

**Beyond 40 Acres and a Mule:
The History and Practice of Reparations in the African Diaspora**

HIST/AFRC 2162

Instructor: Breanna Moore

Schedule: MW 10:15am - 11:45am

Office Hours: MW 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Email: moorebre@sas.upenn.edu

Location: TBD

Description

How did enslaved people and their descendants conceptualize reparations? What strategies did they employ to achieve them? How do present day movements for reparations seek to address historic harms? This ABCS course will examine the history of reparations advocacy amongst enslaved Africans and their descendants from the inception of the transAtlantic traffic in enslaved people to the present day.

This action-oriented course will explore the root of reparations - repair - and the historical and current strategies that people are employing, both nationally and globally, to advance racial and reparatory justice for descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. By situating reparatory justice initiatives in the context of the African diaspora, the course will examine demands, goals, implementation plans, and organizing methods used by the descendants of enslaved Africans for the harms and legacies of slavery and colonization.

Mirroring the model of the Penn and Slavery Project course, this research seminar provides students with instruction in basic historical methods and an opportunity to conduct collaborative primary source research into Philadelphia's historical connections to slavery. After an initial orientation to archival research, students will plunge into conducting research at historical archives relevant to their final projects including the Kislak Center, the University Archives, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company, and various online sources.

Final Projects

As an ABCS course rooted in community-engaged scholarship and action-driven research, students' final projects will contribute to reparatory justice in Philadelphia by highlighting new research and/or proposing a repair model/reparatory solution for the harms and legacies of slavery and Jim Crow that impact Black Philadelphians.

Students will design a public-facing final project that utilizes historical research, creative arts and multimodal tools, and community engagement. This can include creating new archives, historical markers, ArcGIS mapping, photography, podcast, videography, animation, a website/database, lesson plans, and rubrics for oral interviews, surveys, a pop-up exhibit, an article, a public presentation, or survey rubrics for reparations research of community members, etc. The course is supported by a curriculum support grant from The Sachs Program for Arts Innovations and can fund some project expenses. A guideline for final projects will be provided. Final projects can be done in teams. Students will have the option to submit their final project as a reparations

recommendation and proposal to The Philadelphia Reparations Task Force which will be submitted to the Philadelphia City Council and Mayor.

Community Partners

Our course community partner is [The Philadelphia 1838 Black Metropolis](#). Students can support and further 1838's work for reparatory justice by expanding on their research into the "Amount of Money Free Black people paid for their freedom in 1838", utilizing and researching the 1847 census to unveil the enslavers who demanded and received the manumission money, and the legacy and impact on Black Philadelphians who were coerced into compensated abolition. Relevant archives to consult include the [Historical Society of Pennsylvania](#).

Students may also expand on the "[Mapping West Philadelphia: Landowners in October 1777](#)" project developed by the University of Pennsylvania's [University Archives and Records Center](#) (UARC) from research provided by UARC archivist J.M. Duffin. Students may select a specific era to track the growth and decline of Black land ownership in Philadelphia. Relevant archives to consult include the [City Archives of Philadelphia](#) and [the Philadelphia Register of Wills](#).

Students may pursue research and scholarship into the City of Philadelphia's "[Slavery Era Business/Corporate Insurance Disclosure and Financial Reparations](#)" ordinance and the obligated financial depositories subject to the law.

Other Options

Students may conduct a final research project that falls outside of the community partners but must identify primary sources to support their research and examine a contemporary issue advocated by reparationsists such as: (1) An aspect of the city of Philadelphia's history of racial discrimination (ie. redlining, the MOVE bombing, etc.); (2) Any issue that falls under the five injury areas of slavery (defined by N'COBRA as Peoplehood/Nationhood, Education, Health, Criminal Punishment, Wealth/Poverty) committed by a financial, academic, religious, medical, or carceral institution within Philadelphia' or (3) a specific case in which African Americans experience disparities due to racial discrimination. For example, if a student chooses to research segregated African American health institutions. They may utilize the Mercy-Douglass Hospital [Records](#) (1896-1977) held at the University of Pennsylvania: Barbara Bates Center for the Study of The History of Nursing.

Course Goals

Students will:

- Explore the catalysts of reparatory demands, historical and contemporary debates for and against descendants of enslaved Africans receiving reparations, and the history and current advocacy and demands for reparations by Africans and their descendants throughout the diaspora.
- Gain skills in archival research, basic historical methods, and collaborative primary source research.
- Produce accurate, original research about an aspect of Philadelphia's historic connections to slavery and/or its legacies.

- Develop skills in critical analysis, conceptualization, narrative construction and formation, identifying and interpreting historical sources, oral communication, utilization of digital humanities tools, and methodologies to engage multiple perspectives.
- Analyze key dilemmas in designing reparations programs (eligibility, feasibility, funding, implementation).
- Define reparations and explain their various forms.

