English 5306: American Literature, 1800-1865

The Literature of Slavery and Freedom
Dr. Brian Yothers, Professor
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Office Hours: M 1:30-2:50; W 4:30-5:50

Course Description and Objectives
We will be examining the literature and slavery and freedom across genres, from slave narratives by Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup, and Harriet Jacobs, to novels by Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Wells Brown, Frances E. W. Harper, and Frank J. Webb. We will also be reading a substantial selection of antislavery verse, including such poets as George Moses Horton, who was enslaved through most of his career as a poet, Frances E. W. Harper, James Monroe Whitefield, John Greenleaf Whittier, and John Pierpont. We will be particularly interested in how the text we read talk to each other across genres and create a tradition of witness, polemic, and persuasion. We will also examine the ways in which the work of twentieth and twenty-first century critics has shaped and re-shaped the canon of antislavery literature.

Required Course Materials
Books:
Lyrical Liberators: The American Antislavery Movement in Verse, 1831-1865, Ed. Monica Pelaez
Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ed. Christopher Diller, Broadview
Narrative of Frederick Douglass, Ed. Celeste-Marie Bernier, Broadview
Twelve Years a Slave, by Solomon Northup, Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Penguin
Melville's Short Novels, Ed. Dan McCall, Norton Critical Edition
Clotel, by William Wells Brown, Ed. Geoffrey Sanborn, Broadview
The Garies and Their Friends, by Frank J. Webb, Ed. William Huntinging Howell, Meghan Walsh, Broadview
The Bondwoman’s Narrative, by Hannah Crafts, Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Hatchette

Secondary scholarly essays are available on the MLA International Bibliography, Project Muse, and JStor.
I also recommend that you use the Purdue Online Writing Lab as a resource on writing and documentation and the Oxford English Dictionary as a resource for examining unfamiliar language in nineteenth-century poems.
Course Requirements

Weekly responses: You will write a one-page response to one of the assigned poems for each of our class sessions this semester. The response should be framed as a single, well-developed observation that can help to launch class discussion. The group of responses as a whole will be worth 20% of your grade.

Presentations: Early in the semester, you will sign up to take a leading role in the discussion of one of the texts we are reading this semester. You will write a 4-5 page brief essay on the text and make a 10 minute presentation. The paper will be work 20% of your overall grade, and the presentation will be worth 10%.

Seminar paper: You will write a seminar paper of 15-20 pages that will be due on December 7. The paper will be worth 40% of your overall grade. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided early in the semester.

Participation: You are expected to be present and actively engaged in the discussion every day. Participation will be worth 10% of your grade.

Grades
A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=0-59%

Attendance Policy
This is a graduate course, and you are expected to be in class for every session. Any absence aside from those rendered necessary by illness falls short of the expectations for graduate student professionalism. If you are sick, please stay home; otherwise, attendance should be a priority.

Late Work
I will not accept late work.

Originality of Work
The work you do for this course must be your own. No credit will be given for any un-cited material from an outside source or work that duplicates work submitted for another class. If you appear to have deliberately committed plagiarism, your case will be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

CASS
If you have or suspect you have a disability and need an accommodation, you should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building. You are responsible for presenting to me any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.
Email Etiquette
Email is a useful tool if you have questions for me, and emailing me is generally the easiest and most efficient way to make contact outside class. Given that this is a university setting, you should recognize that your emails are documents that represent you professionally, and therefore should rise to certain standards of professional decorum. There are some basic guidelines that you should follow, both in my class and in your other classes.

1. All emails should have a clear subject heading.
2. All emails should have a clear, courteous salutation.
3. All emails written for professional purposes should adhere to standard grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.
4. All emails should be signed with your name (otherwise, your reader may not know who you are!)
5. Emails should be sent from your UTEP account. If you do use another account, be sure that the name on the account is appropriate for professional interactions.
6. If there are any attachments, you should explain your reason for sending them and indicate the program in which they were written. In general, your attachments should take the form of Word documents or PDFs.
7. You should consider your rhetorical context when emailing. What is the purpose of your email, and how can you most effectively accomplish that purpose? Three particularly important matters to keep in mind are brevity, clarity, and courtesy. If your email is not clear, specific, and to the point, you may not elicit the response you desire. If your email is discourteous, you diminish the professionalism of the persona you present to others. To cite just one example, some professors find emails that include calls for action “ASAP” to be discourteous or even presumptuous.

Schedule
Please note that this schedule is subject to revision. I will provide ample notice if the schedule will be revised.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>Frederick Douglass, <em>Narrative of the Life</em></td>
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|          | Mark K. Burns, “A Slave in Form but Not in Fact”: Subversive Humor and the Rhetoric of Irony in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
<p>|          | Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Frederick Douglass’s Camera Obscura: Representing the Antislave “Clothed and in Their Own Form” |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Monica Pelaez, <em>Lyrical Liberators</em>, pp. 1-169</td>
<td>Virginia Jackson, Historical Poetics and the Dream of Interpretation Jessica Conrad, “Polluted Luxuries”: Consumer Resistance, the Sense of Horror, and Abolitionist Boycott Literature</td>
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<td>September 28</td>
<td>Stowe, <em>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</em>, pp. 260-482</td>
<td>Faye Halpern, Beyond Contempt: Ways to Read <em>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</em> Patrick Colm Hogan, The Multiplicity of Implied Authors and the Complex Case of <em>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</em></td>
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<td>October 5</td>
<td>William Wells Brown, <em>Clotel, Or the President’s Daughter</em></td>
<td>Geoffrey Sanborn, Introduction in Broadview Boadview Appendix D: Brown and His Audiences Laura Soderburg, One More Time, with Feeling: Repetition, Reparation, and the Sentimental Subject in William Wells Brown’s Rewritings of <em>Clotel</em></td>
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<td>Author and Title</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>October 19</td>
<td>Solomon Northup, <em>Twelve Years a Slave</em></td>
<td>Laura Langer Cohen, “Solomon Northup's Singing Book” Esmereldá Arrizón-Palomera, <em>The Trope of the Papers: Rethinking the (Un)documented in African American Literature</em></td>
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<td>October 26</td>
<td>Harriet Beecher Stowe, <em>Dred, A Tale of the Dismal Swamp</em> pp. 7-270</td>
<td>Robert S. Levine, Introduction</td>
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<td>November 9</td>
<td>Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno”</td>
<td>Brenna M. Casey, “Peering Across the Plaza”: The Shrouded Women of “Benito Cereno” Elizabeth Duquette, The Fog of Tyranny in “Benito Cereno”</td>
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<td>December 7, 7:00-10:00</td>
<td>Presentation of final papers</td>
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