

FYS 033 -- Slavery and American Popular Culture

Drake University, Fall 2019

Mondays/Wednesdays 12:30 – 1:45, Harvey Ingham 112

Professor Nate Holdren

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Office Hours: 1:45-3:30, 4:45-5:15 M/W. I am on campus and at Mars Coffee very often and would be happy to meet with you at another time if those hours don't work well.

Phone: 773-750-0715 (Please note that this is my cell phone and I have small children, so don't call me late at night. Please also note that email is a better way to reach me.)

Welcome to FYS 33, and welcome to Drake. I am excited to work with you this semester. I have put the course schedule for our class first because you'll use the course schedule on a regular basis over the semester. Other information, like the course description and the list of books you should read, follows after the schedule.

Schedule of Class Sessions

When readings are listed, please have those readings done by the time our class meets on that date.

Monday, August 26

Reading: Course syllabus, Bloom's Taxonomy; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 1-19.

Wednesday, August 28

Reading: Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 20-50

(Monday, September 2 - Labor day, no meeting)

Wednesday, September 4 -

Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 50-96. Morrison, *A Mercy* 1-9

Monday, September 9

Reading: Morrison, *A Mercy*, 10-78.

Wednesday, September 11

Reading: Morrison, *A Mercy*, 84-118.

Monday, September 16

Reading: Morrison, *A Mercy*, 119-167

Wednesday, September 18

Reading: Morrison, *A Mercy*, 168-196;

Due on Saturday: Blackboard Self-Assessment 1; Abstract and Timeline for Paper 1

(Instructions on page 7 of this syllabus)

****Remember to do the Blackboard posts!****

(see page 4 of the syllabus if you don't remember what to do)

Monday, September 23

Reading: Lamott, *Bird by Bird* excerpts (on course Blackboard site)

Wednesday, September 25

Reading: Anderson, *Chains*, 1-52

Paper 1 due by sunrise on Sunday, September 29 (Instructions on page 5 of this syllabus)

Remember to do the
Blackboard posts!

Monday, September 30

Reading: Anderson, *Chains*, 53-116

Wednesday, October 2

Reading: Anderson, *Chains*, 116-168

Monday, October 7

No reading. Library session.

Wednesday, October 9

Reading: Anderson, *Chains*, 215-313

(Monday, October 14/Tuesday, October 15 - Fall break, no meeting)

Wednesday, October 16

Reading: Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 97-157.

Due on Saturday, October 19: Blackboard Self-Assessment 2; Abstract and Timeline for Paper 2 (Instructions on page 7 of this syllabus)

Monday, October 21

Reading: McPhee, "Draft 4" on course Blackboard site

Wednesday, October 23

Reading: Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 158-209

Monday, October 28

Northrup, *Twelve Years A Slave* pages 1-69/chapters 1-7.

Wednesday, October 30

Reading: Northrup, *Twelve Years A Slave* pages 70-100/chapters 8-10

Due on Saturday, November 2: Paper 2. (Instructions on page 5 of this syllabus)

Monday, November 4

Reading: Northrup, *Twelve Years A Slave* pages 101-170/chapters 8-16.

Wednesday, November 6

Reading: Northrup, *Twelve Years A Slave* pages 170-238/chapter 17-end

Monday, November 11

Reading: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pages 43-111/chapters 1-8

Remember to do the Blackboard posts!

Wednesday, November 13

Reading: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pages 112-227/chapters 9-18

Monday, November 18

Reading: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pages 228-370/chapters 19-33

Wednesday, November 20

Reading: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pages 371-end/chapter 34-end

No meeting, Holdren out of town – Friday, November 22

Due on Saturday: Blackboard Self-Assessment 3; Abstract and Timeline for Paper 3
(Instructions on page 7 of this syllabus)

Monday, November 25

Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 245-270.

Wednesday, November 27 - Thanksgiving break, no meeting

Monday, December 2

No reading. In-class writing workshop session.