Course Requirements

- At the beginning of the semester, students will complete a pre-questionnaire to assess their knowledge of reparations, the transAtlantic traffic in African humanity, and enslavement. At the end of the semester, students will complete a post-questionnaire to determine the achievement of course objectives.
- This course requires students to be involved in intensive reading.
- Each student will submit 5 one-page reading responses.
- Each student will submit one book report essay on an assigned book by 11:59pm the day before class.

Grades

Reading Responses (5) - 10

Midterm Essay (1) - 20

Book Report (1) - 10

Final Project - 30

Regular Attendance, Class Participation, and Progress on Research and Final Project - 30

Total Grade - 100

Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular attendance is required.

Important Dates - TBd

- _____, 2025: Students must submit a description of the final project.
- ____: Final date to submit the book report.
- ____: Midterm essay due.
- April 30, 2025: Final project presentations.
- ____: Final project due.

Class Meetings

Week 1: Introduction and Defining Reparations

January 15, 2025

- Introduction to course and review of syllabus
- Defining Reparations, Compensation, Restitution, Rehabilitation, Satisfaction, Non-Repetition
- Discussion of final projects

Readings:

The United Nations General Assembly [Resolution](#) 60/147, “Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law” GA Res 60/147 A/Res/60/147 (21 March 2005)

Week 2: The TransAtlantic Traffic in African Humanity

January 20, 2025

Readings:

Lingna Nafafé, José, *Lourenço Da Silva Mendonça and the Black Atlantic Abolitionist Movement in the 17th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022)

- Introduction
- Ch. 5 - “Mendonça’s Discourse in the Vatican: Liberation as a Wider Atlantic Question”
- Ch. 6 - “Mendonça’s Quest for Abolition and the Tussle between the Portuguese Overseas Council and the House of Ndongo”

Berry, Daina Ramey, and Gross, Kali N., *A Black Women's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2020)

- Chapter 2 - “Isabel’s Expedition and Freedom Before 1619”

January 22, 2025

Trip to University Archives

Research methods and applications

*Presentation by 1838 co-founder

Week 3: Enslaved Women and Freedom

January 27, 2025

Readings:

McDaniel, W. Caleb, *Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution In America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019)

January 29, 2025

Trip to Kislak Archive

Berry, Daina Ramey, and Gross, Kali N., *A Black Women's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2020)

- Chapter 3 - “Belinda’s Petition for Independence, 1760-1820”

Primary Sources:

- Belinda Sutton’s [Petitions](#): 1783, 1785, 1788, 1793

Week 4: Haiti and France

February 3, 2025

Readings:

Manjapra, Kris, *Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002)

- Ch. 2 - “Punishing the Black Nation in Haiti”

Dupuy, Alex, *Rethinking the Haitian Revolution: Slavery, Independence, and the Struggle for Recognition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019)

- Chapter 4 “Property, Debt, and Development: Rethinking the Indemnity Question”

Obregón, Liliana, “Empire, Racial Capitalism and International Law: The Case of Manumitted Haiti and the Recognition Debt” *Leiden Journal of International Law*, Volume 31, Issue 3 (2018): 597–615

Mary Dewhurst Lewis, “Legacies of French Slave-Ownership, or the Long Decolonization of Saint-Domingue” *History Workshop Journal*, Volume 83, Issue 1 (2017): 151–175

Alcenat, Westenley, “The Case for Haitian Reparations,” *Jacobin* [link](#)

Primary Sources:

- Claire Payton, “[The Indemnity](#): French Royal Ordinance of 1825” in *The Haiti Reader: History, Culture, Politics* ed. Charles, King (Durham : Duke University Press, 2020)
- [Treaty](#) of Friendship and Treaty relative to an Indemnity between France and Haiti, signed at Port-au-Prince, 12 February 1838
- Database: [Haiti and France](#)

February 5, 2025

Trip to Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Week 5: Slave Trade Abolition, Anti-Slave Trade Treaties, and Indemnities

February 10, 2025

Readings:

Inge Van Hulle, *Britain and International Law in West Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

- Chapter 2 “British Legal Strategies and the Abolition of the Slave Trade”

Keene, Edward. “A Case Study of the Construction of International Hierarchy: British Treaty-Making Against the Slave Trade in the Early Nineteenth Century.” *International Organization* 61, no. 2 (2007): 311

Dike, K. Onwuka *Trade and Politics In the Niger Delta, 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956)

- Ch. 5 - “The Slave Trade Treaties”

February 12, 2025

Archives

Week 6: Compensation and the Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire

Readings:

