Course Description:

This course will consider the place and concept of Canada in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts written by men and women who were part of the African diaspora. Many of these authors were born into slavery and fled to Canada from the United States, some as Black Loyalist soldiers who had served in the American Revolutionary War, and some as “fugitives” who were travelling on the Underground Railroad. The course will assess the particular themes and forms of this writing as a specific genre, and it will consider new critical assessments of the representations and roles of Canada in this era of slavery. We will also compare the “Canadian” texts to some of the better-known anti-slavery texts from the same period that were published in England and the United States.

COURSE MATERIALS

Books:
(available at Benjamin Books, 122 Osgoode St.)

Mary Ann Shadd, A Plea for Emigration (Mercury)
Mary Prince, The History of Mary Prince (Penguin Classics)
Martin Delany, Blake, or, the Huts of America (Beacon)
Fredrick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, An American Slave (in the same volume as the Jacobs text)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (Broadview)

Texts available on course website:
John Marrant, A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black
Boston King, *Memoirs of Boston King*
David George, *An Account of the Life of David George*
Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*
Benjamin Drew (ed.), *The Refugee: Narratives of the Fugitive Slaves of Canada* (selections)

**Scholarly works: (accessible via the library and/or from professor)**

---

**EVALUATION**

Article Explication (Due **Oct. 11**) 15%
Theme Presentations (2) (see schedule) 30%
Final Essay (Due **Dec. 19**) 40%
Participation 15%

---

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Article Explication:** (3 pages) This paper will offer a detailed explication of one of the scholarly works studied in the course up to this point (i.e. texts by Gilroy, Lowe, Adams, Clarke, Miles, or Whitlock). An ‘explication’ is a detailed explanation of the text’s argument in one’s own words (not an overview, but a precise and concrete explanation) and a consideration of the implications of this argument. For example, students may choose to describe how their chosen scholarly text changes and/or enhances thinking on the topics addressed in the course to that point (perhaps how it has enhanced or changed your own thinking). Students may also apply one or more ideas from the scholarly work in question to one of the primary texts studied to that point. The best papers will offer as much detail as possible in the short amount of space allotted and also show evidence of the students’ own analytical contribution to the work and the matters it discusses.

**Theme Presentations:** In preparation for the final essays, students are asked to select a particular theme at the beginning of the term from the following list of five: mobility,
nation & “the black Atlantic”, religion, gender, literacy. Students will then track the appearances of their chosen theme through their readings of the course texts (the themes appear often) and disseminate what they have found in two brief presentations given throughout the term. The presentation dates appear on the schedule: students present on the day that their term appears. Group presentations are encouraged (since there will be five students presenting per presentation day) but students can also work individually. Prior to the presentation (the day before by 4pm) each student must post a quotation that he or she has found within a course text that can be interestingly related to the theme in question (ideally from the text being studied on the presentation day), and a brief paragraph that states what they find particularly interesting about this passage in relation to said text. The presentation should offer a brief and direct explanation of how they find the term operating in the course thus far and in the chosen text. The overall aim of the presentation should be to generate a concise, intellectually rich, and thought-provoking analytical discussion on the theme. Students may, especially for the first presentation, pose an analytical question that might generate discussion and also inform their own reading as the course continues. The second presentation should comment somewhat on how students’ understanding of the term in relation to course material has been enhanced and perhaps changed since the first presentation. Each student presenter should submit, within two days following the presentation, a 1-2 write-up based on the presentation (think of it as a small extension of your web-post). If all five students do not speak on a presentation day, or if someone’s work is not featured in the presentation, this will be weighted more heavily for the grade assessment. Presentations should take about 5 minutes per presenter (25 minutes per group presentation). If the presentation generates plenty of good discussion, more time will be allowed.

Note: The presentations should not be a list of all of the occurrences of a particular theme; nor should it be a summary, or an overview. Rather, it should offer an analysis of perhaps one or two particular passages in texts where the theme has occurred.

Final Essay: (8-10 pages double-spaced typed in Times New Roman font 12-point) The final essay of the course will be a comparative essay focussing on at least two of the texts studied on the course (ideally one of the classics and one of the lesser-known texts…but this is not necessary). The topic of the essay should be the theme you have studied and presented upon throughout the semester. You are welcome to write on something other than your theme, but please consult with me by December 1st if you wish to do so, with a one-page outline of the essay you intend to write. All essays must show evidence of individual research (i.e. the essay must reference scholarship that is not on the course reading list).

