

[Provisional Syllabus, Subject to Change]

FALL 2024

**ANDERS BRIGHT**

Location: TBD

Office Hours: M 2-4, and by appointment

**Hist 1121 601 (2024C)**

T, 5:15-8:15

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**The American South, 1607-1865**

This course traces the history of the American South from the settlement of Jamestown, through the Civil War. In doing so, it attempts to situate the region in its global and national context, to describe the rise of its slave economy, and to explain the abrupt destruction of its slave system at the hands of the Civil War. None of this history was inevitable. As the readings will demonstrate, early European settlements barely eked out survival; the development of slavery was not a foregone conclusion; and the coming of the Civil War was not preordained. If this course seeks to avoid teleological narratives about the rise and fall of the southern slave economy, it also seeks to place this history in the context of wider debates about the relationship between slavery, American capitalism, and democracy. In doing so, it will demonstrate how this history still informs contemporary debates surrounding racial justice, regional economic development, and the stories we tell ourselves about our nation's founding.

**Course Requirements**

Students are required to attend lectures, and to complete the weekly readings before class. All readings will either be accessible online through the library, or uploaded to Blackboard.

**Evaluation Method:**

Grades will be calculated as follows: a midterm exam (25%); a 8-10 page paper (30%); a take-home final exam (35%); participation (10%). Papers may be written about any of the class themes, or on a topic that Dr. Bright signs off on.

**Topics and Reading Assignments**

Week 1. August 27 Introduction

Week 2. September 3 Native Cultures and the Geography of the "South"

Readings:

- Daniel Richter, "Legacies of Power from Medieval North America," in *Before the Revolution*
- April Hatfield, "Indian and English Geographies," in *Atlantic Virginia*
- Primary source: image of Powhatan's Mantle

Week 3. September 10 Jamestown: A Case Study of European Settlement

Readings:

- Kathleen Donegan, "Jamestown: Things that Seemed Incredible," in *Seasons of Misery*
- Karen Kupperman, "Jamestown's Uncertain Beginnings," in *The Jamestown Project*
- Primary Source: excerpt from George Percy's *A true Relation*, 1624

Week 4. September 17 A Story of Labor; Slavery, Servitude, and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Readings:

- David Eltis, "Slavery and Freedom in the Early Modern World," in *The rise of African Slavery*
- Stephanie Smallwood, "Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities," in *Saltwater Slavery*
- Digital Source: slave voyages database timelapse video

Week 5. September 24 Plantation Economies and the Global Economy

Readings:

- Jennifer Morgan, "Partus Sequitur Ventrem: Law, Race and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery"
- Paul G.E. Clemens, "Reimagining the Political Economy of Early Virginia"
- Peter Wood, "Black Labor— White Rice," in *Black Majority*
- Primary source: excerpt from Mt. Vernon Account Book

Week 6. October 1 What Came First, Slavery or Racism?

Readings:

- Kathleen Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference," in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches*
- Edmund Morgan, "Towards Slavery," and "Towards Racism" in *American Slavery, American Freedom*
- Primary Source: excerpts of Virginia slave code

Week 7. October 8 The Cultures of Black Southerners

Readings:

- Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America"
- Philip Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p. 559-610
- Digital Source: virtual tour of the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters

Week 8. October 15 A Revolution in a Favor of Slavery?

**Midterm Taken in Class**

Readings:

- debate between Woody Holton and Gordon Wood:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tHY8v\\_WJCQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tHY8v_WJCQ)
- "We Respond to the Historians Who Critiqued the 1619 Project," (New York Times, Dec. 20, 2019)
- Primary Source: Dunmore's Proclamation

Week 9. October 22 Cotton Takes Command

Readings:

- Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told* 1-38
- Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, chapter 3
- Primary Source: Louisiana Purchase Treaty

Week 10. October 29 The Yeomen and their World

Readings:

- Majewski, "Who Financed the Transportation Revolution? Regional Divergence and Internal Improvements in Antebellum Pennsylvania and Virginia"
- Stephanie McCurry, "The Politics of Yeoman Households in South Carolina," in *Divided Houses*
- Primary Sources: "Address to the People of West Virginia," 1847.

Week 11. November 5 Was Slavery a Capitalist Institution?

Readings:

- Ed. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, *Slavery's Capitalism*, introduction, chapter 2
- Daina Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, chapter 6
- Primary Source: National Gallery of Art, *Industrial Revolution Image Set*

Week 12. November 12 Black Freedom, Resistance, and Community Building  
**Paper Due In Class**

Readings:

- Daina Berry, *The Price for their Pound of Flesh*, chapter 2 and 5
- Kimberly Welch, *Black Litigants in the Antebellum American South*, chapter 7
- Primary Source: David Walker's Appeal

Week 13. November 19 The South in a Global Context

Readings:

- Matt Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire*, chapter 3
- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, chapter 8
- Primary Source: Issue of *DeBow's Southern Review*

Week 14. November 26 The Civil War: Slavery, THE States' Right

Readings:

- Paul Quigley, "Dreams: Southern Nationalism before Southern Nationhood" in *Shifting Grounds*
- Chandra Manning, "Working for Citizenship in Civil War Contraband Camps"
- Primary Source: South Carolina Declaration of Secession

Week 15 December 3 The South Burning  
**Take Home Final Distributed in Class**

Readings:

-Drew Faust, *The Republic of Suffering*, chapters 2-3

Primary Source: excerpt from Mary Boyd Chestnut's Diary