Though the slave narrative genre reached its peak in the mid-19th century, this mode of autobiography has a history that stretches from the 1700s to the present across numerous oceans, islands, and continents. We will take seriously the historical origins of the slave narrative, while also examining the ways in which it isn’t just autobiography—how its autobiographical function is often inseparable from its work to protest, resist, and evade oppressive structures. This course also considers how the generic conventions of the slave narrative operate in fiction, speculative fiction (including neo-slave narratives), film, and legal testimony or confession. In studying the slave narrative as a genre, we will address the material conditions that influence this form of Black authorship, and we will critique the ways that this genre has historically been appropriated, mediated, circulated, and studied.

**COURSE TEXTS**

These three books are the only books you are required to purchase. They have been ordered via The Duck Store, but you are free to buy different editions or use other vendors; if you buy Kindred from somewhere other than The Duck Store, make sure you are getting the graphic novel version. You also *may* buy Classic Slave Narratives (also available through The Duck Store) - you will be required to have a copy of at least Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, but you may prefer a different edition, or you may opt to read the free version via docsouth.unc.edu. All other required readings will be posted to our course Canvas page. You will also be required to watch two films that are available on major streaming platforms.

Please note: There are a number of readings that will be provided to you via Canvas. If you have a hard time reading on screens or prefer hard copies, you are welcome to print those readings or buy your own copies from any vendor.

**REQUIRED TECH**

- Computer/Tablet
- Internet Access for Zoom and Canvas
- Suggested: Headphones

**ACCESSIBILITY**

The Accessible Education Center (uoaec@uoregon.edu) handles requests for accommodation of disabilities. I and the University want this class to be an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me as soon as possible if aspects of the course are creating barriers to your participation or if you need to share an accommodations letter from the AEC.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Through reading, written assignments, and in-class discussion, this class will help you:

1. Arrive at a deeper historical, legal, cultural, and literary understanding of Black writing through a deep study of the slave narrative genre and how it has evolved over hundreds of years
2. Refine, through written expression, close reading skills, critical thinking, and critical argumentation skills
3. Practice forms of scholarly engagement in both archival research methodologies and peer engagement and interaction
4. Identify other places in which to use the skills and the knowledge you acquire from the class—other coursework, daily life, personal reading, etc.

**STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

- Take handwritten notes during Zoom sessions and while you read for class
- Take care of your emotional, physical, and mental health
- Seek help with concepts during class meetings, in office hours, or via Canvas
- Put important dates in your calendar and keep track of your assignments & submissions

**BEST WAY TO REACH ME**

*Email:* fbarter@uoregon.edu or email through Canvas (allow 48 hrs for responses)

*Office Hours:* M: 2:30-4:30pm, Th: 12:00-1:00pm

Sign up at https://dr-barter.youcanbook.me/
**COURSE FORMAT**

We will have class meetings during the scheduled time as live, synchronous Zoom sessions. Our class meetings will be a combination of large group discussion, small group activities, and structured "practice time" and "writing time" for upcoming assignments. Zoom sessions will not be recorded. If you miss a class, please arrange to get notes from a classmate and/or consult the class notes on Canvas.

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES**

**ASSIGNMENT 1**

**CANVAS POSTS (6 TOTAL)**

In lieu of reading quizzes, we will use the Canvas Discussion Board to practice close reading skills before class most days in Weeks 2-9. Posts are due by 9:30am the day of class. You must complete 6 posts in total.

**ASSIGNMENT 2**

**GROUP PRESENTATION**

In a small group, you will offer a brief in-class presentation on a narrative from the North American Slave Narratives collection on Documenting the American South.

**ASSIGNMENT 3**

**NOTE-TAKING**

Once this term, you will serve as a designated note-taker. You will take notes during class and turn those notes into a detailed infographic-style document to share with the full class.

**ASSIGNMENT 4**

**ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

You will conduct research and create a detailed research log using Accessible Archives, a digital database of 19th-century African American newspapers.

**ASSIGNMENT 5**

**FINAL PROJECT**

Your final project will be on a topic and in a format of your choice but should be the equivalent of a 6-8 page paper and should be clearly connected to our course materials. You will also submit a separately graded proposal/outline.

**PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE**

Your regular participation is a required component of your enrollment in this course. Your participation grade will be based on: 1) verbal participation (on mic or in chat); 2) active listening; 3) encouragement of peers; 4) citing course texts; and 5) using relevant terminology. Your regular attendance is expected. You will not be able to pass the course unless you attend at least 75% of our synchronous class sessions (I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences).

Full assignment details and rubrics are on Canvas.

