

# HIST 5301: Historiography of Slavery in the United States

**PROFESSOR:** DR. WILLIAMSON

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**Office Hours:**

**Location:** Lawrence Hall (LH) 211

<b>Mondays</b>	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>
<b>Tuesdays</b>	12:30-1:45pm
<b>Wednesdays</b>	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>
<b>Thursdays</b>	12:30-1:45pm
<b>Fridays</b>	<i>Available by appointment</i>

## I. Introduction

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This course is a graduate historiography course that examines the historical works in the field of southern slavery in Anglo-America and the United States to 1877. This course facilitates major texts in the field and demonstrates how contemporary views have shaped historians' interpretations of this inherently violent and disruptive system as a fundamental part of the American past. As the semester progresses, we will examine more recent scholarship and focus on topics of interest to historians currently working in the field. Finally, we will look closely at the forces that led to the collapse of American slavery and the lasting effects that slavery had on the South and American society. As scholars, we will engage with questions surrounding basic human rights and political discourse, racial theory, economic and humanist aspects of chattel principle, the proslavery argument, humans as property under the law, the powers of the executive branch, The Lost Cause argument, and who "won" the Civil War.

Each week, you will be expected to participate in discussion in detail over the assigned readings for the week. Through this analysis, we will examine the content presented by the authors as well as the evidence upon which they base their arguments. We will also consider how each work fits within ongoing historical debates about the topic and/or theme of the readings.

### *Course Content Disclaimer*

At times this semester we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

## II. Required Course Materials—available as e-books through the SRSU library.

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### • Required Readings

- Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998).
- Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- S. Boritt Gabor and Scott Hancock, *Slavery, Resistance, Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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- Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
- Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (any edition).
- **Recommended:** Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- **Technology:** This is an online course, which means that you **must** have regular, reliable access to a working computer with internet. Students are responsible for checking email and the Blackboard site on a regular basis to access course materials and information.
- **Accountability:** Think of this course like joining a gym—you get out what you put in. As your professor, it is my responsibility to make sure you know how to use the equipment and to assist you when you need a spotter. Meanwhile, it is your responsibility to engage with the course materials, put in the work, and complete the assignments by the designated due dates. The grade you earn is determined by the quality of your effort, not necessarily the time you spend.

### THE 5 C'S OF HISTORICAL REASONING

1. **Change and Continuity:** Historians are required to debate what has changed over time and what has remained the same. Change can be a dramatic pivot or a slow shift.
2. **Causation:** Historians debate the causes of historical events. It would be more accurate to say that we often discuss about causality, sometimes passionately. Few events have only one cause (monocausal), so we debate with one another about which cause should be considered the most important.
3. **Context:** Historians insist that the past must be understood on its own terms. Any historical event, person, idea must be placed in the context of its historical era to be interpreted. The historian's goal is to discover how people in the past understood their own lives, which is often quite different from how we may react to their situation.
4. **Contingency and Connections:** Historians are aware that events happen for a variety of reasons, which are often interconnected. Change one factor, and the event might not have happened at all. This idea helps us to remember that historical events are not inevitable.
5. **Complexity:** Historical reasoning is not about memorizing dates and names. It is about making sense of the messiness of the past, in all its complexity. That often means recognizing that different historical groups experienced events in different ways.

### Section III. Grades

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A 90-100%    B 80-89%    C 70-79%    D 60-69%    F 59% or lower

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- **Discussion Participation** (10%): Students are expected to read the assigned materials before the start of class and contribute to discussions of course materials on the course Blackboard page. Participation is required of each individual student.
- **Six Book Reviews** (10% each, 60% of the semester grade): Students will write and submit précis, or scholarly reviews, over assigned reading.
  - Précis should be 2-3 full, double-spaced page, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins on all sides. For examples of a scholarly review (otherwise known as a précis), see: [www.h-net.org/reviews/](http://www.h-net.org/reviews/)
  - A précis should summarize a given book or article's argument, scope, and methodology as clearly and concisely as possible. Some reviews may require students to write a comparative analysis of multiple readings. Your review should evaluate the effectiveness of the book or article(s) as well as its limitations.
  - The purpose of a scholarly review is to both summarize the books or article's contents and, more importantly, to critically evaluate its contribution to knowledge, both factual and historiographical. The reviewer's priority is to critically appraise each book; to analyze it on its own terms, to discuss what it did and did not do, what sort of evidence the author used and how well, what its strengths and weaknesses were. Be sure to point out the thesis of each book and whether the author presented a supported a persuasive argument. Try to ascertain what kind of historiographical context (if any) the author provided—in other words, how did the author's work fit into a broader body of historical literature? If the author did not do this, hold them to task. For examples of scholarly book reviews, see: [www.h-net.org/reviews](http://www.h-net.org/reviews)
- **Final Paper** (30%): To measure the success of student acquisition of these mandated skills, one assignment during the semester will require critical analysis of an historical event in nineteenth-century American history. Each student will utilize a selection of primary and/or secondary sources to interpret and evaluate, place in historical context, and utilize to construct an analytical essay. The essay will require that students think critically about the sources, examine how individual choices and decisions influenced the course of history, and consider the ways in which individuals engage with regional, national, and/or global communities.
  - You must consult with your professor about potential research topics prior to making your final decision. You may choose *any* subject relevant to the theme and chronology of this course. This essay must have a strong, coherent thesis statement, which will be supported by a minimum 10 scholarly sources (books, articles). These may include works from the required, supplemental, and/or recommended reading lists.
  - Essays must be typed or word-processed in 12-point fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri), double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.
  - All papers should be a minimum 10-15 full pages (not including required cover page and works cited pages) and will be evaluated on style and content; therefore, they should be well-written and free of grammatical errors. Papers that are not formatted according to guidelines and requirements will be dropped one letter grade automatically.
  - Work will be evaluated on the following:

