HIST157b
THE SECRET LIVES OF THE ENSLAVED:
MARGINALIZED VOICES AND THE WRITING OF HISTORY
Brandeis University
Professor Abigail Cooper   abcooper@brandeis.edu

Course Description:
In this course you will develop strategies to recover marginalized voices in the historical record. You will learn how to read traditional historical sources against the grain. You will experiment with and develop writing techniques to integrate marginalized voices into a cohesive historical argument. The materials I have posted on LATTE for this course focus on the experiences of enslaved peoples in the African Diaspora. These will serve us well as we reflect upon and innovate ways to read an uneven historical record. Writing assignments open up space for you to investigate and recover any marginalized voices from any place and time, so long as you discuss your intentions with the instructor and employ strategies explored in the course.

***This is a Digital History Intensive course. Please bring a laptop or tablet to every class. There will be plenty of times when we close the lids and engage in discussion sans screens. Even so, we will also be exploring and experimenting with digital resources in both planned and improvised ways. Laptops are available for rental at the library.***

Requirements:
- **Readings, Writings, and Collaborative Discussion:** This is a course designed to get you to think about how we write marginalized voices into history, and it tasks you with doing that work. We cannot discern the secret lives of marginalized people without your full, committed participation. Materials for this course are collected and posted on LATTE. This means reading the assigned work, thinking about it, and preparing those thoughts for discussion and workshopping with your peers.
- In-class Projects: Each week, we will do collaborative research and writing work, including database and archive exploration, in-class source analysis, discussion on the readings, exchanges on methods of doing history and addressing silences, and creative writing employing grounded historical imagination.
- Weekly Writings: On LATTE, forums are posted for each week. The prompt will vary from week to week. Consult the LATTE page for instructions.

**Project Deadlines:**
- Paper One (~4-6 pages): MAR 25
- Paper Two (~10-12 pages): MAY 1

Evaluation Method:
- Participation & In-Class Projects — 25%
- Weekly Writings — 25%
- Paper One — 25%
- Paper Two — 25%
Academic Accommodations: If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis and wish to request a reasonable accommodation for this class, please see me immediately.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Violations of University policies on academic integrity can result in failure in the course or on the assignment, or in suspension or dismissal from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification. Please read the University’s policies on academic integrity at http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai. I will refer suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct.

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Course Outline (1/16/2019: First class – go over syllabus, talk about course, meet each other)

WEEK ONE: 1/22/2019 & 1/23/2019 – SOCIAL HISTORY LAB

WEEK TWO: 1/28/2019 & 1/30/2019 – AFRICA & THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

WEEK THREE: 2/04/2019 & 2/06/2019 – LANGUAGE, SOUND, SONG


WEEK SIX: 3/04/2019 & 3/06/2019 – PROPERTY & KIN


WEEK EIGHT: 3/18/2019 & 3/20/2019 – FAMILY FORMATIONS


191HIST-157B-1 : The Secret Lives of the Enslaved: Marginalized Voices and the Writing of History

My courses

Home

191HIST-157B-1 : The Secret Lives of the Enslaved: Marginalized Voices and the Writing of History
Spring 2019

- UPLOAD YOUR FINAL ASSIGNMENT HERE & BRING HARD COPY TO CLASS -- DUE MAY 1st
- UPLOAD YOUR 1st PAPERS HERE
- WritingGoodHistoryPaper - Hamilton College
- HIST157b FIRST PAPER ASSIGNMENT 2019
- Opportunities posted by Prof. Cooper
- 10 QUESTIONS WITH PROF. COOPER (Article from 2013)
- RECOMMENDED MATERIAL SHARED BY PEERS

Please post any relevant news item, article, interview, event, opportunity, or other information here in this forum for your HIST157b peers.

- AAAS50 VIDEO
Professor Cooper's Shared Resources
- WPA interviews megadoc
- Missionary-Teacher Accounts megadoc
- Zora Neale Hurston megadoc
- DocSouth Enslaved and Freedpeople's published narratives megadoc
- Freedmen and Southern Society Project federal records on emancipation megadoc

Slave Testimonies (Blassingame ed.)

SOCIAL HISTORY LAB

- HIST157b Library Guide
- Documenting the American South
- 1/22 Slavery & Anti-Slavery Primary Source Activity
AFRICA and the MIDDLE PASSAGE Jan. 28 & 30

- Saidiya Hartman, Lose Your Mother (Ch8) reading due Jan 28
- Reading Reflection - Saidiya Hartman, Lose Your Mother
In your own words, reflect upon and respond to Saidiya Hartman’s “Lose Your Mother.” Make it as long or as short as you need it to be.

The most universal definition of the slave is a stranger. Torn from kin and community, exiled from one’s country, dishonored and violated, the slave defines the position of the outsider. She is the perpetual outcast, the coerced migrant, the foreigner, the shamefaced child in the lineage. Contrary to popular belief, Africans did not sell their brothers and sisters into slavery. They sold strangers: those outside the web of kin and clan relationships, nonmembers of the polity, foreigners and barbarians at the outskirts of their country, and lawbreakers expelled from society. In order to betray your race, you had first to imagine yourself as one. The language of race developed in the modern period and in the context of the slave trade.

Sibell Speaks

ASSIGNMENT: SOUNDS AS SOURCES

PLEASE SHARE AN AUDIO CLIP FROM MARGINALIZED VOICE(S)

Write a brief description to give context to the clip (a paragraph or less). Upload the audio clip in the Attachment area.