**GRADING**

**AVERAGE GRADE**

- 95-100% A
- 90-94% A-
- 87-89% B+
- 85-86% B
- 80-82% B-
- 77-79% C+
- 75-76% C
- 70-72% C-
- 67-69% D+
- 65-66% D
- 60-62% D-
- 0-59% F

**DUE DATES & EXTENSIONS**

Assignments are due by the date/time listed in the syllabus. I know that sometimes things happen that interfere with your ability to complete assignments. You have 7 days of "credit" to use at your discretion, no questions asked, to submit an assignment after it is due. To use your credit, simply email me to let me know that you're using x days of credit and how many days of credit remain. Otherwise, late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day that they are late; assignments will not be accepted more than one week past the due date except with prior permission in extreme circumstances. See Canvas for full details on the credit policy.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic dishonesty in any form undermines your integrity, mine, and that of this course. If you have particular questions or concerns about an issue of academic honesty, please contact me. I take very seriously our shared obligation to academic integrity, and all of your work in this class—including informal writing and annotations—should be entirely your own.

Check Canvas for more details and for extra credit opportunities/policies.
# Course Schedule

**An Asterisk (*) = A Canvas Post Is Available That Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Before Class</th>
<th>After Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mar. 29 | Week 1 - Introductions | Before class: Read syllabus and Canvas site | After class:  
- Sign up for note-taking date  
- Make sure you’ve added all important dates to your calendar! |
| Mar. 31 | Week 1 - The Slave Narrative as Genre, in Context | Before class:  
- Read Lindon Barrett, "African American Slave Narratives: Literacy, the Body, Authority (on Canvas)  
- Read "Writing About Slavery" (community-sourced by Gabrielle Foreman) (on Canvas) | |
| Apr. 5 | Week 2 - Studying the Genre* | Before class:  
- Read Chapters 1-12 of Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* | |
| Apr. 7 | Week 2 - Small Group Roundtable | Before class:  
- Work with your group to finalize your presentation for our roundtable on 19th-century freedom narratives. | |
| Apr. 12 | Week 3 - Loopholes of Retreat* | Before class:  
- Read Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves" (link on Canvas)  
- Read Chapters 13-15 of Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* | |
| Apr. 14 | Week 3 - Loopholes of Retreat* | Before class:  
- Read Chapters 16-27 of Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* | |
| Apr. 19 | Week 4 - Loopholes of Retreat* | Before class:  
- Read Chapters 28-41 of Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* | |
| Apr. 21 | Week 4 - Transitioning to Jim Crow* | Before class:  
- Read "The History of the Carolina Twins" (link on Canvas)  
- Read "The WPA and the Slave Narrative Collection" and "The Limitations of the Slave Narrative Collection" (links on Canvas) | |

As noted above, all class meetings will take place over Zoom.

Zoom meetings will NOT be recorded.

Make sure you mark the date you’re signed up for note-taking!

To Do: Complete your research log - it’s due April 30!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Before Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Apr. 26 | Week 5 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read first 1/2 of Octavia Butler, *Kindred* | |
| Apr. 28 | Week 5 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read second 1/2 of Octavia Butler, *Kindred* | |
| May 3 | Week 6 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read first 1/4 of Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* | |
| May 5 | Week 6 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read second 1/4 of Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* | |
| May 10 | Week 7 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read third 1/4 of Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* | |
| May 12 | Week 7 - Reimagining Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read final 1/4 of Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* | |
| May 17 | Week 8 - Afrofuturism and Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read first 1/2 of Rivers Solomon, *The Deep* | |
| May 19 | Week 8 - Afrofuturism and Freedom Narratives* | Before class:  
- Read second 1/2 of Rivers Solomon, *The Deep* | |

Start thinking about your final project - your proposal is due May 21!
COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Start working on your final project!

MAY 24
Week 9 - Experimenting with Time and Form*
Before class:
- Watch Antebellum (dir. Gerard Bush and Christopher Renz) (available on Amazon Video)

MAY 26
Week 9 - Experimenting with Context*
Before class:
- Watch Get Out (dir. Jordan Peele)

MAY 31
NO CLASS - MEMORIAL DAY

JUN. 2
Week 10 - Reflections and Wrap-up
Before class:
- No reading assignment
- Complete your participation self-evaluation before class

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

CANVAS POSTS
FLEXIBLE! You are responsible for keeping track, but you must submit 6 total. If you submit more than 6, I will only count your 6 highest scores. Don’t leave them all until the last minute - it is to your benefit to get feedback early.

GROUP PRESENTATION
In-class roundtable on April 7

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH PROJECT
Due by 8:00pm on Friday, April 30

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL
Due by 8:00pm on Friday, May 21

FINAL PROJECT
Due by 11:59pm on Monday, June 7

***NOTE: In order for me to submit grades on time, if you plan to use any of the days in your "credit account," know that all finals and other outstanding assignments MUST be submitted to me by 11:59pm on JUNE 10. NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE, FOR ANY REASON***

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

I am so excited to read and learn with you this term!

***Final project: Due June 7 at 11:59pm***

Check Canvas site for assignment details and rubric