Wednesday, December 4

No reading. Final wrap up.

Paper 3 (instructions on page 6 of this syllabus) **due by final exam date.**

Assignments

Blackboard Posts (also known as Pre-discussion Exploratory Writing, 150 points)

Before class you should write a post on our class's Blackboard site. Your posts should be no more than 250 words and should take you no more than twenty minutes. If you go over 250 words or twenty minutes spent writing, just stop, even if mid-sentence. (I mean that!) You should post on our course Blackboard site before the start of class. If you post them earlier, that's better, but I understand this may not always be possible. Each of your posts should do one of the following:

- summarize how day's reading depicts slavery
- show how the day's reading supports or contradicts a point in another day's reading

You will be doing this exploratory writing for several reasons. One reason is that writing more makes you a better writer. Another is that this writing will help improve your reading and use of the texts. People understand a reading better and have better thoughts about it when they write about it. That means you will have an easier time writing your papers and have higher quality thoughts because you did this exploratory writing. This also means we will have more useful and interesting discussions because you will have written - and so, thought more deeply - about the reading by the time class starts. Finally, by sharing these texts you will also be helping your classmates think through the reading.

There are twenty-two days with readings in this class. If you do this assignment fifteen times you get full credit. You can do up to five additional posts for extra credit. These extra posts must be done on additional days about other course readings (so, no credit for posting twice on the same readings). Each of these additional posts will count for ten points of extra credit toward your final grade for the course. This will be the only opportunity for extra credit in this class and I do not allow students to redo other assignments for additional credit.

Participation (150 points)

Participating means contributing to our class as an intellectual community, and using our class community to push yourself intellectually. You should make an effort to speak once per class. Speaking in class will help you think new thoughts and develop your speaking skills. If you speak in class it will also help your classmates to think new thoughts and develop their skills. This can only happen if you're in class. You can miss two classes with no penalty. After that, absences will hurt your grade. If you need to make some arrangement because an event in your life requires you to miss class, see me as soon as possible, preferably beforehand.

Discussion Co-facilitation (50 points)

Once this semester you will co-facilitate starting discussion, along with one or more classmates. On the day you co-facilitate you should have read all the Blackboard posts before class. Each co-facilitator should bring the following five things:

1. One passage from the day's reading that you think is interesting, insightful, or intellectually exciting. This can be as long as a paragraph or as short as a sentence.

2. One passage from the day's reading that you don't understand, or that made you confused about something you thought you understood.

3. One point a classmate made in a Blackboard post that you think is interesting, insightful, or intellectually exciting.

4. One point a classmate made in a Blackboard post that you disagree with, or don't understand, or that made you confused about something you thought you understood.

5. Two questions about the day's reading. Your questions should engage people to think about the readings and should lead us deeper into the text, not away from the text.

You will present the above material to the class. Your goal as co-facilitator is not to be an expert who imparts information but rather to help create a productive discussion. Your co-facilitation will count for your participation grade.

Paper 1: Morrison and Berlin (150 points)

Write an essay of 1000-1500 words. Include the word count with your paper. Your essay should have a thesis and make an argument. By writing your essay you should further develop your ideas on slavery. (That is, when you write this essay, think new thoughts. It is okay and normal to feel confused and unsure in the process. Try to write your way into then back out of this condition.)

Your paper can do any of the following: take a concept from Berlin's book and apply it in some illuminating way to aspects of Morrison's book; take a concept from Morrison's book and use aspects of Berlin's book to illustrate that concept; take aspects of Morrison's book and use it to supplement Berlin's book in a worthwhile way.

Finally, make sure I can tell what revision process work you did on your paper. If you don't, I won't remember to give you credit for that work and you will lose some points. (See the section on revision process work on page 6 below.)

