

Captive Minds:

The Premodern Literature of Slavery

LIT 80W
Fall, 2016
MWF 2:40-3:45 PM
Classroom Unit 001

Instructor:
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Office Hours: MF 1:00-2:30 PM (or by appointment)

Slavery as a social phenomenon demands more than just violence: slaves must be convinced that it is against their interests to escape from or undermine the conditions of their oppression, and masters must be made to believe that they “deserve” the powers of domination that they exercise. In societies that practice slavery, literature has usually undertaken to accomplish one or both of these tasks; slavery, therefore, leaves an indelible mark on the literary production of slave societies.

In this course, we’ll be trying to understand the nature of that “mark” by looking closely at the literatures of several premodern slave societies, from Homeric Greece to Elizabethan England. We’ll also see how written texts can help “enable” enslavement by exercising an influence on politics and social structure that goes beyond the literary sphere. Finally, we’ll try to develop a cultural-historical narrative that explains the origins of genocidal forms of plantation slavery in the Americas by tracing their origins back to Greece and Rome.

Each week, we’ll be reading one or more primary texts as well as one or two shorter secondary texts; you should budget 4-7 hours a week for this, depending on the length of each week’s primary text. Plan to attend all lectures and discussion sections (4 hours a week) as well as to devote about 2 hours each to a series of three short writing assignments and 10-15 hours to your term paper. In preparation for the midterm, you may also wish to spend 1-2 hours a week reviewing previous weeks’ readings. Your total time expenditure for this course, including attending class, should not exceed 13 hours per week; if you find yourself needing more time than this to complete the coursework, please speak with your TA or with me.

Required Texts:

Homer. [*The Odyssey*](#).

Plautus. [*Amphitryo*](#), [*Asinaria*](#), [*Aulularia*](#), [*Bacchides*](#), [*Captivi Amphitryon*](#), [*The Comedy of Asses*](#), [*The Pot of Gold*](#), [*The Two Bacchises*](#), [*The Captives*](#). (also available as a free ebook).

Euripides. [*Andromache*](#), [*Hecuba*](#), [*The Trojan Women*](#).

Epictetus. [*Discourses*](#), [*Fragments*](#), [*Handbook*](#).

Shakespeare. [*The Tempest*](#).

All textbooks are available from the Literary Guillotine, except where otherwise noted. Other required readings will be published via ecommons and in a pair of readers (one for weeks 1-6, another for weeks 7-11) available at the Literary Guillotine.

Grading and Course Objectives

One aim of this course is to prepare you to analyze and discuss representations of slavery according to a range of intellectual frameworks and as an element of your own experience. 35% of your grade will therefore be based on attendance and participation in class and section. This means:

- You should come to every class meeting and discussion section prepared to discuss the week's reading.
- You should participate in discussion, in class and especially in your discussion section.

Attendance of your chosen discussion section will be graded out of 9 points; you get one point for each meeting you attend, which means that, in order to get a perfect score, you'll need to attend all of them but one. From week four on, your TAs will be monitoring your attendance at regular class meetings as well. This will be graded out of 16 points; there are nineteen class sessions between week four and the end of the term, so that you can miss three of these and still maintain a perfect score. Your TA will grade your participation in class discussion on a scale of 1 to 5.

In addition to the required secondary readings, I'll be posting a number of optional readings on the ecommons site for the course. Starting in week four, I'd like you to form groups of 2-4 and choose one of these optional readings to present to the rest of the class. This will count for the final five points of your attendance and participation grade. Once every group has been scheduled to present a reading, your group may choose to present an additional reading for 2 points of extra credit.

Another aim of this course is to prepare you to write out such analyses at length, in both argumentative and critical styles. Accordingly, 20% of your grade will depend on a series of three short writing assignments (300-600 words) that ask you to answer narrowly focused questions about particular literary representations of slavery. These assignments will be graded out of ten points, on the following basis:

- 5 points: Completion and on-time submission. If you hand in your assignment late, you'll lose one point for each day of lateness.
- 3 points: Addressing the prompt.
- 2 points: exceptionally insightful analysis and/or close reading.

A further 20% of your grade will depend on your term paper (1200-2000 words), a synthetic treatment of several texts which you will develop, in consultation with your TA, throughout the second half of the term. This will be graded on the same rubric as your short writing assignments.

