

SLAVERY AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Carroll College | THEO 289B | Spring 2019

Class: Tuesday and Thursday 2:15–3:30p | St. Charles Hall 044

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:30–3:30, Thursday 3:30–5:00

Meetings by appointment at other times.

Eric Daryl Meyer, Ph.D.

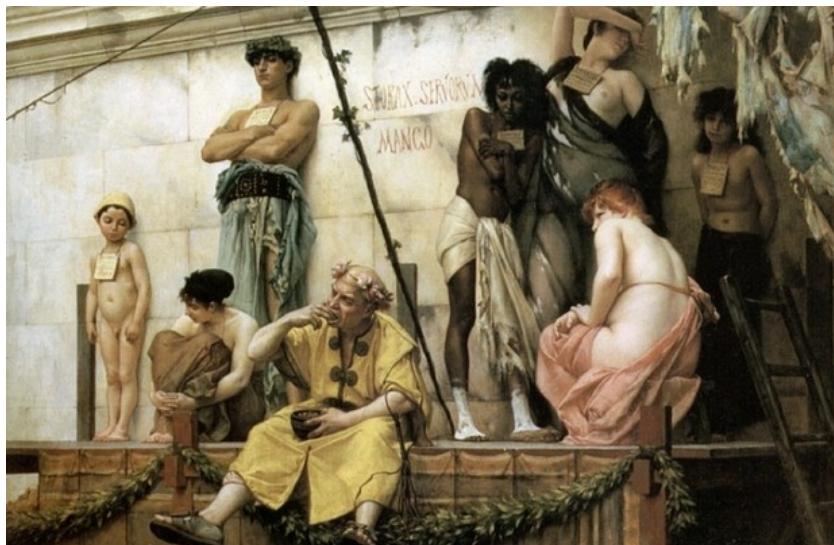
Office: St. Charles Hall 041

emeyer@carroll.edu

office: 406.447.4332

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

For the great bulk of the history of Western civilization—from the Greco-Roman period up into recent memory—slavery has been an ordinary aspect of social, political, economic, and religious life. While forms of enslavement have varied significantly, some human beings have presumed to own other human beings as property, to be directed and disposed at will. Those who have been enslaved have resisted and repudiated their enslavers in creative and subtle ways, even as their stories are largely lost to historical memory.



Gustave Boulanger, "The Slave Market" (Oil painting, 1886)

In our moment, chattel slavery is widely rejected as abhorrent, a shameful aspect of our past.

Anyone who would dare to defend chattel slavery in public or advocate for its return would (rightly) be regarded as outside the spectrum of reasonable moral discourse. Yet, in the span of Western history, our cultural, economic, and political moment is the outlier. From the earliest moments of biblical history forward, those who pray to the God of Abraham and Sarah have reckoned with slavery as a commonplace institution. Even where Jews and Christians have resisted slavery, it could rarely be taken for granted that slavery was a moral and spiritual abomination. That history includes the periods in which the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament were written and so these sacred texts reflect slavery as a commonplace institution of human life.

Two presuppositions have guided the development of this course: (1) that enslaving human beings is an inexcusable moral and theological evil and that (2) slavery is best understood from the perspective of the persons who survive enslavement. From that starting point, this class will undertake the task of thinking critically about the ways that Christian theology has been entangled with slavery. God's people have been enslaved and they have enslaved others. Scripture speaks of slavery as a social institution and uses slavery as a theological metaphor. Theologians have defended and repudiated slavery. Christians have died fighting for the freedom of enslaved people (their own freedom and the freedom of others). Christians have died fighting to maintain slavery as part of the social order.

Because slavery is no longer an open question in our cultural moment, yet remains an enormous part of Christian heritage, thinking about slavery and Christian theology provides an opportunity to think about the ways that Christian theology is capable both of resisting and of justifying evil. The largest arc of our reflections this semester will be about what makes the difference between the two.

Students who complete this course will: (1) develop a historical understanding of slavery as a social institution in the late Roman Empire and the United States; (2) develop an understanding of slavery as it appears in scripture and Christian thought, both as a metaphor and as a social institution; (3) practice critical reflection about the significance of slavery in Christian history, scripture, and theology and (4) articulate a theological position about how contemporary Christians should respond to the heritage of slavery in Christian history, scripture, and theology; (5) develop interdisciplinary skills that bridge historical research and theological reflection; (6) think critically and extensively about how best to respond to evils that are knit into social, economic, political, and religious structures.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS:

INTRODUCTORY CONVERSATIONS AND CONTEXTS:

T 1.15 Course Introduction and Syllabus

Th 1.17 Slavery and Abolition: Descriptions and Definitions

- Page DuBois, *Slavery: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–22.

