WRPR 193B
Slavery in Ancient Greece and Rome
First-Year Writing Seminar

Professor Marilyn Evans
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Course Description

According to the ancient historian M. I. Finley, there have been only five genuine slave societies, and two of them were ancient: those of classical Greece and Rome (the other three are the United States, the Caribbean and Brazil). Slavery was deeply woven into the fabric of everyday life in both societies, since it functioned as the key principle of social organization and the dominant mode of production. This course will explore slavery as a social, political, legal, economic and cultural institution in both the Greek and Roman worlds. In order to consider the impact of slavery on state and society in ancient Greece and Rome we will reflect on a number of topics, including the origins of slavery; the sources, number, legal status and treatment of slaves; ancient attitudes towards slaves and slavery; the family life of slaves; the many forms of slave labor; slave revolts and resistance; representations of slaves in literature and art; the archaeology of slavery; and manumission and freedom. We will also consider slavery in the American south to help us situate ancient slavery in a broader historical context. The class is discussion based, with occasional lectures.

Course Goals

• To gain skills that will help you write a successful research paper and improve your written communication proficiency
• To improve your ability to analyze primary sources
• To practice analyzing scholarly texts with an eye towards identifying the main thesis, arguments, and scholarly merit as well as quality of writing
• To build on your oral communication skills through peer tutorials, class discussion and oral presentations

Required Texts

K. R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge 1994); Bradley in syllabus
N. R. E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (Bristol Classical Press 1993); Fisher in syllabus
T. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Routledge 1981); Wiedemann in syllabus
F. Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* with an introduction by R. B. Septo (Harvard Belknap Press: Cambridge, MA 2009); Douglass in syllabus
Evaluation

Attendance and participation: 25%
Essays: 45%
  Essay 1 (due Friday, Feb. 15th, at 5 pm): 5%
  Essay 2 (due Friday, Mar. 1st, at 5 pm): 5%
  Essay 3 (first draft due Friday, Mar. 22nd, at 5 pm; final draft due Friday, Apr. 5th, at 5 pm): 15%
  Essay 4 (first draft due Friday, Apr. 19th, at 5 pm; final draft due Friday, May 17th at NOON): 20%
Class discussion guide: 10%
Reading journal: 10%
Peer tutorials: 10%

Grade scale


Assignments and expectations

1. Attendance is expected at every class session. Absences are excused on the grounds of illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions. All other absences are unexcused and will negatively affect your participation grade. Assignments that are not completed due to an unexcused absence will receive a zero and cannot be made up. Each student is responsible for making sure she, he or they understands what material was covered in the event of an absence. More than three unexcused absences is grounds for a failing grade in the class.

2. Participation in every class meeting is expected of each student. This involves preparing the assigned readings and contributing to class discussion. Asking questions is encouraged! In addition, please be respectful and attentive when other students and the professor are speaking. Even if you have not prepared the assigned readings for the day, I still expect that you will participate in class. Such situations will not negatively impact your grade unless I notice them becoming routine. Make sure you bring your copy of the readings to class.

2. Essays There will be four essays due over the course of the semester. Each is essay is designed to help you develop your skills as a researcher and writer. The first essay will be a critical analysis of a work or works of scholarship; the second will be a primary source analysis. The last two essays will combine elements of the first two: the third will be a comparative essay and the fourth a well-developed research paper. These essays will be submitted first as a draft and then as a revision. After the first draft of the third and fourth papers, we will meet in writing tutorials in groups of four students who read and comment on one another’s work. Details for
each essay assignment will be provided at least two weeks before the due date. Due dates for each assignment are listed in the weekly schedule of the syllabus.

3. **Reading journal** Once a week you will be asked to write a response to the readings on Moodle. You can choose which day to post (Tuesday or Thursday) and this can change from week to week. Your posts must be recorded by 9am on the day that the reading is assigned in order to receive credit. Each post should be approximately 250 words.

4. **Discussion guide** In pairs, you will lead the discussion of one class meeting. Consider yourself professor for the day. You will guide the class through the assigned readings and discussion. As part of your preparation for serving as discussion guide, I recommend that you meet with me prior to the class meeting assigned to you. You will be evaluated on your preparation of stimulating discussion questions, your knowledge of the assigned readings and your ability to engage with the questions and responses of your classmates.

5. **Tutorials** For the last two essays, we will hold tutorial sessions in groups of four. Your attendance and participation in these tutorials is mandatory. You will be expected to read the essays of your assigned group as well as to offer constructive criticism on each essay. Preparation for tutorial is an important part of the course as you will learn by reading one another’s drafts as well as by listening to your fellow students comment on yours. You must turn in your essays on time since other people are depending on you.

Course policies

1. **Academic honesty** Academic honesty is expected of and required from each student. While I encourage you to meet in pairs or small groups to discuss the material, and have no problem with you discussing paper topics with one another, all work, including exams and written assignments, must be your own. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Any willful violation of the Academic Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Council for disciplinary action. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty for the purposes of this course, please ask. Every student is expected to uphold Haverford’s Academic Honor Code (the Honor Code can be read here: [http://honorcouncil.haverford.edu/the-code/](http://honorcouncil.haverford.edu/the-code/)).

2. **Accommodations policy** Haverford College is committed to providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment, please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at [he-ads@haverford.edu](mailto:he-ads@haverford.edu). The Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations.

Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and want to use their accommodations in this course should share their verification letter with me and also make
arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss their specific accommodations. Please note that accommodations are **not retroactive** and require advance notice to implement.

