

# Frederick Douglass

TH 2743  
Fall 2018  
Schlegel 120

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## 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, students should be able to:

- Evaluate how the Bible functioned in the slavery debate
- Identify “American Apocalypticism” and assess how it functioned in the years preceding the Civil War
- Articulate the intellectual and social currents that informed Douglass’s thought.
- Evaluate Frederick Douglass as a moral, religious, and political thinker
- Reflect on the ways that autobiography and intellectual biography render a subject

## Requirements

1. Regular class attendance, reading and thoughtful participation
2. An oral presentation on your research project. Students will present their research questions and findings to the class (approximately 15 minutes per student)
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 and premise; (2) analysis and argument; and (3) theological/moral reflection and conclusion. In the first of these essays, paper #1, students will evaluate Douglass’s self-realization in the context of social injustice (**due 10/24**). In the second essay, paper #2, 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 11/16**).

4. A 10-12 page final essay on your research topic (**due 12/14**).

### **Grading**

1. Attendance and informed participation: 20%
2. Oral report on research (15 minutes): 10%
3. 2 short essays: 30%
4. Final research paper: 40%

### **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. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

### **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. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) 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 Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### Schedule of Topics

September 7	Introduction to slavery: <i>Africans in America</i>
September 12	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 1-3</li> </ul>
September 14	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 4-6</li> </ul>
September 19	Slavery: <i>Africans in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 7-9</li> </ul>
September 21	Introduction to Douglass: The Eastern Shore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Narrative</i>, chapters 10-11, Appendix</li> </ul>
September 26	Douglass: Maternal influence and the early years in slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 4-9</li> <li>• <i>Life and Times</i>, 498-499</li> </ul>
September 28	Douglass: Early religious lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My Bondage</i>, chapters 10-14</li> </ul>

- October 3 Douglass: The Covey experience and escape from slavery  
  - *My Bondage*, chapters 15-18
- October 5 Douglass: the early Garrisonian years  
  - *My Bondage*, chapters 23-25
- October 10 Douglass: the moral agenda
- October 12 **NO CLASS**
- October 17 & 19 **Research and Study**
- October 24 **Paper #1 due**  
 Douglass: the religious agenda
- October 26 Douglass: the *North Star* years  
  - *Life and Times*, Second Part, chapters 7-8
- October 31 Douglass: the tumultuous 1850's  
  - *Life and Times*, Second Part, chapters 9-10
  - David Blight, chapter 2
- November 2 Douglass: Civil War  
  - *Life and Times*, Second Part, chapters 11-12
- November 7 “The Shape of a Life”  
  - Waldo Martin, chapters 2 & 4
- November 9 “Social Reform”  
  - Waldo Martin, chapters 6 & 7
- November 14 “National Identity and Culture”  
  - Waldo Martin, chapters 9 & 10
- November 16 **Paper #2 due**  
 “Douglass and the Secession Crisis”  
  - David Blight, chapters 1 & 3
- November 21 & 23 **NO CLASS**
- November 28 “Douglass and the American Apocalypse”  
  - David Blight, chapters 4-6
- November 30 “Douglass and the Meaning of Reconstruction”  
  - David Blight, chapters 8-10

December 5            Student presentations on research

December 7            Student presentations on research

December 14           **Final Papers due by 5PM**

**Suggestions for Research:**

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. The tumultuous 1850s and the current political climate
6. Douglass, Black Nationalism and Racial Assimilation
7. Reconstruction in Postbellum America
8. The Civil War in American Memory