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- strength of your historical arguments and content
- how well you have used historical evidence to support your argument(s)—the 5C's of Historical Reasoning (see above)
- composition (i.e., spelling, grammar, sentence structure)
- form (i.e., correct citation, *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Turabian* format)

### Section IV. Classroom & Teaching Philosophy

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#### *A Climate of Mutual Respect*

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose, and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

#### *Student Support*

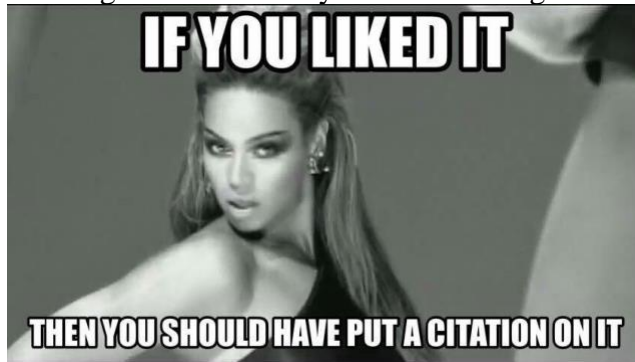
I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

### Section V. Policies

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#### *Grading*

While I am always happy to discuss ways to improve your writing and performance on exams, I am not in the business of haggling over grades. Grades in this class are the product of careful deliberation and are not negotiable. If you find that the instructor—who is human—made a mathematical error, please bring the matter to my attention during office hours.



#### *Academic Integrity*

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the

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temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Please read the complete policy at

[http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student\\_conduct\\_discipline.pdf](http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf)

### Section VI. University Programs and Services

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- **SRSU Library Services:** The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or by phone (432-837-8123).
- **Academic Success Center:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Wildenthal Library offers tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better notetaking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with writing and test taking strategies.
- **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE):** The University offers tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better notetaking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with writing and test taking strategies through ACE.  
Location: FH 214. Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/academic-center-excellence>
- **Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):** Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services.

**Students seeking accessibility services must contact:**

Counseling and Accessibility Services

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Telephone: 432-837-8691

Mailing Address: P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832

- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](http://Timelycare/SRSU). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Hours: M-F 8am-12pm and 1pm-5pm

## **HIST 5301: Historiography of Slavery in the United States**

Phone: (432) 837-8203

Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2408/counseling-accessibility-services>

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### Section VII. Spring 2024 Schedule

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**Week 1 (Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>-Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup>):** Introductions, in Bb Discussion Board

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**Week 2 (January 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>):**

Review: “Historiography | Definition, Importance, & Examples”

Here: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/historiography-definition-importance-examples.html#:~:text=First%2C%20it%20helps%20us%20understand,the%20recording%20of%20history%20itself.>

Read: “From Silent Object to Vocal Subject” Here:

<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aujh>

**Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>**

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**Week 3 (January 29<sup>th</sup>-February 4<sup>th</sup>):**

Read: Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>**

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**Week 4 (February 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>)**

Read: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998).

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**Week 5 (February 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>):**

Read: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

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**Week 6 (February 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>):**

Read: Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**

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### Week 7 (February 26<sup>th</sup>-March 3<sup>rd</sup>):

Read: S. Boritt Gabor and Scott Hancock, *Slavery, Resistance, Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

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### Week 8 (March 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>) Final Paper Topic Selection

Your research statement should explain your 1) topic overview, 2) methods (approach, what types of sources will you use), 3) tentative thesis/argument, questions you intend to answer 4) what you think you will find, and 5) a tentative source list.

**1-2-page research statement/proposal, due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

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### Week 9 (March 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>): Spring Break

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### Week 10 (March 18<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>):

Read: Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

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### Week 11 (March 25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>):

Read: Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

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### Week 12 (April 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>):

Read: Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (any edition).

**Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

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### Week 13 (April 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>): Research & Writing Days

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### Week 14 (April 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>): Research & Writing Days

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**Week 15 (April 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>):** Research & Writing Days

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**Week 16 (April 29<sup>th</sup>-May 5<sup>th</sup>): FINAL HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS**  
**DUE BY 11:59PM Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

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