Paper 2: The Truths of Slavery and the American Revolution (175 points)

Write an essay of 1200-1800 words. Include the word count with your paper. Your essay should have a thesis and make an argument. By writing your essay you should further develop your ideas on slavery. (That is, when you write this essay, think new thoughts. It is okay and normal to feel confused and unsure in the process. Try to write your way into then back out of this condition.)

The theme of your essay should be 'the truths of slavery during the American Revolution' or 'a truth of slavery during the American Revolution.' Your essay should deal with Anderson's novel *Chains*. Your paper can do any of the following: take a concept from Berlin's book and apply it in some illuminating way to aspects of Anderson's book; take a concept from Anderson's book and use aspects of Berlin's book to illustrate that concept; take aspects of Anderson's book and use it to supplement Berlin's book in a worthwhile way. You may draw on Morrison's book as well if it helps

you to write your paper.

Finally, make sure I can tell what revision process work you did on your paper. If you don't, I won't remember to give you credit for that work and you will lose some points. (See the section on revision process work on page 6 below.)

Paper 3: Northup, Stowe, and Berlin (200 points)

Write an essay of 1500-2000 words. Include the word count with your paper. Your essay should have a thesis and make an argument. By writing your essay you should further develop your ideas on slavery. (That is, when you write this essay, think new thoughts. It is okay and normal to feel confused and unsure in the process. Try to write your way into then back out of this condition.)

Both Northup's and Stowe's books were written while slavery was contemporary. Both books held up a mirror showing the slave society of the 19th century some ugly truths about itself. Northup's book is a nonfiction memoir while Stowe's novel is fiction.

For this essay, consider what we can learn from historical fiction, historical nonfiction primary sources (such as Northup's book), and historical scholarship. Use Northup's and Stowe's books, as well as Berlin's book. Discuss the roles of nonfiction, fiction, and narrative in conveying some important truth(s) about slavery. In addition, make an argument about how depicting the truth(s) of slavery was an important anti-slavery act on the part of Northup and Stowe at the time they wrote their books. (Use Berlin to help with this part of your paper.)

Finally, make sure I can tell what revision process work you did on your paper. If you don't, I won't remember to give you credit for that work and you will lose some points. (See the section on revision process work below.)

Paper Revision Process (125 points)

You will write three papers for this course. In the description for each paper I mentioned "revision process work." Here's what I mean. You must do some work on revision for each of your three papers. You are required to complete two documents that I call Revision Worksheet One and Revision Worksheet Two. Worksheet one is worth 25 points. Worksheet two is worth 50 points. The revision worksheet will take more time than you expect. For what it's worth, it's okay with me if you don't like filling it out. You don't need to pretend you enjoy it. Please note, if you leave any of the revision worksheet blank I will take off points. When you complete a revision worksheet, turn in the complete revision worksheet along with your paper, following all instructions on the worksheet.

You are also required to go to the Writing Workshop twice. You can sign up for the Writing Workshop here:

<http://www.drake.edu/english/studentresources/writingworkshop/>

(You can combine the Revision Worksheets and your appointments at the Writing Workshop in various ways: you might do revision worksheet one on paper 1, go to the writing workshop and complete revision worksheet 2 for paper 2, and go to the writing workshop for paper 3. You might go to the writing workshop for paper 1, do

revision worksheet 1 for paper 2, and go to the writing workshop and also complete revision worksheet 2 for paper 3. And so on.)

Each of your appointments at the Writing Workshop is worth 25 points. Please do not skip your appointment at the Workshop. If you need to cancel, that's fine, you can do so at that same link. But please do not make an appointment and then not show up. That wastes the writing tutor's time and prevents another student from getting access to the workshop.

When you go to the writing workshop, in order to get credit do the following:

- 1) Along with your paper, include a brief note telling me that you went to the Writing Workshop.
- 2) Turn the draft you took to the workshop, and turn in a second draft with the changes you made after your visit to the workshop. Highlight or bold those changes so I can see them.