T 1.22 Slavery as a Crucible for Moral and Theological Discernment

- Clarice J. Martin, “Somebody Done Hoodoo’d the Hoodoo Man”: Language, Power, Resistance, and the Effective History of Pauline Texts in American Slavery.” *Semeia* 83–84, (1998): 203–233.

SLAVERY IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND SCRIPTURE

Th 1.24 Slavery in Late Antiquity: Introduction

- Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3–38.

T 1.29 Slavery in Ancient Christianity

- Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 71–101.
- Reading Quiz 1

Th 1.31 Slavery in the Hebrew Scriptures

- Genesis 15–16, 21.
- Exodus 1–5, 9–16, 20–21
- Leviticus 25
- Psalm 137

T 2.5 Slavery in the Pauline Letters

- 1 Corinthians 7:17–24
- Ephesians 5:21–6:9
- Philemon
- 1 Timothy 6:1–2
- Romans 1:1–7, 6:1–23
- Galatians 3:23–4:7
- Philippians 2:1–13

Th 2.7 Slavery in the Pauline Churches

- Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39–70, 130–156.

T 2.12 Slavery in the New Testament Gospels

- Mark 10:35–45, 12:1–12
- Matthew 13:24–42, 18:23–35, 22:1–14, 24:45–51, 25:14–30
- Luke 16:1–15
- John 13:1–20, 15:1–25
- Reading Quiz 2

Th 2.14 No Class: Instructor Away at a Conference in Omaha, NE

T 2.19 Slavery in the New Testament Gospels, part II

- Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 102–129.

Th 2.21 “Doulology”: Slavery as Central Metaphor and Concept of Christian Theology

- Chris L. de Wet, *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*, Routledge Studies in the Early Christian World (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 1–40.

T 2.26 Ancient Christian Abolitionism

- *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on Ecclesiastes: An English Edition With Supporting Studies, Proceedings of the Seventh International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Stuart George Hall and Rachel Moriarty. Edited by Stuart George Hall. (New York: De Gruyter, 1993) 72–84.

Th 2.28 Ancient Christian Accommodations to Slavery

- Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), book XIX.15–16.
- Augustine of Hippo, *Letters*, trans. Robert B. Eno. Vol. 81. Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2010), epistles 10, 24.
- John Chrysostom, “Homily 2 on Philemon,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 13. Edited by Phillip Schaff (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans).
- Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), chapter 20.
- Reading Quiz 3
- **Due:** Slavery and Sacred Text Response Paper

3.4–3.8 No Class: Spring Break

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

T 3.12 New World Slavery in Context

- Page DuBois, *Slavery: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23-49.

Th 3.14 The Church, Colonialism, and Slavery

- Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 15-36.
- Maura Jane Farrelly. “American Slavery, American Freedom, American Catholicism,” *Early American Studies* 10, no. 1 (2012): 69-100.
- “The Jesuits Sell Their Slaves,” in *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader*, second Edition, eds. Mark Massa S.J. and Catherine Osborne (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 161-64.
- Pope Gregory XVI, “In Supremo Apostolatus,” (1839)

T 3.19 Perspectives of Enslaved Persons

- Frederick Douglass, “What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?” Speech, July 5th, 1852.
- Harriet Jacobs (aka Linda Brent), *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 105–16.
- “Closing Address of the Fourth Colored Lay Catholic Congress (1893)” in *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader*, second Edition, eds. Mark Massa S.J. and Catherine Osborne (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 105–7.

Th 3.21 No Class: Instructor away at a Workshop

T 3.26 Harriet Tubman I: Biography

- Lois E. Horton, *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2013) 1–51.

Th 3.28 Harriet Tubman II: Theology

- Lois E. Horton, *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013) 52–90.
- Reading Quiz 4

T 4.2 John Brown I: Biography

- W.E.B. DuBois, *John Brown* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 19–38, 59–109.

Th 4.4 John Brown II: Theology and Abolitionism

- W.E.B. DuBois, *John Brown* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 110–203.

T 4.9 John Brown III: Questions of Violence

- W.E.B. DuBois, *John Brown* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 204–301.

Th 4.11 Theological Defense of Slavery I

- “Bishop John England on Slavery (1840)” in in *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader*, second Edition, eds. Mark Massa S.J. and Catherine Osborne (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 157–161.
- Richard Furman, “Exposition of the Views of the Baptists Relative to the Coloured Population of the United States in Communication to the Governor of South Carolina” (1823)

T 4.16 Theological Defense of Slavery II

- *Domestic Slavery Considered as a Scriptural Institution in a Correspondence between Rev. Richard Fuller and Rev. Francis Wayland* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1845), iii–v, 1–12, 137–65.

