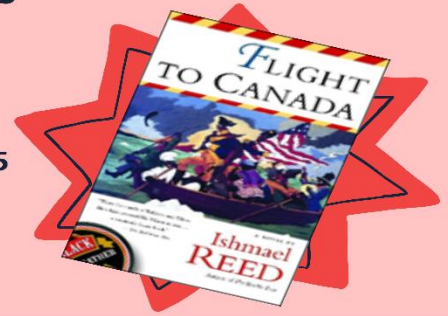


Slave Narratives and Neo-Slave/Freedom Narratives

DR. DELIA STEVERSON

SPRING 2021 / MWF 11:45-12:35



AML 4685 sec 102H, M117

Class Time/Location: MWF P 5 Online and CBD 0210

Mondays are asynchronous and WF are synchronous

Phone and Email	352-294-2854 / dsteverson@ufl.edu
Preferred Form of Contact	Canvas Email or Slack
Office Hours	Wednesdays 2pm-4pm on Zoom by appointment

In 1966 Margaret Walker published *Jubilee*, a quasi-fictional novel that recounts a black woman's experience through slavery, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction. This text would serve as the beginning of a genre of African American writing that Ishmael Reed would later pen *neo-slave* or *freedom narratives*. As Ashraf Rushdy posits in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel*, neo-slave narratives were not created in a vacuum, but rather are a continuation of African American oral and literary traditions, specifically the slave narrative. To understand the tradition by which the neo-slave narrative arose, it will be important to first identify the traditions of the slave narrative. Other than for the abolishment of slavery, what were the purposes of slave narratives? How did African American authors consider issues of violence, agency, authenticity, and sponsorship when crafting their slave narrative? What are the larger themes in slave narratives and how do neo-slave narratives rework those themes?

Course Learning Goals: At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss history and analyze the impact of slavery on African American writing
- ✓ Become familiar with critical periods, discourses, and writers in the Slave Narrative and Neo-Slave Narrative genres
- ✓ Develop and practice reading, writing, and oral skills through varied assignments

Communications: I will communicate with you primarily through Canvas, most of the time through the announcements page or through Canvas Email. Please **allow 24 hours for a response**. We'll also be using Slack, which is a neat app that helps all of us stay in touch with each other and share both important but also fun information. Be sure to join the Slack [here](#).

Learning Environment: Please be sure to give yourself, me, and each other some GRACE. Please make use of the camera feature. It's awkward to feel like I'm only talking to myself.

Be kind and gentle with each other. You can still disagree but do it in a constructive way. Have patience! This is important because we want to be patient and understanding with each other. I'll be patient with you and please **be patient with me**.

Be yourself in this digital or in-person space, and at the same time think about how you can be your best self, despite the unprecedented times. **I do not**

tolerate bullying or extreme disrespect—whether that be toward each other or toward myself. If you feel bullied in our class environment, *please* communicate that with me and I'll rectify the situation.

I don't mind snacks or drinks on Zoom or in the classroom. Just mute your microphone and try not to let it distract you or your classmates. Be respectful of my time and your classmates' time by being present and engaged with that day's material. My classes are generally discussion-based, so share your opinions—I look forward to hearing them, and I'm sure your classmates do too!

Required Reading and Other Course Materials

- ✚ Frederick Douglass – *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)*
- ✚ Harriet Jacobs – *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)*
- ✚ Zora Neale Hurston – *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”* (2018)
- ✚ Margaret Walker – *Jubilee* (1966)
- ✚ Octavia Butler – *Kindred* (1979)
- ✚ J. California Cooper – *Family* (1991)
- ✚ Other readings available via Canvas and/or UF libraries

*indicates available for open access online

Assignment Breakdown (Out of 100%)

Analysis of Antebellum Slave Narrative	20%
Slavery on Film Analysis	10%
Discussions and In-Class Assignments, Participation	40%
Slavery in Contemporary American Popular Imagination	30%

Policy on Late and Make-Up Work

Daily assignment due dates will be listed on Canvas. It is your responsibility to turn in assignments on time. Late daily assignments will lose 1 point for each day they are late. Late essays will lose half a letter grade for each day they are late after the deadline.

However, I do understand that sometimes life happens – I’m here to see

you succeed, not fail. Just talk to me in advance if there becomes a circumstance that would require you to miss a deadline. The earlier you discuss it with me, the easier it will be to figure out an alternative plan.

Grade Return Timing

It is my goal to return your graded work to you in a timely fashion. **Expect at least two weeks turn-a-round** for major

assignments (essays, projects). For everyday assignments, please allow **at least a week for graded work.**

Point Range for this Class:

Letter Grade	Range:		Letter Grade	Range:	
A	100 %	to 94.0%	C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%	C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%	D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%	D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%	D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%	F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

UF Course Policies

✦ **Inclusion and Accessibility:** I am committed to making our classroom as accessible as possible for all students. I'd love to hear your input regarding how I can make online and f2f teaching more accessible for everyone. We all learn in different ways and it's important to me that you feel supported throughout the semester. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need specific accommodations, and I will do my absolute best to make sure that all students have multiple ways of accessing our class information. Additionally, it's a good idea to connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). I invite you to share your letter with me, so that I will be better equipped to help support your learning needs.

✦ **Workload:** As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. For our class, these may include reading/viewing

assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

✦ **Student Evaluations:** Evaluations are important. I'd love your professional and respectful feedback on the quality of my instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from [the GatorEvals website](#).

✦ **Recording Zoom Sessions:** To make our virtual classroom more accessible, our Zoom meetings will be recorded, but the chat feature will not. Also, please know that office hours are confidential and will *not* be recorded.

