

Race and Slavery in Yale's Archives
HIST S173/AFAM S173/AMST S283??

Professor Edward Rugemer

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Office hours: by appointment, after class or on zoom.

Class meetings: Tu/Thu 9-12:15

Class Location: Beinecke Room 9

Course Description

This summer seminar will explore significance of race, slavery, and abolitionism in American History during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The course will also introduce students to archival methods for the study of history. Taught from a classroom in the world-famous Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, each class meeting will begin with a discussion of scholars' writings upon a particular theme of this history. Then we will turn to a selection of archival documents from one of Yale's repositories that sheds light upon this theme. Students will learn to transcribe and analyze historical documents, and then to make meaning of the past from their investigations. Topics include slavery and slaveholding, the transatlantic slave trade, the continental slave trade, the abolitionist movement, the Black experience in northern cities, Yale University, and the afterlives of racial slavery as evident in material culture.

Bibliography of Class Readings*

Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

David Blight, *Yale and Slavery: A History* (Yale Univ. Press, 2024)

Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (Yale Univ. Press, 2013)

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard, 1999)

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (Penguin, 2008)

Edward Rugemer, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World* (Harvard, 2018)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995).

Jean Fagin Yellin, ed., *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, (1857; Oxford, 1998)

*excerpts from these books will be made available to all students through Canvas, or Yale's Digital Library

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and Attendance

Attendance is required for each meeting of this seminar. All students must read the assigned works and arrive in class with questions, comments, and opinions about what you read and what you think. Everyone needs to participate in the conversation.

In-Class Writing

Each class will include two fifteen-minute writing assignments, one during the first part of the class related to the assigned readings, and another during the second part of the class focused

upon the archival documents under consideration. Writing can be done on a laptop, or on paper with a pencil, due to Beinecke Library protocols.

Presentations

Our final class meeting on June 26 will be devoted to student presentations, which are worth 30% of the final course grade. Each student will develop a fifteen-minute presentation based upon their own research in one or more archival collections related to their chosen theme, in addition to secondary reading. Each student will meet with Professor Rugemer by June 5, the end of the second week of class, to discuss their research/presentation topic. Students will organize presentations around a selection of primary documents from their research, which will tell a story about the archives, and about the history we can understand through these documents. Each presentation will be followed by approximately 10 minutes of questions and answers with the class. Please explore the following website for brief accounts of Yale's archival collections related to racial slavery and its abolition. <https://slavery.yale.edu/>

Grading

Final grades will be calculated based on the following formula:

Participation and Attendance	20%
In-class writings on assigned reading. (average of 7 writings)	25%
In-class writings on archival documents. (average of 7 writings)	25%
Final Presentation	30%

Course grades will be calculated on a four point scale: A 4, A- 3.67, B+ 3.33, B 3, B- 2.67, C+ 2.33, C 2, C- 1.67, D+ 1.33, D 1.00, D-.67, F 0; see <http://catalog.yale.edu/ycps/yale-college/honors/>

Accessibility

I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if an accommodation might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design. I am always happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. You are also welcome to contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations for this or other courses. I welcome feedback that will assist me in improving the experience for all students.

Academic Honesty

I take academic honesty very seriously. All written work must be the original creation of the student. Nothing may be copied from other publications, the internet, or another student's work. For Yale's policies on academic honesty see: <http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/academic-honesty> and follow the appropriate links.

AI Statement

There is no need to use AI for this course.

COURSE CALENDAR

- May 27** **Introduction to the Course**
 9-10:00 Personal introductions: students, Professor Rugemer, Beinecke teaching assistant
 What do historians do?
 What is archival research?
 Discussion Readings: Farge, *Allure*, 53-85.
- 10:10-11:00 How do we approach the history of race and slavery?
 Discussion Readings: Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 70-107.
- 11:10-12:15 Introduction to Archival Sources/ transcription exercise
- *Description of a Slave Ship*. London: James Phillips, Lombard-street, 1789.
 - James Wadsworth, *Plan of the city of New Haven taken in 1748*
 - *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1845)
 - Boswell Collection, Addition, Gen Mss 150, Series 1 Correspondence, Douglas of Garallan Family Subseries, Box 3.
 - Deeds for enslaved people, 1783-1848, Slavery Misc. MS 717, Sterling MS
- May 29** **Racial Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade during the 18th Century**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, 14-40; Rugemer, *Politics of Slave Law*, 171-212.
- 10:45 - 12:15 Archival Sources
- Austin & Laurens Account Book, 1750-1758, Gen MSS, vol. 184.
 - Letters to Richard Oswald, 1759-1784, OSB MSS 62
 - John Dalling, Observations on the present state of the island of Jamaica, 14 May 1774, Osborn c524
- June 3** **Racial Slavery in the Early American Republic**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 51-96.
- 10:45 - 12:15 Archival Sources
- See appendix.
- June 5** **An enslaver in 18th C Jamaica**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Rugemer, selections from forthcoming work
- 10:45 - 12:15 Archival Sources
 Boswell Collection, Addition, Gen Mss 150, Series 1 Correspondence, Douglas of Garallan Family Subseries, Box 3