Th 4.18 Theological Defense of Slavery III

- *Domestic Slavery Considered as a Scriptural Institution in a Correspondence between Rev. Richard Fuller and Rev. Francis Wayland* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1845), 76–94, 184–203.

T 4.23 Slavery and Christian Theology: Moral and Theological Discernment

- Reading Quiz 5

Th 4.25 *No Class Meeting: Please Attend SURF*

T 4.30 Afterlives of American Slavery Roundtable Discussions

- **Due:** Afterlives of American Slavery Paper

Th 5.2 Course Wrap-up and Evaluation

Th 5.9 Final Exam 2:00–3:45

COURSE TEXTS:

Every student will need a copy of the following books:

DuBois, W.E.B. *John Brown*. New York: International Publishers, 1972.

Glancy, Jennifer. *Slavery in Early Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Horton, Lois E. *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013.

The day-to-day readings for this course that are not drawn from the texts above will be available through Moodle. Students will be required to get access to one further book in order to complete the “Afterlives of American Slavery” assignment. Please contact me with any problems or questions regarding the course readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Readings
 - Students should print off each assigned reading in advance and bring this printed copy to class. Because this is a text-based class, the learning goals require that students make time to read every text attentively, with a pen in hand, leaving thoughts, notes, and questions in the margins. Students who practice these active reading habits will be able to participate more creatively in class discussions and will find themselves better-prepared for quizzes and written assignments. On average, you can expect to read 100 pages per week in this course.
- Reading is hard work! Reading well is more than passing your eyes over all the words on the page. Students who are looking to improve their reading strategies are encouraged to visit during office hours!
- Quizzes
 - For the purpose of reading accountability, there will be 5 detail-oriented quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will cover all the readings assigned since the last quiz. The quiz grade for the course will be comprised of the highest four quiz scores (i.e. the lowest quiz will be dropped). Because the lowest quiz score is dropped, each student may miss one quiz during the semester without affecting their grade. Accordingly, no make-up quizzes will be given for routine absences; please contact me if you have missed multiple quizzes.
- Papers
 - Slavery and Sacred Text Response Paper (5-7 pages)
 - For the first part of this paper students will craft a historical critical analysis of a passage of Scripture that invokes slavery—either as a social institution or as a theological metaphor. The second part of the paper will require students to reflect on how texts involving slavery should be read as the Word of God written and preserved by human hands. In other words, how does one read these passages as sacred text? More information to come.
 - Afterlives of American Slavery Review Essay (5-7 pages)
 - Students will read a theological text that grapples with the afterlife of slavery in American society and American Christianity. Each student will write a review essay exploring and responding to the author's attempt to understand the aftereffects of slavery in American religious life. Book sign-ups and more information to come.
- Final Exam
 - There will be a final exam in this course. More details to come.
- Participation
 - It is exceedingly difficult to become wise if one does not come to class on time, having thoughtfully (!) completed the assigned reading with an open mind, ready to think and talk more about the relevant issues with the text in hand. Accordingly, these are basic expectations for participation in the course. Thoughtful comments and questions contributed to class discussions (and additionally, conversations during office hours) will demonstrate the depth of your engagement with the course's central themes.

FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAPERS:

- Written assignments should conform to the following format:
 - double-spaced (with a single-spaced heading)
 - 12 pt. font
 - 1-inch margins
 - Citations: footnotes in Chicago Humanities Style (see below)
 - Works Cited page (see below)
 - Double-sided printing is encouraged

- It is vitally important that you cite the sources you use in your writing (see ACADEMIC INTEGRITY). The method of citation for this course will be *footnotes*. I encourage students who are unfamiliar with using footnotes to meet with me for a demonstration.
- Your footnotes and “Works Cited” page should be formatted according to Chicago Manual of Style. A short style guide will be handed out in class and posted on the Moodle page for the course. A more complete style guide is available by searching for “Chicago Style Quick Guide” at your local internet.
- Students are strongly encouraged to avoid gender-biased language in their writing. In contemporary formal writing, it is rude and inaccurate to use words like “man” or “mankind” when one is referring to both women and men. The disciplinary standards of academic theology also avoid masculine pronouns for God (he, his, himself); instead, use “God” in place of pronouns where possible (God’s, Godself).
- The best way to improve your papers (and relatedly, your paper grades) is to read a copy of your paper *aloud* (yes, out loud) without stopping from start to finish, making marks in the margins where your writing sounds awkward, makes logical or argumentative leaps, or contains spelling/grammar errors. After reading through the whole paper, go back and fix the passages that you have marked. Rinse and repeat if desired.