Abstract and timeline for paper

Read the paper assignment. Then do the following ten steps.

- 1) State what idea(s) from Berlin's *Generations of Captivity* you will be using.
- 2) Write down one or two quotes expressing the ideas(s) from Berlin and the page number(s) for the quote(s)
- 3) State what other book you will be working with in addition to Berlin's book.
- 4) State what aspects of that book you will be examining.
- 5) Write down one or two quotes expressing the aspects of the book you will be examining and the page number(s) for the quote(s)
- 6) Pretend you have already written your paper. Summarize the paper's argument in 200 to 300 words. (This summary is called an abstract.)
- 7) List the steps required to write this paper. Include a) making an appointment with a writing tutor, b) writing the draft, c) reading/rereading some of the readings for this paper, if that's necessary d) meeting with the writing tutor, e) completing the revision worksheet.
- 8) Next to each step estimate the amount of time you expect each step to take
- 9) Next to each step write down the dates and times of day when you plan to do those steps. (Please don't say 'I'll do an all nighter just before its due.' I strongly encourage you to work in multiple short work sessions.)
- 10) If you anticipate any challenges, state them, and how you might deal with them.

Blackboard self-assessment

You will write three self-assessments of your Blackboard posts. For each self-assessment you will read over all the Blackboard posts you haven't self-assessed yet. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to assess what you are doing with your Blackboard posts. Answer these three questions. (Answer each question briefly, if you find yourself going much more than half an hour and 300 words per answer then you're probably spending too much time on this.)

- 1) Using the terms in Bloom's Taxonomy, what are you doing in your Blackboard posts?
- 2) In what ways have you been using the posts as a resource for your learning?
- 3) Make a decision about how you will use your posts as resource for your learning. If you decide to use the posts differently, describe how and explain why. If you decide to

continue to use the posts the same way, explain why.

Course Description

In 1865 the United States ended slavery in this country, freeing four million African Americans. Slavery has been the subject of countless works of fiction, non-fiction, and film. Depictions of slavery in American popular culture began well before slavery ended. Many anti-slavery political activists wrote widely read newspapers, novels, and nonfiction books. Arguably, these works helped to end slavery. In this class we will examine material from the past, including anti-slavery fiction and nonfiction, and from the present, including current fiction, scholarly writing, and movies.

Welcome to FYS 033, Slavery and American Popular Culture, and welcome to Drake! Please be familiar with all material included on this syllabus. I'm looking forward to working with you and getting to know you this semester. I hope you find this semester interesting and satisfying. At any point during this semester if you have any questions or concerns about anything related to class, please come and talk to me. I am committed to facilitating your success and achievement as you do the hard work of learning. I welcome any thoughts from you on how I can better help you to do that learning.

Readings

We will read the following books. These books are available in the university bookstore and Amazon.com. Please buy them all. Some other readings are available electronically. These readings are on the course web site. This site should come up if you go to <https://drake.blackboard.com/> and log in. Please have a copy of the course readings with you for each day of class.

- Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, Belknap Press
- Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*, Vintage
- Laurie Halse Anderson, *Chains*, Atheneum Books
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Bedford
- Solomon Northrop, *Twelve Years a Slave*, Graymalkin

Course goals

In this course you will learn more about slavery in U.S. history. More than that, the course is an opportunity to improve your ability to examine works of popular culture. We will focus on identifying and analyzing the ways works of popular culture depict society in the past and the present. We will practice this activity through discussion, informal writing, and formal writing. These activities mean that the course will give you opportunities to improve your skills and habits at

- listening, thinking, and responding during discussion
- writing to think
- revising your writing
- summarizing, analyzing, and presenting information
- making arguments

To take advantage of these opportunities you will need to do all of the following things and can expect these things from each other:

- come to every class and do so prepared to listen to others, take notes, and respond thoughtfully
- do the reading with your full attention
- complete the course assignments on time
- come to office hours or set up another time to meet me

If you do all these things to the best of your ability, you will get the most out of this course intellectually and academically.

