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Frederick Douglass
TH 2743
Spring 2015

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the moral, religious, and political thought of Frederick Douglass, and to the times in which he lived. Douglass was one of the most fascinating and influential figures of the nineteenth century. Remembered primarily as a dynamic abolitionist lecturer and candid editor, Douglass was also an important thinker. He was among the nineteenth century's foremost advocates for social, racial and gender equality. Douglass is also among the first generation of black thinkers to combine the disparate elements of Protestantism, Black Nationalism, moral and political abolitionism, and cultural assimilation into an effective program of social progress for African Americans. His ideas influenced generations of black scholars, most notably, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- Distinguish between the Colonial and Antebellum periods of slavery in America
- Reflect on Frederick Douglass's social location and early lessons in slavery
- Evaluate Frederick Douglass as a moral, religious, and political thinker
- Understand the meaning of "American Apocalypticism" and how it functioned in the years leading up to the Civil War
- Articulate the intellectual and social currents that informed Douglass's thought.

Requirements

1. Regular class attendance, reading and thoughtful participation
2. A collaborative presentation on one of the topics at the end of the syllabus. Students will present their research questions and findings to the class (approximately 20 minutes per group)
3. 2 short essays (3-5 pages each, double-spaced). These short essays are intended to help you prepare for your final essay. While you are free to choose the specific topic of these essays, each one should contain the following three elements: (1) description; (2) analysis/evaluation; and (3) theological/moral reflection. In the first of these essays, students will evaluate Douglass's self-realization in the context of social injustice (**due 3/13**). In the second essay, students will locate Douglass within the intellectual and social currents of his day and assess how his public voice is indebted to those currents (**due 4/17**).
4. A 10-12 page final essay on your research topic (**due 5/15**).

Grading

1. Attendance, reading, and participation: 20%
2. Oral presentation: 20%
3. 2 short essays: 30%
4. Final research paper: 30%

Required Books (in order of use)

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., editor, *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, 1994

Waldo Martin, *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984)

David Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989)

Use of Inclusive Language:

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance,

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty:

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Special Accommodations:

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session.

Schedule of Topics

February 6	Introduction to slavery: <i>Africans in America</i>
February 11	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 1-3
February 13	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 4-6
February 18	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 7-9
February 20	Introduction to Douglass: The Eastern Shore <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 10-11, Appendix
February 25	Douglass: Maternal influence and the early years in slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 4-9• <i>Life and Times</i>, 498-499
February 27	Douglass: Early religious lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 10-14
March 4	Douglass: The Covey experience and escape from slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 15-18
March 6	Douglass: the early Garrisonian years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 23-25
March 11	Douglass: the moral agenda
March 13	Paper #1 due Douglass: the religious agenda
March 18 & 20	Research and Study
March 25	Douglass: the <i>North Star</i> years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Life and Times</i>, Second Part, chapters 7-8

March 27	Douglass: the tumultuous 1850's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Life and Times</i>, Second Part, chapters 9-10 • David Blight, chapter 2
April 1	Douglass: Civil War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Life and Times</i>, Second Part, chapters 11-12
April 3	Easter Recess
April 8	“The Shape of a Life” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waldo Martin, chapters 2 & 4
April 10	“Social Reform” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waldo Martin, chapters 6 & 7
April 15	“National Identity and Culture” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waldo Martin, chapters 9 & 10
April 17	Paper #2 due “Douglass and the Secession Crisis” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Blight, chapters 1 & 3
April 22	“Douglass and the American Apocalypse” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Blight, chapters 4-6
April 24	“Douglass and the Meaning of Reconstruction” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Blight, chapters 8-10
April 29	Student presentations: groups 1 & 2
May 1	Student presentations: groups 3 & 4
May 6	Student presentations: groups 5 & 6
May 8	Student presentations: groups 7 & 8
May 15	Final Papers due by 9am

Student Presentation Topics (2 students per topic)

1. Republican Ideology and Slavery in Revolutionary America
2. The Antebellum Slavery Debate
3. Douglass Reads the Bible: Christianity and Slave Religion
4. Douglass, Moral Suasion and Political Abolition
5. Douglass, Black Nationalism and Racial Assimilation
6. Reconstruction in Postbellum America
7. The Civil War in American Memory
8. The Relevance of Douglass for Contemporary Public Discourse about Race