Participation: This course has been designed to meet the requests from undergraduate students for a fourth-year small-enrolment course that is not a seminar. Accordingly, students are not required to give long presentations or to provide the substance of the discussion for entire classes. Students are, however, required to attend every single class. There will be presentations given in ten of the classes, and students must engage with their fellow class-members who are delivering these presentations. As well, there will be regular discussions in which students must participate. In addition to these specific
modes of presentation, students will be asked to demonstrate the usual traits of good classroom citizenship. These include: reading all assigned texts, demonstrating respect for everyone in the class, and engaging with interest and patience in ideas that are new and challenging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Paul Gilroy, Introduction, <em>The Black Atlantic</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Olaudah Equiano, <em>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 15 | Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*  
Lisa Lowe, “Autobiography Out of Empire” |
| 20 | Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*  
Presentation: *Mobility* |
| 22 | Rachel Adams, “Fugitive Geographies: Rerouting the Stories of North American Slavery,” from *Continental Divides*  
George Elliot Clarke, “Embarkation,” from *Odysseys Home* |
| 27 | John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black*  
Tiya Miles, “‘His Kingdom for a Kiss’: Indians and Intimacy” |
| 29 | Boston King, *Memoirs of Boston King*  
David George, *An Account of the Life of David George*  
Presentation: *Religion* |
| **October** |  |
| 4 | Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*  
Presentation: *Gender* |
| 6 | Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*  
Gillian Whitlock, “The Silent Scribe: Susanna and ‘Black Mary’” |
| 11 | **Article Explication Due**  
Benjamin Drew ed., *The Refugee: Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada*  
(selections—pgs. 42-52 & 182-187) |
13  Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, An American Slave*

18  Fredrick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, An American Slave*
Presentation: **Literacy**

20  Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*

### Study Week October 24-28

**November**

1  Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

3  Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
Presentation: **Religion**

8  Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
Presentation: **Literacy**

10  Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

15  Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
Presentation: **Gender**

17  Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

22  Mary Ann Shadd, *A Plea for Emigration*
Presentation: **Nation & “the black Atlantic”**

24  Mary Ann Shadd, *A Plea for Emigration*

29  Martin Delany, *Blake, or, the Huts of America*

**December**

1  Martin Delany, *Blake, or, the Huts of America*
Presentation: **Mobility**

6  Martin Delany, *Blake, or, the Huts of America*
Presentation: **Nation & “the black Atlantic”**
SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND LATE ESSAYS:

Assignments must be submitted to me in person in class. Students must retain a paper copy of their submitted assignments. Electronic submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances. Late essays will receive a penalty of 2% per day, 10% per week. Consideration will be given to students who submit, along with their late assignments, a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation. All such certificates should indicate the precise dates the student was ill and/or unable to attend class or complete an assignment. If you wish to submit an assignment outside of class time (early or late) you must make an appointment with me to do so. Work submitted more than 2 weeks late will receive a mark of zero.

COMMUNICATION:

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about your work, including preparation of an assignment, questions about the texts, lectures, Canadian literature and criticism in general, questions about class policies, or questions about the English program. You can visit me in my office hours, but if you are not available during these times please feel free to schedule an appointment with me. For quick questions and clarifications I am usually available before and after class. I will respond to emails usually within 24 hours.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Anyone found guilty of academic fraud is subject to severe sanctions, including a mark of F or zero for the assignment or course in question, the loss of credits for the year in question, suspension or expulsion from the Faculty, or even revocation of your degree. It is your responsibility as a student to be familiar with and understand the University’s policy on academic fraud. The regulations apply whether the plagiarism was intentional or not. Forms of academic fraud include improper, missing or made-up bibliographical information, passing off others’ work as one’s own, turning in the same assignment for more than one class, and collaborative efforts when individual work is requested. Please feel free to consult me at any time if you have questions about plagiarism, documentation, and/or anything that might fall under the category of academic dishonesty. Further information is available from the Faculty of Arts website at: http://www.arts.uottawa.ca/eng/students/fraud.html.