- June 10** **The U.S. Continental Slave Trade**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 19-44.
- 10:45 – 12:15 Archival Sources
- See appendix.
- June 12** **An African American Pastor/Abolitionist in 19th C New Haven**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Robert Warner, “Amos Gerry Beman 1812-1874, Memoir on a Forgotten Leader,” *Journal of Negro History* 22.2 (April 1937): 200-221; James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, 51-74.
- 10:45 – 12:15 Archival Sources
- Amos Beman Scrapbooks, JWJ MSS 105 (4 books)
 - Selections from Beman’s library, from Slavery Pamphlets, all with his signature, (up to 8 selections, depending on class size; there are 25 to choose from)
- June 17** **History and Representation of the Transatlantic Slave Trade**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, chp. 10.
- 10:45 – 12:15 Archival Sources
- *Description of a Slave Ship*. London: James Phillips, George-yard, Lombard-street, 1789.
 - Feelings, Tom. *Middle Passage: white ships/black cargo*. New York: Dial Books, 1995.
 - sketches from Tom Feelings Artwork, James Weldon Johnson Collection.
- June 19** **Yale and Slavery**
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Blight, *Yale and Slavery*, 141-157.
- 10:45 – 12:15 Archival Sources
- See appendix.
- June 24** **The Material Culture of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin***
 9-10:30 Discussion Readings: Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, chps., 1-5, 7, 9, 14-20, 25-30, 40-4; Lott, *Love and Theft*, 211-234.
- 10:45 – 12:15 Archival Sources
- See appendix.
- June 26** **Student Presentations**

APPENDICES OF ARCHIVAL SOURCES

June 3 Racial Slavery in the Early American Republic

- Three inventories of enslaved people dated December 1826, from the estate of a Mr. Robinson, who died in June of that year. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 6, folder 100.
- Letter to Ezra Stiles and copies of related documents regarding the manumission of an enslaved person being illegally held in Jamaica, dated June-July 1791. Baldwin Family Papers (MS 55), box 212, folder 1.
- Four trial documents from Wilkes County, Georgia, regarding an inquisition against an enslaved woman named Jude who was accused of poisoning the son of her owner, dated January 1-2, 1785. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 6, folder 84.
- Legal agreement between Smith Booth and Aaron Negro, of Newtown, Connecticut, regarding freeing the latter after six years of good behavior, dated April 16, 1794. Caleb Baldwin Papers (MS 53), box 2, folder 15.
- Letter from A. Reid to Samuel Reid regarding the discovery of a slave insurrection, dated June 8, 1810. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 18, folder 138.
- Indenture between Joseph Street and Patsey, “a free negroe girl of color,” dated August 18, 1818. Street Family Papers (MS 946), box 3, folder 48.
- Petition to the New Orleans police jury from Marie Louise Bitain, a free woman of color, who had purchased the freedom of her daughter and grandson, but learned that if she should die, they would become enslaved again, dated April 14, 1832. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 7, folder 103.
- Letter to the editor of the Boston *Recorder* from Josiah Crosby on the topics of emancipation and the Colonization Society, dated October 26, 1833. Evarts Family Papers (MS 200), box 44, folder 16.
- Letter from Joseph Browne, a Black New Haven resident, to Roger Sherman Baldwin concerning the Whig leanings of Connecticut’s Black population, dated May 10, 1841. Baldwin Family Papers (MS 55), box 22, folder 253.
- Letter from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Isabella Porter Beecher expressing her indignation over the fugitive slave law, dated 1852. Beecher Family Papers (MS 71), box 1, folder 53.
- Contract with slave catchers regarding enslaved people who had escaped to the Choctaw Nation, dated June 12, 1854. Ephraim Bishop Papers (MS 585), box 1, folder 5.
- Letter from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Henry Ward Beecher regarding details of an abolitionist rally, dated January 13, 1854. Beechers Family Papers (MS 71), box 15, folder 576.
- Traveling papers for Jacob Ross, a manumitted “Negro man, late the property of John McClelland, Dec’d,” giving him leave to travel to Salem, Roanoke County, Virginia, to arrange the purchase of his wife’s freedom from her owner, dated September 29, 1855. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 7, folder 113.