LEVINE READING RESPONSE

In about 100 to 300 words, reflect and respond to the week’s assigned reading. (You have a choice this week. Either a reading response or share a sound.)

Red Selections Sacred Song Levine Black Culture Reading
UNTHINKABLE HISTORIES Feb. 11th & 13th

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing Past, preface + "Unthinkable History"

ASSIGNMENT: Write a Long-Form Epigraph in the Style of Michel-Rolph Trouillot

Put your Epigraph here if you only want Prof. Cooper to read it
I encourage you to share your epigraph with the fellow students (in ASSIGNMENT forum directly above), but I also want to create this space to write only for me as your audience and I will hold sacred that privilege.

Online Archives and Databases Feb. 25th & 27th

FEB. 27th: A class of small group writing discussion meetings

Please sign up for one small group meeting on Wed., Feb. 27th or Wed., Mar. 6th (not both). Each Wednesday has the following options: Group 1: 3:30-3:57, Group 2: 3:57-4:24, or Group 3: 4:24-4:50. These small group meetings will be opportunities to talk about writing. Each group should have three people in it.

- PAPER ONE IDEAS (for whole class to see) -due Feb. 26
- 1st PAPER IDEAS (for only Prof. Cooper’s eyes) -due Feb. 26
- DATABASES, COLLECTIONS, & SOURCES INTERACTIVE
- Upload your research trail here

(thumbnail sketch of American slavery timeline I went through in for Brandon in small group meeting)

PROPERTY & KIN Mar. 4th & 6th

Penningroth, Claims of Kinfolk (skim intro & Ch1, read Ch2)

Get an idea of how Penningroth is doing his history from the introduction, try to get the gist of what he is pointing out about property and kin in West Africa in Chapter 1, and then read Chapter 2 start to finish.

Claim of Jane Holmes

MAR. 6th: A class of small group writing discussion meetings

Please sign up for one small group meeting on Wed., Feb. 27th or Wed., Mar. 6th (not both). Each Wednesday has the following options: Group 1: 3:30-3:57, Group 2: 3:57-4:24, or Group 3: 4:24-4:50. These small group meetings will be opportunities to talk about writing. Each group should have three people in it.
MATERIAL CULTURE WEEK Mar. 11th & 13th

- Mid-course Feedback - Two Question
- Craft in America (PBS): SWEETGRASS BASKETS (from 14:25 to 19:35)
- Craft in America: MISSISSIPPI CULTURAL CROSSROADS (from ~3:00 to ~13:00)
- Memorial ACTe Museum, Guadalupe (from 2:15 to 4:30)
- Gee’s Bend Op-Doc from NYTimes (14:25 min. long)
- "Lest We Forget" Online Exhibit, Schomberg Center NY Public Library

FAMILY FORMATIONS Mar. 18th & 20th

In 1965, Senator Daniel Moynihan published a highly controversial report on the black family in America. He was trying to enact progressive labor reform in Congress, and in doing so, he drew on the argument of sociologists who said that slavery's legacy had led to largely female, single-parent households disproportionately below the poverty line. The public debate heightened quickly and revolved around the question—"Was black matriarchy 'pathological' and was slavery responsible?" Historians had a strong response, and Prof. Cooper will give a lecture on that topic. In the readings this week we grapple with questions centered on family formations, looking to how a society has historically structured its resources according to ideas of family and how different communities understood their families within larger, often inflexible institutionalized systems.

Primary Sources:
Letters from freed people, in Family and Freedom: A Documentary History of African-American Kinship – selections

"Moynihan Report Summary"
Memory & History (Bridget & Sarah Beth) Mar 25 & 27

- For Everyone: Oral History: An Appreciation
- Estes "Ask and Tell"
- Shahidian "To Be Recorded in History"
- Mercier "Probing Memory and Experience"
- Diverse Oral Histories Forum
- Poor People’s Campaign Oral Histories
- Exploring HistoryMakers Archive Forum

ONE-ON-ONE WRITING DISCUSSIONS April 1st & 3rd

- Individual Meetings (10 min. each)

  Sign up for ONE individual meeting with Professor Cooper on either Monday or Wednesday.

- POST YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR YOUR FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL HERE (by Sunday 9pm)
DISCUSSIONS & STRATEGIES FOR READING AND WRITING MARGINS April 8th & 10th

This week we will talk together about your final projects and strategies to make them successful. We will look back to reinforce what we have worked on together since the beginning of the course, and Prof. Cooper will clear up confusions, lingering questions, and offer impromptu suggestions to address inquiries in a targeted way. Prof. Cooper will also take the opportunity to engage primary sources from your projects to probe strategies for making historical analyses. You ALL have substantial reading this week, but it is custom-designed as per our discussions on April 1st or 3rd.
BRANDON

Envision Block Experience

SOURCES:
- List: Name. Age. Dept. Price
- Advertisements: What seller is trying to say

QUESTIONS: How are marginalized voices?

- Memoirs of Fannie Earl and others
- WPA interviews
- Solomon Laughter
- Charles Ball Memoir

Maxwell

C/C Choices
Liberation vs. Empowerment

* Bought vs. * ran away

Stephanie Camp's Closer to Freedom (2003)

Sharon Draper's Copper Sun - Hist. Fiction
- Page-turner

W/ white indentured servant
April 15th & 17th

YouTube: The Case for Reparations - The Atlantic

Forum for April 15 & 17 Discussions (~200 words, highlight a quote + pose a discussion question)

April 29th & May 1st

In the Wake by Christina Sharpe (introduction)