Draper, Nicholas, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Manjapra, Kris, “The Scandal of the British Slavery Abolition Act Loan” *Social and Economic Studies* 68, no. 1 (Mar, 2019): 165-259

Aaron Graham Slavery, “Banks and the Ambivalent Legacies of Compensation in South Africa, Mauritius and the Caribbean” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 47:3, (2021) 473-487

Beckles, Hilary, *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Slavery and Native Genocide* (Kingston: University Of West Indies Press, 2013)

- Ch. 12 - “The Case for Reparations”

Primary source:

[Legacies of British Slave-ownership project Database](#)

February 19, 2025

Archives

Week 7: Comparative Abolition, Reparations, and Indemnities

February 24, 2025

Araujo, Ana Lucia, *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade: A Transnational and Comparative History* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)

- Chapter 1 - “Greatest Riches in All America have Arisen from Our Blood and Tears”
- Chapter 2 - “And What Should We Wait of these Brutish Spirits?”
- Chapter 3 - We Helped to Pay this Cost”

Beauvois, Frédérique, *Between Blood and Gold: The Debates Over Compensation for Slavery In the Americas* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017)

- Introduction
- Chapter 4 - “Compensation’s Political Side: A Means of Ensuring Colonial Cooperation”

Manjapra, Kris, *Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002)

- Ch. 1 - “Making Africans Pay, Gradually, in the North”

Primary source: ["Repairs" Database](#)

February 26, 2025

Archives

Week 8: Emancipation, Reconstruction, and Reparations

March 3, 2025

Readings:

Claude F. Oubre, *Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Land Ownership* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978)

Amanda Laury Kleintop, “Life, Liberty, and Property in Slaves: White Mississippians Seek ‘Just Compensation’ for their Freed Slaves in 1865.” *Slavery & Abolition*, 39, no. 2 (June 2018)

Winkle, Kenneth, “Emancipation in the District of Columbia” in Lawrence, Susan C., *Civil War Washington: History, Place, and Digital Scholarship* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2015)

Berry, Mary Frances. “Taking the United States to Court: Callie House and the 1915 Cotton Tax Reparations Litigation.” *The Journal of African American History* 103, no. 1/2 (2018): 91–103.

Primary Sources:

- “Special Field Orders No. 15” [link](#)
- President Andrew Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation May 29, 1865 [link](#)
- W. R. Vaughan, Vaughan’s “Freemen’s Pension Bill.” Being an Appeal in Behalf of Men Released from Slavery. A Plea for American Freedmen and a Rational Proposition to Grant Pensions to Persons of Color Emancipated from Slavery. (Chicago, Ill.: 1891) [link](#)

March 5, 2025

Archives

Week 9: Africa and Repatriation

March 17, 2025

Johnson, Robert, *Returning Home: A Century of African-American Repatriation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005)

Douglas R. Jones, "The League Will Not Ignore the Cry of the Negro Race for Justice": Marcus Garvey, the League of Nations and South-West Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 48:1 (2022): 103-117

Manjapra, Kris, *Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002)

- Chapter 6 - "Global Jim Crow and Emancipation in Africa"

March 19, 2025

Archives

Week 10: Land vs. Financial Claims

March 24, 2025

Onaci, Edward, *Free the Land: The Republic of New Afrika and the Pursuit of a Black Nation-State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020)

Elaine Allen Lehtreck. "We are Demanding \$500 Million for Reparations": The Black Manifesto, Mainline Religious Denominations, and Black Economic Development." *The Journal of African American History* 97, no. 1-2 (2012): 39-71.

Rustin, Bayard, "The Failure of Black Separatism" *Harper's Magazine*, 240:1436 (1970) [link](#)
Young Jr., Whitney M., "Domestic Marshall Plan?: 'Compensation'--Yes." *New York Times*, Oct 06, 1963.

Young Jr., Whitney M. "A Domestic Marshall Plan." *New York Amsterdam News*, Sep 02, 1967.

March 26, 2025

Archives

Week 11: Renewed Calls for Reparations in the Mid to Late Twentieth Century

March 31, 2025

Araujo, Ana Lucia, *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade: A Transnational and Comparative History* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)

- Chapter 4 - "What Else Will the Negro Expect?"
- Chapter 5 - "It's Time for Us to Get Paid"

Aiyetoro, Adjoa and Davis, Adrienne, "Historic and Modern Social Movements for Reparations: The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America and Its Antecedents." *Texas Wesleyan law review*. 16, no. 4 (2010)

Primary Sources:

- *A Petition to the United Nations On Behalf of 13 Million Oppressed Negro Citizens of the United States of America.* (New York: National Negro Congress, 1946) [link](#)
- W.E.B. DuBois and the NAACP, *An Appeal to the World: A Statement of Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress.* (1947) [link](#)
- *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief From a Crime of The United States Government Against the Negro People.* (New York: Civil Rights Congress, 1951) [link](#)
- Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program ·