June 10 The U.S. Continental Slave Trade

- J.D. Fondren & Bros., Richmond, Va., 1788-1863 (Beinecke, GEN MSS Vol 251)
- E.L. McGlashan Collection of Documents Concerning Slavery in the United States
- Winter, John G. *Cataloge of Negroes, mules, carts, wagons, &c., to be sold in Montgomery...* Montgomery: Advertiser and Gazette Job Office, 1854. Slavery Pamphlets 54.

- Five slave shipping manifests for ships departing New Haven for Savannah and Charleston, dated October 12-17, 1822. Bishop Family Papers (MS 839), box 1, folder 2.
- Agreement regarding the sale of Sam, an enslaved boy, in Kent, Litchfield County, Connecticut, dated April 16, 1792. Caleb Baldwin Papers (MS 53), box 2, folder 15).
- Bill of sale for an enslaved family, dated March 8, 1809. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 6, folder 95.
- Letter from Maria Perkins to Richard Perkins documenting the distress of an enslaved family being sold by their owner, dated October 8, 1852. U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 3, folder 47.

June 19 Yale and Slavery

- "Negroes for Hire," December 19, 1826, broadside advertising the availability of University). U.B. Phillips Papers (MS 397), box 47, folder 3.
- "Account of the Cost of New College, 1748-1752" from the Thomas Clapp, President of Yale College, Records (RU 130), box 1, folder 7, from the MSSA collections. https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/archival_objects/781473
- "Freedom! And the Public Faith!" – broadside regarding a public meeting to oppose "any alteration or repeal of the Missouri Compromise," to be held at Brewster's Hall in New Haven. Dated March 8, 185{4?}.

June 24 The Material Culture of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

- *The National Era* (June 5, 1851), Folio AN9 W3 N2137
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life among the Lowly*. Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1852. Za St78 852
- "The Game of Uncle Tom," card game. Rhode Island: V. S. W. Parkhurst, 1852.
 - Cary Playing Card Collection, USA 185 and Shirley 5552
- Aiken, George L. *Uncle Tom's Cabin: or, Life Among the Lowly, A Domestic Drama in Six Acts*. New York: S. French, [185-?].
- Emilio, M. "Little Eva: Song (Little Eva, Uncle Tom's Guardian Angel)." Boston: Jewett, c1852. Za St78 +G852E
- Eva and Topsy porcelain (1852) Art Storage 925
- Mrs. Keeley as Topsy. In the drama of "Slave life," or, "Uncle Tom 's Cabin" as performed at the Theatre Royal Adelphi. From life on stone by Louisa Corboux (1853) BrSides 2013 166
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon which the Story is Founded. Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work*. Boston, Jewett, 1853. Za St78 853k
- Playbill for Uncle Tom's Cabin, Boston Muesum, November 18, 1852. BrSides Folio 2014 202
- *Little Eva: the Flower of the South*. New York: Vincent L. Dill, [between 1853 and 1855?]. Shirley 1487 & 1488
- Stowe, *The Christian Slave. A drama founded on a portion of Uncle Tom's cabin. Dramatized by Harriet Beecher Stowe, expressly for the readings of Mrs. Mary E. Webb*. Za St78 855c

- “Coming: the Standard Combination in the Great Moral Drama, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.” [United States: s.n., between 1860 and 1865?] (Promotional booklet). Shirley 1489
- Tom and Eva porcelain (ca. 1860-1880) [Art Storage 940](#)
- Jay Rial's Ideal Uncle Tom's Cabin (illustration of hounds chasing Eliza, ca 1880s) Za St78 J852 6
- Broadside: Coming soon! Parsons & Pool’s original Uncle Tom’s cabin and Tennessee Jubilee Singers [between 1870 and 1889] BrSides Folio 2004 2
- Uncle Tom’s Cabin [toy cabin], [ca. 1897], 2013 461
- Marston’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin: 5th consecutive season.... [1907] **BrSides 2013 7**
- Ripley’s big Uncle Tom’s Cabin: the most realistic stage picture ever given... [ca. 1900] **BrSides Folio 2015 10**
- Duncan Sisters. “I Never had a Mammy.” New York: Irving Berlin, Inc., c1923. **JWJ Sheet Music V4 D912 Ia1**
- Bruckner doll, New York: E.I. Horsman Company? Between 1901 and 1924? **JWJ Za St78 901B**
- Before “Mandingo” and “Drum” there was “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (Blaxploitation-era film) **2014 Folio 277**