3 (January 29): American Abolitionism**

Reading:

- James B. Stewart, *Holy Warriors*

Assignment:

- Two-page reaction paper on the assigned reading due at the beginning of the class.

### **Week 4 (February 5): Defending the “Peculiar Institution”**

Reading:

- Peter Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*

Assignment:

- Three-page paper based on primary documents in assigned reading.

### **Week 5 (February 12): Discussion of Topics and Tour of Library**

Reading:

- Selected Abolitionist newspapers

Assignment:

- Three-page paper based on examination of an Abolitionist newspaper

### **Week 6 (February 19): Proposals**

Assignment:

- Five- to seven-page proposal due at the beginning of class.
- Prepare a five- to ten-minute presentation of your proposal for the class.

### **Week 7 (February 26): No Class**

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

### **Week 8 (March 4): No Class**

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

### **Week 9 (March 11): Spring Break (No Class)**

### **Week 10 (March 18): Outline**

### **Week 11 (March 25): No Class**

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

### **Week 12 (April 1): No Class**

Individual Meetings

- A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class to schedule times.

### **Week 13 (April 8): Rough Draft Group 1**

Reading and Assignment:

- Group 1 must submit their rough drafts to the entire class by 5 p.m. on April 4. Members of Group 2 will be assigned as primary and secondary critics of the rough drafts of Group 1. Even though Group 1 will not be assigned as critics on the papers of those in their group, they are still responsible for reading each rough draft.

#### **Week 14 (April 15): Rough Draft Group 2**

##### Reading and Assignment:

- Same drill as Week 13 with Group 1 and Group 2 reversed. Group 2 must submit their rough drafts to the entire class by 5 p.m. on April 11. Members of Group 1 will be assigned as primary and secondary critics of the rough drafts of Group 2. Even though Group 2 will not be assigned as critics on the papers of those in their group, they are still responsible for reading each rough draft.
- Revision plans, due, Group I

#### **Week 15(April 22): Final Draft Group 1**

##### Assignment:

- Final Draft Due For Group I
- Revision plans, due, Group 2

#### **Week 16 (April 29): Final Draft Group 2**

##### Assignments:

- Final Draft Due For Group 2