

# Princeton, Slavery, and Historical Memory

Fall, 2016

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302 Dickinson Hall  
Office hours: Monday, 2:30-4:30 and by appointment

This freshman seminar focuses on Princeton University's historical connections to the institution of slavery. Building on work done by undergraduate students for the Princeton and Slavery Project over the past four years, students will explore the meaning of historical memory at both the institutional and personal level. Together, we will think about what Princeton University might do to address its involvement with slavery. The focus of the class, however, will be on how the historical memory of slavery functions in the individual lives of Princeton students, alumni, staff and faculty.

While doing extensive reading about Princeton and Slavery, and slavery as a problem of public history, students will work together and with filmmaker Melvin McCray to create a series of short audio and film interviews about the burden of America's slaveholding past and its impact on individual Princetonians descended from slaveholders, slaves and, perhaps, both. In preparation for these interviews, students will learn how to do genealogical research, and navigate the Princeton University archives. Students will be responsible for finding interview subjects, preparing interview questions, and conducting face to face interviews that will: 1. Lead to short written and audio-video pieces that will become part of an online exhibition on the Princeton and Slavery website, and 2. Serve as preliminary interviews for the film work to be done by Mr. McCray '74, a prize-winning filmmaker who made the much-acclaimed film *Looking Back: Reflections of Black Princeton Alumni*. Students will also contribute to the film by doing transcriptions and picture research in University archives.

The audio and video interviews produced by this class will become an integral part of the Princeton and Slavery website, set to roll out in the fall of 2017. This website will present the first full investigation of slavery's impact on Princeton, with dynamic timelines, maps, and exhibitions that track the slave-holding practices of early Princeton trustees and faculty; follow campus debates about slavery; explore Princeton during the Civil War; document slavery in the town of Princeton; and follow the lives of Princeton's southern students.

## **Course Expectations:**

### **Seminar Participation: 25%**

Students are expected to read homework assignments prior to class, to be active participants in class discussions, and to engage in focused research during the in-class workshops. Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled class times.

### **Interview preparation work: 10%**

Working in tandem with other students, students will work to identify prospective interview subjects for the Princeton and Slavery project, do basic background research on their families, and compose a list of interview questions. After completing their interviews, students will also work with filmmaker Melvin McCray to prepare for filming sessions.

### **Oral History Interview: 25%**

Each student will interview at least one Princeton affiliate with a direct family connection to the institution of slavery, and transcribe the highlights of the interview.

**Online exhibitions: 40%** Each student -- in partnership with another student -- will produce a 3-5 minute illustrated audio piece. Well-produced work will be published on the Princeton and Slavery website.

## **Readings:**

Required books, available at Labyrinth:

- Craig Stephen Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (Bloomsbury Press, 2013)
- Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998)
- Alfred Brophy, *Reparations: Pro and Con* (Oxford, 2006)
- Lauret Savoy, *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape* (Counterpoint, 2015)
- Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007)

Recommended reading, available on Library reserve:

- Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Princeton, 1746-1896* (1946; Princeton, 1996)

Additional readings posted on Blackboard.



Drawing in the autograph book of William B. Lane, '1861

## **Week 1: Sept. 20 Introduction and Course Expectations**

To read:

- Craig B. Hollander and Martha A. Sandweiss, "Princeton and Slavery: Holding the Center," (2015) [Blackboard]
- Ira Berlin, "American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice," *Journal of American History* vol. 90, no. 4 (March, 2004), 1251-1268.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3660347>

In class activities:

Introduction to the Princeton and Slavery website. Develop outreach program to locate prospective student interview subjects, and draft emails for circulation.

Walking tour of slavery-related sites on Princeton campus and downtown Princeton

## **Week 2: Sept. 27 Slavery and Universities: The Princeton and Slavery Project in Context**

To read:

Review of other University and Slavery websites:

- “Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice,” [http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery\\_Justice/](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/)
- Antony Dugdale, J. J. Fueser and J. Celso Castro Alves, “Yale, Slavery, and Abolition” <http://www.yaleslavery.org/>
- “Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History” website with videos and a publication based on student research: <http://www.harvardandslavery.com/>
- “Georgetown and Slavery,” <http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/>
- “Slavery and the making of the University” <http://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/slavery>

Bring to class:

Names of potential student interview subjects.

In class activities:

Review alumni interview possibilities. Craft interview list for alumni and students.

Meeting with filmmaker Melvin McCray to discuss how to identify research subjects for class film project on *Remembering Slavery: The Burden of Historical Memory*. We will discuss how to identify subjects, and research their stories, review good interviewing techniques, and learn how to develop a one-page story pitch and a script with a narrative thread.

Working together, students will develop interview questions and devise a strategy for identifying interview subjects.

Training with Zoom recorders with Digital Learning Lab.

### **Week 3: Oct. 4 Slavery and Historical Memory**

To read:

- Lauret Savoy, *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape*

Look at: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aalives/videos/index.html>

Report in on scheduling and background research for prospective interviews.

In class activities:

In-class practice interviews with author Lauret Savoy.  
Confirmation of interview assignments.  
Introduction to background research for interviews.

