ENGL 669: Topics in African American and Africana Literature and Culture
THE SLAVE NARRATIVE IN ENGLISH
Dr. Lucia Hodgson
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The slave narrative, as William L. Andrews argues, is a “bedrock” tradition of African American literature. It is also a foundational genre of British and American literary traditions in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries. Black and white writers on both sides of the Atlantic wrote slave narratives—nonfictional and fictional—to represent, to challenge, and sometimes to perpetuate the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, and to articulate the tension between the simultaneous commitments to freedom for some and slavery for others.

This course fulfills the following distribution requirements:
One course in any literature, pre-1800
One course in any literature, 1800-the present

In this course, we will read many of the major slave narratives (factual and fictional) written in English by black and white authors between 1768 and 1861, including, but not limited to:

- *The Life, and Dying Speech of Arthur, a Negro Man* (1768)
- *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars In the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw* (1772)
- *Belinda’s Petition* (1783)
- *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* (1789)
- *The History of Mary Prince* (1831)
- *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831)
- *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave* (1834)
- *The Slave: or, Memoirs of Archy Moore* (1836)
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)
- *Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1847)
- *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1850)
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* (1853)
- *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (1853)
- *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859)
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

We will consider the literary and critical history of the slave narrative genre, including its transatlantic origins, its conventions, its controversies, its tropes, its relation to other genres (adventure tale, captivity narrative, novel, spiritual autobiography, travel narrative, bildungsroman, neo-slave narrative, abolitionist poetry, sentimental/domestic novel, neo-slave narrative, prison narrative, government interview), and its major theorists, including but not limited to: Frances Smith Foster, Hortense Spillers, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Valerie Smith, William L. Andrews, Helen Thomas, Laura Doyle, Saidiya Hartman, Philip Gould, Vincent Carretta, Lisa Lowe, Robert S. Levine, Hazel V. Carby, Christina Accomando, Eric Sundquist, and P. Gabrielle Foreman, and Jeannine Marie DeLombard.

Students will be encouraged to explore and write about connections between the slave narrative genre and their areas of research interest.