RELATIVE WEIGHT OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading Quizzes	20%
Slavery and Sacred Text Essay	20%
Afterlives of American Slavery Essay	20%
Final Exam	20%
Participation	20%

GRADING SCALE:

The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D 60-69; F 60 or below.

COURSE POLICIES:

UNIVERSITY EMAIL:

When I need to communicate with you outside of class to pass along instructions, study materials, or other items, I will use your “____@carroll.edu” address. You are expected to check this account on a regular basis.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

In an academic community where plagiarism and cheating are tolerated, transformative learning is undermined and the grades that you work so hard to earn become meaningless. I take the integrity of our academic community very seriously and I encourage you to take the same attitude.

When you quote someone else’s words directly, or paraphrase someone else’s ideas in your own work, you need to give that person credit by providing a citation. The method of citation for this course will be *footnotes*. *Plagiarism* is the failure to give someone credit when you use her ideas, directly or indirectly. If you are in doubt as to whether you have plagiarism in one of your papers, please get in touch and ask me! It is *much* easier to cite a source than to explain the situation later (to professors, deans, friends, etc.). While it is your responsibility to ensure that your work meets the standards of academic honesty set forth in the “Carroll Code of Student Conduct” (see <https://www.carroll.edu/public/academic-integrity-policy>), I am more than happy to help you do so prior to assignment due dates.

I will be proactive about maintaining high standards of academic integrity. In accordance with university policy, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment in question, and will be referred to the proper university authorities. Even *one* instance of plagiarism or cheating is grounds for *failing the course*.

LATE WORK:

Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers will be marked down by one-third of a letter grade (i.e. A- to B+), and papers more than one day late will be marked down an additional one-third of a letter grade (B+ to B) for every day that they are late during the two weeks following the due date. After that, papers will be accepted for two-thirds credit until the end of the semester. Since there are printers available in many locations on campus, a broken printer is not a sufficient excuse for a late assignment.

INCLUSIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE CLASSROOM

We are students and scholars. By definition, we will be exploring new ideas, experimenting with new practices, and subjecting long-held beliefs to critical reflection. All of these processes involve learning from mistakes and overcoming past failures. We will discuss personal and politically charged topics in this class, many of which have directly affected the lives of class members. If genuine learning and change are to take place, the classroom cannot be a completely *safe* place. I expect, however, that we will work together to make the classroom a *courageous* space—where anyone can try out their ideas in public with a respectful hearing, but all ideas are subject to critical scrutiny. As the instructor, I will especially strive to create space for historically underrepresented and undervalued perspectives.

Because of the importance and fragility of such a learning environment, abusive, threatening, or maliciously disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will be subject to discipline according to Carroll's Code of Student Conduct.

ATTENDANCE:

- Class discussion of course readings plays a critical part of accomplishing the learning objectives of this course. Therefore, regular attendance is expected of all students. If you expect to be absent for any reason, please notify me of your absence as soon as possible. Generally, I am quite willing to work with students whose circumstances require them to miss class, but I prefer to know in advance.
- Attendance is taken at the beginning of the class period. Students who arrive late should talk to me after class to ensure that they have not been marked absent, and may be asked to explain their tardiness. Repeatedly arriving late to class is disruptive for everyone; three late appearances will be counted as one absence.
- When you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed (e.g. assignments, instructions, major points of a lecture). I am more than happy to fill you in on what we covered, but it is your responsibility to seek me out, not vice versa.
- Up to *three* absences over the course of the semester will not directly affect a student's grade (though missing class inevitably has indirect effects). Between three and five absences over the course of the semester will lower a student's grade in the course by one-third of a letter grade (i.e. a B+ becomes a B). Six or more absences in a semester will lower a student's grade by an entire letter grade (i.e. a B+ becomes a C+). A student who misses more than nine class meetings (three weeks of class) will not pass the course.

EXTERNAL STIMULI:

- Food and drink, in small quantities, are permitted so long as they do not become a distraction to you or others.
- Cell phones must be invisible and silent during class (i.e. set to vibrate in a pocket or bag). Cell phones that emerge during class will be transported to a special location in the classroom (iPurgatory) and released by indulgence at the end of class.
- Computers and tablets are not to be used during class except by special permission. Students who wish to have their notes in electronic form are encouraged to type up their class notes as a form of review.

DISABILITIES:

Students who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations for documented disabilities (e.g.: ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) should *promptly* direct their request to Kevin Hadduck in the Academic Success and Disability Services Office (Borromeo Hall, room 115, 406.447.4504, khadduck@carroll.edu). All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <https://www.carroll.edu/academic-resource-center/disability-services> for additional information. In the interest of fairness, the only accommodations made for exams and assignments will be those arranged through the ASDS Office (not *ad hoc* or last minute).