Above all, I ask you to make two commitments for this class. First, I ask you to commit to pursuing individual intellectual excellence in this class. Second, I ask you to treat our class as a community of people engaged in this pursuit together in a mutually-beneficial way. That is to say, in this class please challenge yourself to improve your skills, sharpen your abilities, and think new thoughts, and please attempt to help your classmates do the same.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is when someone presents another person's ideas as his or her own. It is plagiarism if you use someone else's words without quoting, or if you put someone else's ideas in your own words with out identifying that person. I trust your intellectual honesty and do not expect that we will have any problems with plagiarism. That said, I have had students plagiarize in the past, and so I mention it here.

Plagiarism is an act of intellectual dishonesty and an act that harms the person who plagiarizes. We improve our skills and develop our abilities by hard work. Someone who plagiarizes does not do that hard work and so makes no improvement or personal development. In my experience, when someone plagiarizes it is typically a temporary lapse in judgment made in a moment when the person feels they can not succeed honestly and feels embarrassed to say so -- such as a student who has fallen behind in the reading and is not prepared to complete an assignment by the deadline. If you happen to find yourself in a difficult situation that will affect your performance in our class, speak to me and we will figure something out. The sooner you let me know, the better, but it is always better to be honest with me so I can act as someone on your side. The university also takes plagiarism seriously and there can be serious consequences. You can find the university guidelines on plagiarism online at <http://www.drake.edu/studentlife/handbook-resources/handbook/academic/#dishonesty>.

Changes to Syllabus

The point of the class is your success and learning. The syllabus is built around that. I wrote this syllabus before I met any of you. You are all individuals, and you form a unique combination in this class. I may make changes to the syllabus during the semester if it seems to me that most people will get more out of this class as a result.

Grades

Paper 1– 150 points

Paper 2 – 175 points

Paper 3 – 200 points

Abstracts and Timelines – 75 points total
 Blackboard Posts – 150 points total
 Blackboard Post Self-Assessments – 75 points total
 Revision Worksheet 1 – 25 points
 Revision Worksheet 2 – 50 points
 Attending writing workshop – 50 points total
 Participation – 200 points total
 Total: 1200 points

You must complete all papers and paper revisions for this class regardless of the points.

Grade scale

Drake introduced +/- grading in the Fall of 2016. The GPA values for +/- grading are available online at <http://www.drake.edu/studentrecords/gradesandgpa/>

In this course grades are as follows. (Note: these grades are expressed as percentages. If you got, say, a 150 out of 200, that’s a 75 according to the scale below.)

A 93-100	B- 80-82	D+ 68-69
A- 90-92	C+ 78-79	D 63-67
B+ 88-89	C 73-77	D- 60-62
B 83-87	C- 70-72	F 59 or lower

Campus Resources

Writing Workshop -- <http://www.drake.edu/english/studentresources/writingworkshop/> Writing is a skill that gets better with practice and feedback. Using the Writing Workshop will improve your writing. I highly encourage you to go.

Speaking Center -- <https://library.drake.edu/get-help/services-for-students/speaking/>
 The Speaking Center exists to help all Drake students who want to be better public speakers. My remarks on writing go as well for public speaking.

Disability Services -- <http://www.drake.edu/acadassist/disabilityservices/>
 Disability Services helps students with disabilities exercise their rights to inclusion and accommodation.

University Counseling Center -- <http://www.drake.edu/counselingcenter/>
 The University Counseling Center provides counseling and mental health resources to Drake students.

Academic Achievement -- <http://www.drake.edu/acadassist/>
 Academic Achievement exists to help you succeed. They can help you improve your academic skills and raise your grades.

Office for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion -- <http://www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/>
 This coordinator of this office acts as a resource for students who have been subjected to violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking.