

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom

Hist 364/364W/464/AAS 356/WST 340

Time: TR 2:00-4:40pm.

Room: Rush Rhees 456

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00--1:00pm.

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Almost four hundred years of slavery and racial discrimination have taken a huge toll on the black family. Despite this, the family adapted to the awful demands placed upon it and today, the number of black millionaires grows rapidly. The poverty rates in the black community expands, however, as does many other challenges facing the increasingly fragile black family. The course will examine factors such as inter-racial and same-sex marriages, teenage pregnancy, declining healthcare, mass incarceration, and a debilitating education system, and evaluate the claim of leading scholars that "the very future of the black family in America is at risk."

### **Academic Honesty**

Authors of the words and ideas contained in your written essays must be fully cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and will be severely punished.

### **A Word on Note Taking and Research:**

As the material from the Assigned Texts (supplemented where necessary by the Additional Readings) will inform our discussions throughout the course, as well as constitute a major source on which you will draw for your written assignments.

### **For your Information:**

The faculty of the Department of History considers class attendance essential to the mastering of the

content of its courses and the production of quality history papers. Students who miss class should inform the instructor of the reason for their absence, in advance whenever possible. Students should come to class prepared to comment on the assigned readings. If you have a physical or mental disability that requires an accommodation or academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience.

### **Reference Librarian**

Please take time to introduce yourself to the library specialist in United States History and Culture: Alan Unsworth [aunsworth@library.rochester.edu](mailto:aunsworth@library.rochester.edu) or check at the Reference Desk

Course Grading will be as follows: Three Book Reports 3-8 sides (30%); Class Participation, (20%) and a Final Paper (50%) Regular class attendance is expected, and students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and their work-in-progress. (Book Reports: Due Dates: Blassingame Feb. 2; White Feb. 9; Stack Feb. 23; Research Paper April 26).

If you have a physical or mental disability that requires an accommodation or academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor at your earliest convenience.

### Set Texts:

John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South

Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South

Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community

K. Sue Jewell, Survival of the African American Family: The Institutional Impact of U.S. Social Policy

### Course Outline:

**Week One** Tuesday January 19

## Introductions

Reading: Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (abridged version on Blackboard)

Reading for Week Two:

John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*

**Week Two** 26 January "Slavery Destroyed the Black Family"

Reading for Week Three:

Blassingame, *The Slave Community*

Gutman, Herbert G., *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, Introduction (On Reserve)

**Week Three 2** February Historians versus Moynihan

(First Book Report due Feb. 9)

Reading for Week Four:

Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*

**Week Four** 9 February Women, Wives, and Husbands

Reading for Week Five:

Joy DeGruy Leary, A Dissertation on African American Male Youth Violence: "Trying to Kill the Part of You that isn't Loved," Portland State University 2001, (Copies available on Reserve)

Bruce Sacerdote, "Slavery and Intergenerational Transmission," <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~bsacerdo/wpapers/Slavery3.pdf>.

**Week Five** 16 February Moynihan and his Supporters?

(Second Book Report due Feb. 23)

Reading for Week Six:

Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community

**Week Six** 23 February The Structure of Poverty and Wealth

Stack, All Our Kin

**Week Seven** 1 March

K. Sue Jewell, Survival of the African American Family: The Institutional Impact of U.S. Social Policy

**Week Eight** 8 March Third Book Report due March 15)

Spring Break

**Week Nine** 15 March

Jewell, Survival of the African American Family

### **Discussion and Research Topics**

**Week Ten** 22 March The Media and the Black Family: From the Cosby Show to The Wire

Topic: Mass Incarceration

**Week Eleven** 29 March

Selecting a Research Project (2):

Topics: 1] Education Gap 2] Wealth Gap 3] Health Gap

**Week Twelve** 5 April March

Research Project

1] Declining Black Marriages 2] Same Sex Marriage 3] Teen Pregnancy

**Week Thirteen** 12 April

Research Project (2)

**Week Fourteen** 19 April

Presentations (1)

**Week Fifteen** 26 April

Presentations (2)

Final Project Due (in class)