April 2, 2025

Archives

Week 12: Capitalism and Slavery: Reparations Litigation

April 7, 2025

Litigation

- Cato v. United States, 1995 [link](#)
- Farmer-Paellmann v. Fleetboston Financial Corp. (2002) [link](#)
- *In Re African-American Slave Descendants Litigation*, [link](#) and [link](#)

Articles

Miller, Eric J., "Representing the Race: Standing to Sue in Reparations Lawsuits" *Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal*, Vol. 20 (2004) [link](#)

Chen, Cheryl Rhan-Hsin, and Gary Simon, "Special Report: Actuarial Issues in Insurance on Slaves in the United States South." *The Journal of African American History* 89, no. 4 (2004) [link](#).

"Prosecutors demand Brazil's oldest bank pay reparations for slavery" *The Washington post*, October 27, 2023 [link](#)

Primary Sources:

- Lloyd's of London Statement and Archive on the TransAtlantic Slave Trade [link](#)
- "Testimony of Deadria Farmer-Paellmann." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* (9, no. 5 (2016) [link](#).

April 9, 2025

Archives

Week 13: Reparations in the Twenty-First Century [TBD]

April 14, 2025

Who Should Get Reparations? Lineage vs. Pan-African Debate

- “About ADOS” <https://ados101.com/about-ados>
- “California group votes to limit reparations to slave descendants” *NPR*, March 20, 2022 [link](#)
- “California becomes the first state to break down Black employee data by lineage” *NPR*, August 16, 2022 [link](#)

Darity, William A., and A. Kirsten Mullen, *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans In the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020)

Bhabha, Jacqueline, Matache, Margareta and Elkins, Caroline, *Time for Reparations: A Global Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

- Ch. 3. - “Free Citizens of This Nation?: Cherokee Slavery, Descendants of Freedpeople, and Possibilities for Repair”
- Ch. 6. - “France, French Justice and the Claims for Reparations by Slave Descendants in Guadeloupe”

Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” *The Atlantic*, June 2014 [link](#)

Legislation and Policy

- H.R. 40 - Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act [link](#)
- The Reparations Now Resolution [link](#)
- Philadelphia Slavery Disclosure Law Bill 050615
- CARICOM 10 Point Reparations Plan [link](#)

April 16, 2025

Archives

Week 14: African, Caribbean, and Latin America Reparations

April 21, 2025

Readings:

Savoy, Bénédicte, *Africa's Struggle for Its Art: History of a Postcolonial Defeat* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2022) - select chapters

Paulose, Regina Menachery, and Ronald Gordon Rogo, “Addressing Colonial Crimes Through Reparations: The Mau Mau, Herero, and Nama” *State Crime Journal* 7, no. 2 (2018):

De Greiff, Pablo, “Overview of the Reparations Program in South Africa” in *The Handbook of Reparations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

April 23, 2025

Readings:

Paschel, Tianna, *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Colombia and Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016) - Select Chapters

Hooker, Juliet, “Afro-Descendant Struggles for Collective Right in Latin America” in Marable, Manning, and Leith Mullings. *New Social Movements In the African Diaspora: Challenging Global Apartheid* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

CARICOM 10 Point Reparations Plan [link](#)

Week 15: Reparations Claims Against Non-Governmental Institutions

April 28, 2025

Select Readings

Education and Religious Institutions

- Adam Rothman, Ch. 2 “Slavery, Universities, and Reparations” in *Time for Reparations: A Global Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)
- Anne E. Bromley, “New Law, Signed at UVA, Focuses on Reparations for Descendants of Enslaved Workers” *UVA Today*, May 5, 2021 [link](#)
- Georgetown University [link](#)
- Virginia Theological Seminary [link](#)
- Princeton Theological Seminary [link](#)
- Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery Report [link](#)
- Society of the Sacred Heart [link](#)
- Episcopal Diocese of Maryland [link](#)

Media

- Media 2070: An Invitation to Dream Up Media Reparations [link](#)

Municipal and State Reparations Task Force Reports

- Amherst, MA African Heritage Reparation [Assembly](#)
- Evanston, IL [Reparations Committee](#)
- Greenbelt, MD [reparations commission](#)
- High Point, NC [One High Point Commission](#) to Explore Community Reparations for the African American Citizens
- Los Angeles, CA Reparations Advisory [Commission](#)
- Providence, RI [Municipal Reparations Commission](#)
- San Francisco, CA [African American Reparations Advisory Committee](#)
- St. Louis, MO [Reparations Commission](#)
- Fulton County, GA [Reparations Task Force](#)
- California [Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans](#)

April 30, 2025

Presentations