Finally, I'll be giving you in-class three essay tests over the course of the term. Together, these will account for the remaining 25% of your grade.

Please submit term papers to your TAs by Friday, December 9.

Academic integrity:

All work submitted for this course must be your own. Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with in accordance with university policy. For more information, please see the University policy on academic integrity for undergraduate students at http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_integrity.

Accessibility accommodation:

UCSC's Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides resources and support for students with documented disabilities. Any student who thinks s/he is in need of accommodation, based on the impact of a disability, should contact me privately to submit their Accommodation Authorization and discuss specific needs, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 831-459-2089 in room 125 Hahn Student Services or by e-mail at drc@ucsc.edu to coordinate those accommodations.

Mental health resources:

UCSC Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of short-term and long-term mental health services. Counseling services are confidential and free of charge to all UCSC students. For more information, contact CAPS at 831-459-2628 or visit <http://caps.ucsc.edu/>.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Friday, 9/23. What, where and when is slavery? Course outline.

Week 2: Finding the Slave

Monday, 9/26. Read: Homer, *Odyssey* 17-18. How can we know who the slave is?

Wednesday, 9/28. Read: *Odyssey* 19-21. Slave labor on the narrative.

Friday, 9/30. Read: *Odyssey* 22, 24. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Selections).
Slave literature and slave systems.

Week 3: Power and Wisdom

Monday, 10/3. Read: Plato, *Meno*. Maurice Godelier, *The Mental and the Material* (selections). What do slaves know?

Wednesday, 10/5. Read: Epictetus, *Enchiridion*. What can slaves teach?

Friday, 10/7. Exam #1.

Week 4: Can the Slave Speak?

Monday, 10/10. Read: *Life of Aesop*, 1-27 (pp.111-122). James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (selections). Whose script is it, anyway?

Wednesday, 10/12. Read: *Life of Aesop*, 28-80 (pp. 123-146). Slavery as contest.

Friday, 10/14. Read: *Life of Aesop*, 80-end (146-162) Leslie Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations* (selections). Can slaves win?

Week 5: Slavery and Social Anxiety

Monday, 10/17. Writing Assignment #1 due. Read: Euripides, *Andromache* ll.1-270. How to become a slave.

Wednesday, 10/19 Read: *Andromache*, ll. 271-1009. Is slavery a Tragedy?

Friday, 10/21 Read: *Andromache*, ll.1010-end. Page Dubois, *Slaves and Other Objects* (selections). Persons or things?

Week 6: Slavery and Empire

Monday, 10/24. Read: Vergil, *Eclogues* 1. Ovid, *Amores* 2.2. Calpurnius Siculus, *Eclogues* 7. Fitzgerald, *Slavery in the Roman Literary Imagination* (selections).

Wednesday, 10/26. Exam #2.

Friday, 10/28. No class.

Week 7: Naturalizing slavery

Monday, 10/31. Read: Aristotle, *Politics* (selections). What does it mean to be “natural?” Writing Assignment #2 due.

Wednesday, 11/2. Read: Plautus, *Capitivi*, ll. 1-460. Is it funny?

Friday, 11/4. Read: *Captivi*, ll. 461-end. Is it sad?

Week 8: Gods, Masters and Slaves

Monday, 11/7. Read: *Exodus* (selections).

Wednesday, 11/9. Read *Romans* (selections). *Surah Yusuf*(selections).

Friday, 11/11. No class.

Week 9: The slave fantastic

Monday, 11/14. Read: Pliny the Younger, *Letters* (selections). Artemidorus, *Oneirocriticon* (selections).

Wednesday, 11/16. Read: *Surah Yusuf*. Ibn Sirin, *Tafsir al-Ahlam* (selections).

Friday, 11/18 Read: *Arabian Nights* (Selections).

Week 10: New Worlds of Slavery

Monday, 11/21. Cabeza de Vaca, *Relacion* (selections).

Wednesday, 11/23 Bartolome de las Casas, *The Destruction of the Indies* (selections).

Friday, 11/25 No Class.

Week 11: Where is freedom?

Monday, 11/28. Read: Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act 1. Writing Assignment #3 due.

Wednesday, 11/30. Read: *Tempest*, acts 2-4.

Friday, 12/2. Read: *Tempest*, act 5. Bertrand Russell, “In Praise of Idleness.”

Exam #3 to be scheduled outside of class during week 11.

Term papers due Friday, 12/9.