It is a state law in Pennsylvania that individuals must be given advance notice if they are to be recorded. Therefore, any student who has a disability-related need to audio record this class must first be approved for this accommodation from the Coordinator of Access and Disability Services and then must speak with me. Other class members will need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

3. **Academic environment** Please be respectful of the academic environment. Engaging in personal conversations, using cell phones, text messaging, interneting, listening to music, reading newspapers, doing crossword puzzles, sleeping or engaging in other personal diversions during class are all disruptive. In class, put your laptops and phones away (and the latter on silent); e-readers are permitted to discuss the readings. Please be respectful of the opinions of others. If you disagree with an opinion voiced by another student, carefully word your response to reflect your disagreement with the opinion rather than as an attack on the individual.

4. **Late work** Essays submitted after the deadline will be deducted a full grade for each 24 hour period they are late.

**Weekly Schedule**

*NB - this is a provisional syllabus only. The schedule and assignments may change at any time, but you will be given notice.*

**Week 1: Introduction to the course**

Jan. 22 – Introductions; Syllabus

Reading assignment: N/A

Jan. 24 – Historical context


**Week 2: Definitions and evidence**

Jan. 29 – Definitions of slavery

Reading assignment: O. Patterson 1982, pp. 1-34 (Moodle); Fisher 1-9.

Jan. 31 – The ancient evidence

Week 3: The origins and early development of slavery in Greece and Rome

Feb. 5 – The origins of Greek slavery and other forms of servitude

Reading assignment: Fisher 10-33; Y. Garlan 1988, pp. 24-40 (Moodle); Wiedemann nos. 3, 15-16.

Feb. 7 – The origins of Roman slavery

Reading assignment: K. Hopkins 1978, pp. 99-118 (Moodle); Wiedemann nos. 17-20, 69, and 83.

Week 4: The demography of slavery and the slave trade

Feb. 12 – The sources of Greek and Roman slaves

Reading assignment: Fisher 34-47; Bradley 31-56; Wiedemann nos. 101-125.

Feb. 14 – The slave trade: slave traders and enslaved

Reading assignment: S.R. Joshel 2010, Ch. 3, pp. 78-110 (Moodle); M.I. Finley 1972, pp. 162-176 (Moodle).

**Essay 1 due Friday, Feb. 15th, at 5 pm**

Week 5: Slave labor and the economic role of slaves

Feb. 19 – Slave labor in Greece and Rome

Reading assignment: Fisher 37-57; Bradley 57-80; Wiedemann nos. 86, 87, 126-157.

Feb. 21 – Economic role of slavery

Reading assignment: W. Scheidel 2008, pp. 105-126 (Moodle); W. Jongman 2003, pp. 100-122 (Moodle).

Week 6: Daily life

Feb. 26 – The treatment of slaves in ancient Greece and Rome

Reading assignment: Fisher 65-66, 70-77; Bradley 81-106; Wiedemann nos. 177-208.

Feb. 28 – Family and social life

Reading assignment: S.R. Joshel 2010, Ch. 4, pp. 112-160 (Moodle).
**Essay 2 due by Friday, Mar. 1st, at 5 pm**

**Week 7: Manumission and ex-slaves**

Mar. 5 – Manumission in the Greek and Roman world


Mar. 7 – The freedom of freed slaves


**Week 8: Spring Break (no class)**

**Week 9: Resistance, revolt and rebellion**

Mar. 19 – Everyday conflict and planned revolt

Reading assignment: Fisher 79-85; Bradley 107-131; Wiedemann nos. 227-230.

Mar. 21 – Spartacus: the most famous slave revolt

Listen to: In Our Time “Spartacus” (Moodle).

Reading assignment: B. Shaw 2001, pp. 1-29 (Moodle); Wiedemann nos. 231-232.

**Essay 3, first draft, due by Friday, Mar. 22nd, at 5 pm**

*Tutorials to discuss this draft to be held next week*

**Week 10: Literary representations of slaves**

Mar. 26 – Slaves in Greek tragedy

Reading assignment: Euripides, *Trojan Women* (Moodle).

Mar. 28 – Slaves in Roman comedy


**Tutorials to discuss first draft of third essay**

**Week 11: Slavery and material culture**
Apr. 2 – Representations of slaves in art; traces of slaves in material culture

Reading assignment: TBD

Apr. 4 – Representations of freedmen in art; traces of freedmen in material culture

Reading assignment: TBD

**Essay 3, final draft due Friday, Apr. 5th, at 5 pm**

**Week 12: Philosophy and law**

Apr. 9 – Slavery, ancient morality and philosophy

Reading assignment: Fisher 86-98; Bradley 132-145; Wiedemann nos. 2, 236-240.

Apr. 11 – The ancient law of slavery

Reading assignment: Fisher 58-66; K. Bradley 1988, pp. 477-495 (Moodle); Wiedemann nos. 1, 4-14.

**Week 13: Slavery in Late Antiquity**

Apr. 16 – The decline of slavery in Late Antiquity


Apr. 18 – Slavery and Christianity

Reading assignment: Bradley 145-153; Wiedemann nos. 235, 241-243; TBD.

**Essay 4, first draft, due Friday, Apr. 19th, at 5 pm**

Tutorials to discuss this draft will be held the following week

**Week 14: The legacy of ancient slavery**

Apr. 23 – Justifications of modern slavery


Apr. 25 – Debating slavery through classics

Reading assignment: M. Malamud 2001, pp. 279-311 (Moodle).
**Tutorials to discuss first draft of fourth essay**

**Week 15: Comparative history**

Apr. 30 – Frederik Douglass and comparative methods

Reading assignment: Douglass, pp. 1-114.

May 2 – Frederik Douglass and Classics

Reading assignment: TBD

**Final draft of fourth essay due Friday, May 17 at NOON**