Boodry
Slavery and Capitalism Syllabus

**History 457/557: Slavery in US**
Fall 2015
University of Oregon
Day(s) Mondays and Wednesdays
Time: 2:00-3:20
Location: Anstett Hall 195

Kathryn Boodry
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Office Hours: Mondays 11:00-1:00 and by appointment.
Office: 323 McKenzie Hall

**Slavery and Capitalism: The Economic World of Early America**

**Description:**
This course is a survey of American economic history from Colonization through Reconstruction, and traces the emergence of slavery and capitalism as the dominant modes of production and social organization in the United States. In the 150 years since the Civil War, generations of Americans have dismissed slavery as a southern anomaly, restricted to the periphery of the nation, and ultimately a labor regime ineluctably destined to disintegration in the face of the advancement of capitalism and democracy. In this course we will question whether or not this is in fact the case, and ask if perhaps slavery was integral to capitalist economic development. We will explore this possibility by examining the histories of slavery and capitalism while considering the power relations that shaped economic life in early America. Additionally, this course will consider various approaches to the economic past, using tools from several disciplines and applying the insights of social and cultural history to ask how notions of economic “rationality” and “morality” have changed. Through the study of people in the past and how they defined the legitimacy of self-interest, the boundaries of what can be bought or sold, and concepts of economic justice, we can question the standard tropes of American history and memory. In the process we may develop insights regarding contemporary issues like globalization, environmental sustainability, and wealth inequality.

**Required texts:**

The following texts have been ordered from the Duck Store and placed on course reserve:

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*

**Some optional texts:**

Kenneth Pomeranz *The Great Divergence*
Assignments
Two in class Examinations, consisting of an initial in class essay and a midterm examination.
Two Essays. Essay 1 will be five to seven pages and be confined to a consideration of course readings and discussion. Essay 2 will be a longer research type paper of 10-12 pages.
Assignment sheets will be distributed for each paper in class. The exams will be a mixture of short response and essay questions. A discussion of grading policies for the course can be found at the end of the syllabus.

Class Participation
Regular attendance coupled with consistent and engaged participation in the course is expected. Please note, attendance is required in this course. Grading policies are discussed in greater detail at the end of this document.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Response to Readings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In class essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Course Outline:

Week One:
Introduction


Week Two
Monday, 11 January 2016 class cancelled.

The Early Modern Atlantic Economy


Graduate Students:


Week Three:

The Atlantic slave trade

The Creation of Plantation Societies

- Eric Williams *Capitalism and Slavery*, chs. 2-3, 5 Pp. 30-85, 98-108


**In Class Essay**

*Graduate Students:*


**Week Four:**

Cotton, Industrialization and The Ties That Bind


*Graduate Students:*


**Week Five**

Slavery and Capitalism American Style: The Big Picture


**Graduate Students:**


**Essay 1 Due**

**Week Six:**

The Experience of Enslavement

- Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*, Ch. 2,3,5,6.

**Primary Sources:**


**Graduate Students:** Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* Ch 1, 3, 5.

**Midterm Examination**

**Week 7:** 15 October 2013, 17 October 2013

“Mastery”
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- Frank Byrne, *Becoming Bourgeois: Merchant Culture in The South 1820-1865*, Ch. 2,3.

Graduate Students: Drew Faust, *James Henry Hammond and The Old South*

Primary Sources:

- “J.H. Hammond Instructs His Overseer, 1840-1850.”
- George Fitzhugh, “Cannibals All! Or Slaves Without Masters,” (1854).

Week 8: 22 October 2013, 24 October 2013

Slavery and the National Economy


Week 9:

What to Make of the Antebellum South?


Week 10: 26 November 2013, 28 November 2013

The Long Shadow of Slavery
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**Graduate Students:**
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

**Final Papers due 14 March 2016**
**Grading Policies**

**Thesis, Papers, and Exams**

An **A** or **A-** thesis, paper, or exam is one that is good enough to be read aloud in a class. It is clearly written and well-organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples, and, in the case of a research paper, is built on a critical reading of primary material.

A **B+** or **B** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates many aspects of A-level work but falls short of it in either the organization and clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category are solid works containing flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A **B-** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer's independent argument because of weaknesses in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence.

A **C+, C, or C-** thesis, paper, or exam offers little more than a mere a summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between **A** and **C-** are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the **D** or **F** categories demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A **D** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student's command of course or research material.

An **F** thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates no competence in the course or research materials. It indicates a student's neglect or lack of effort in the course.

Additionally, please note that assignments are not optional. All work must be completed in order to earn a passing grade.

**Participation**
A student who receives an A for participation in discussion in precepts or seminars typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind. An 'A' discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

A student who receives a B for participation in discussion in precepts or seminars typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A 'B' discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

A student who receives a C for discussion in precepts or seminars attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. A student who fails to attend precepts or seminars regularly and adequately prepared for discussion risks the grade of D or F.

**Attendance:** Attendance in class is required. More than four absences over the course of the semester will result in a failing grade in the course.

**Academic Honesty:**
All work submitted for this course must be your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in course failure, and in some cases expulsion from school. When drawing from the thought, work and research of others it is important that you use proper citations, and give credit where it is due. If you have any questions about this ask me, or ask a writing tutor at the Writing Center on campus.
Course Level Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- evaluate arguments and evidence effectively
- make and defend intellectual hypotheses and employ historical evidence to do so
- Write a historical essay employing primary source material to support their arguments
- Demonstrate familiarity with historical literature regarding slavery, capitalism and industrialization, including being able to identify key arguments and debates within the field.