*4:30 p.m. Special public reading by author Lauret Savoy, Whitman College, Class of 1970 Theater. Please attend and bring your friends!*

#### **Week 4: Oct. 11 Slavery and Historical Memory**

To read:

- Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family*, pp. 1-214

In class activities:

Workshop on historical research and visual documentation for oral histories.  
Reports on initial conversations with interview subjects.

#### **Week 5: Oct. 18 Slavery and Historical Memory**

To read:

- Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family*, 215-end
- Katrina Browne, "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North," (film. 2008; accessible through Blackboard)

In class activities

Continued work on background research for online oral history exhibitions.

#### **Week 6: Oct. 26 Slavery, Memory and Heritage**

To read:

- Saidya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother* (entire book)

*\*\*Oral history interview updates due.*

In class activity:

Sharing of interviews and transcripts, and discussion of emerging themes for film.

## Fall Break

### Week 7: Nov. 8 Slavery and Universities: The Big Picture

To read:

- Craig Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, (entire book)

*Oral history interview due. Transcription complete, with key passages marked.*

In class activity:

Discussion of interviews. Create one-page story pitches and construct sheet with marked excerpts and corresponding images.

### Week 8: Nov. 15 Slavery and Race at the College of New Jersey

To read:

- Thomas Balcerski, "Under These Classic Shades Together: Intimate Male Friendships at the Antebellum College of New Jersey" *Pennsylvania History* (Spring 2013)  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/pennhistory.80.2.0169>
- Douglas R. Egerton, "'Its Origin Is Not a Little Curious': A New Look at the American Colonization Society," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 5 (Winter, 1985)  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3123062>
- Nicholas Guyatt, "'The Outskirts of Our Happiness': Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic" *Journal of American History* (March 2009)  
<http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/95/4/986>
- Nicholas Guyatt, "Samuel Stanhope Smith," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (May 11, 2016)  
<https://paw.princeton.edu/article/samuel-stanhope-smith>
- Samuel Stanhope Smith, Lecture XXI "On the Relation of Master and Servant," from *The Lectures...*(1812) [Blackboard]
- Margaret Abruzzo, "A Humane Master – An Obliging Neighbor—A True Philanthropist": Slavery, Cruelty and Moral Philosophy," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 66 (Spring, 2005) [Blackboard]

In class activity:

\*\*Workshop on digital audio editing at Digital Learning Lab

## Week 9: Nov. 22 Princeton and the Lead-up to the Civil War

- Lolita Buckner-Inniss, "James Collins Johnson and the Princeton Fugitive Slave Case" [Blackboard]
- James H. Moorhead, "Slavery, Race and Gender at Princeton Seminary: The Pre-Civil War Era," *Theology Today* (Oct., 2012) Vol. 69, No. 3, pp. 274-88.  
<http://ttj.sagepub.com/content/69/3/274>
- Sean Wilentz, "Princeton and the Controversies over Slavery," *Journal of Presbyterian History* (85:2, 2007) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23339113>
- W. Barksdale Maynard, "Princeton in the Confederacy's Service," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (March 23, 2011)  
<http://paw.princeton.edu/issues/2011/03/23/pages/4092/>
- David Kaufman's Oration, (June 25, 1850)  
[https://webpace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/AC016/AC016\\_c0304.pdf](https://webpace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/AC016/AC016_c0304.pdf)
- Online exhibitions from the Princeton and Slavery website. Links to be provided.

In class activity:

Workshop with Digital Learning Lab. Editing audio/images pieces in Premier. *You will need your audio files and a selection of images for your project.*

## Week 10: Nov. 29 Reparations for Slavery

To read:

- Alfred L. Brophy, *Reparations: Pro and Con* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations" (*The Atlantic*, May 2014)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

In class activity:

Additional background research for film.

## Week 11: Dec. 6 Princeton Legacies

To read:

- Selection of readings re: Woodrow Wilson <http://wilsonlegacy.princeton.edu/> and <https://medium.com/@theblackjusticeleague/statement-on-trustee-report-on-woodrow-wilson-530e762d27d3#ge2ycfhn9>
- Melvin McCray, *Looking Back: Reflections of Black Princeton Alumni* (film)  
[https://youtu.be/NXXGUpHCK\\_I](https://youtu.be/NXXGUpHCK_I)
- Jehu Orr, Class of 1849, "Historical Address" (1906)  
[http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/broadsides/detail/115922-broadside-01.jpg](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/broadsides/detail/115922-broadside-01.jpg)

In class activities:

Workshop at Digital Learning Lab with Melvin McCray, for hands-on critiques of rough draft audio/visual pieces

**Week 12: Dec. 13 The Princeton and Slavery Website**

In class activity;

Present rough drafts of collaboratively produced audio/image pieces for class critiques.

Formulate plan for continued student involvement in the Princeton and Slavery Project.

**Tuesday, Jan. 17, Dean's date:** Final draft of collaboratively produced audio-image pieces due. The resources of the Digital Learning Lab will be accessible to you during Reading Period.