✦ **Asynchronous Mondays** – Every Monday class beginning January 25th will be asynchronous. I will have that day's assignment posted to Canvas by the Sunday before at 5pm. Most Monday assignments will be due Mondays at 11:59pm unless otherwise specified. It is your responsibility to stay on top of these assignments.

Attendance: It should go without saying that attendance and participation are mandatory for your success in this class. Please show up to either our virtual classroom or f2f on time and free from unwanted distractions. **You are allowed four absences** from our synchronous class – but it's better form to inform me of your absences beforehand. After the fourth absence, your final grade will be deducted one point for each day you are not present. Six or more absences will result in failure of the course. This policy is flexible because as you know, we're in the midst of a pandemic and things happen.

Formatting: Please write in MLA format. For the sake of accessibility, you may choose to write in either Times New Roman, Tahoma, or Verdana font. If you need more information on MLA formatting, [check out the Purdue Owl.](#)

College is tough! Here's a list of additional UF resources that might aid you along the way:

- [Disability Resource Center](#) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
- [University Police](#)
- [Career Connections Center](#) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.
- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services including a [variety of workshops](#) throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).
- [Dean of Students Office](#) provides a variety of services to students and families, including [Field and Fork](#) (UF's food pantry) and [New Student and Family programs](#).
- [Multicultural and Diversity Affairs](#) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.
- [Office of Student Veteran Services](#) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.
- [ONE.Uf](#) is the home of all the student self-service applications

Schedule of Readings

Week 1 1/11	Introduction
1/13	Syllabus Review 19 th Century historical background

1/15	Philip Gould – “The Rise, Development, and Circulation of the Slave Narrative”
Week 2 1/18	No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
1/20 Antebellum Slave Narrative	Frederick Douglass – <i>Narrative of the Life</i> (1845) Preface and Chapters 1-9
1/22	<i>Narrative of the Life</i> Chapters 10-11 and appendix Dickson Bruce, Jr – “Politics and Political Philosophy in the Slave Narrative”
Week 3 1/25 (asynchronous)	James Olney – “I was Born’: Slave Narratives, their Status as Autobiography, and as Literature”
1/27	Harriet Jacobs – <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (1861) Preface, Introduction, Chapters I, II, V, VII, X, XII, XIV, XVII
1/29	Jacobs – <i>Incidents</i> Chapters XX, XXI, XXIII, XXIX, XXXIX, XL, XLI, appendix
Week 4 2/1	Slave Narrative Analysis John Sekora – “Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative”
2/3	Slave Narrative Analysis discussion
2/5	Slave Narrative Analysis rough draft due: 600 words minimum In-Class Peer Review
Week 5 2/8	Slave Narrative Analysis final draft due by 11:59pm

2/10 WPA Narratives	Introduction to WPA Narratives Zora Neale Hurston – <i>Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”</i> (2018) Foreword, Introduction, Editor’s Note, and Preface – Chapter II
2/12	<i>Barracoon</i> Chapters III-VI
Week 6 2/15	Analyzing a WPA narrative
2/17	<i>Barracoon</i> Chapters VII – End
2/19 Neo-Slave Narratives	Margaret Walker – <i>Jubilee</i> (1966) Chapters 1-6 Ashraf Rushdy – “The Neo-slave Narrative” in <i>Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel</i>
Week 7 2/22	Watch Margaret Walker <i>For My People</i> <i>Jubilee</i> Chapters 7-16
2/24	<i>Jubilee</i> Chapters 17-28
2/26	<i>Jubilee</i> Chapters 29-40
Week 8 3/1	<i>Jubilee</i> Chapters 41-49
3/3	<i>Jubilee</i> Chapters 50-End
3/5	Margaret Walker – “How I Wrote <i>Jubilee</i> ” Amy Levin – “The Violation of Voice: Revising the Slave Narrative”
Week 9 Slavery on Film 3/8	Slavery on Film Assign partners for Slavery in the American Imagination Project Begin reading chosen novel
3/10	Slavery on Film

3/12	Slavery on Film assignment due by 11:59pm
Week 10 3/15	Octavia Butler – <i>Kindred</i> (1979) Prologue-The Fall Chapter 2 (pages 1-65)
3/17	<i>Kindred</i> The Fall Ch.3- The Fight Ch. 4 (pages 65-126)
3/19	<i>Kindred</i> The Fight Ch.5- End of The Fight (pages 126-188)
Week 11 3/22	<i>Kindred</i> The Storm – End of the Novel Sheryl Vint – “‘Only by Experience’: Embodiment and the Limitations of Realism in Neo-Slave Narratives”
3/24	Recharge Day – No Class
3/26	J. California Cooper – <i>Family</i> (1991) Chapters 1-5
Week 12 3/29	<i>Family</i> Chapters 6-11
3/31	<i>Family</i> Chapters 12-14
4/1	<i>Family</i> Chapters 15-end Cynthia Bryant – “‘How I Got Over’: Negotiating Whiteness in J. California Cooper’s <i>Family</i> ”
Week 13 4/5	Slavery in the Contemporary American Imagination Project Read and analyze chosen novel
4/7	Read and analyze chosen novel
4/9	Read and analyze chosen novel

Week 14 4/12	Brainstorm additional mediums Read and analyze two scholarly sources about novel
4/14	Work on presentation and annotated bibliography
4/16	Work on presentation and annotated bibliography Annotated Bibliography due at 11:59pm
Week 15 4/19	Presentations due online by 5pm Begin watching and responding to presentations
4/21	Presentation Responses due by 11:35am (before class) Final class discussion