TEXTS AND IDEAS: FREEDOM AND OPPRESSION

“Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate.”
—Amos 5:15

“My own mind is my own church.”
—Thomas Paine, 1794

 “[To] women and their female posterity... this government is not a democracy.... It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex.”
—Susan B. Anthony, 1873

“We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not mean the same thing.”
—Abraham Lincoln, 1864

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress…. Power concedes nothing without a demand.”
—Frederick Douglass, 1857

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Preceptors: Adele Kudish (ak626@nyu.edu); Dacia Mitchell (dacia.mitchell@nyu.edu)

REQUIRED TEXTS: (All are available at NYU Bookstore. Please obtain the editions listed below.)

*Paine, Collected Writings*, ed. Eric Foner. The Library of America
Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, Dover Publications
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*. Biblio Bazaar

In addition to selections from the required books there will be other readings distributed as handouts as the course unfolds, including brief original sources and critical essays.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This course will examine core aspects of the human quest for freedom—freedom from slavery, from sexual oppression, and from the shackling of the
mind—as these came to crisis points in nineteenth century America. It will begin with a critical look back at formative biblical texts and ideas; touch down briefly in the era of the American founders, and on the influences upon them; and culminate in a sustained attention to mid-nineteenth century reform movements, and in particular to the thought and work of Abraham Lincoln, as he and members of his generation, both allies and critics, worked to eradicate slavery from American society. The course will take a close look at contesting ideas of freedom, focusing on the words and deeds of activists, politicians, secessionists, and former slaves. Why did the Bible condone slavery, helping Americans justify continuing the practice? How is the idea of freedom related to the idea of human equality, and is it possible to address one without the other? How are competing ideas of freedom to be judged? What are the moral underpinnings of human progress? The course will take an unvarnished look at institutions of “unfreedom,” and at those who rose to do combat with them, including women, African Americans, poets, and freethinkers. Through primary sources and critical studies, students will be introduced to a range of transformative figures and texts.

Tentative schedule:

I. Prelude and Biblical Foundations


2) Jan. 27: Trajectories through Genesis: The authoritarian and the humanistic in ancient Israel: texts of terror and texts of freedom. Reading assignment: Genesis 12-50; Judges 11, 19

3) Feb. 1: Exodus and Conquest: foundational stories. Reading assignment: Exodus 1-21; Deuteronomy 7, 20; Joshua 1-11; Deuteronomy 15, 22, 23, 30, 34

4) Feb. 3: The Prophets of Israel: freedom and morality. Reading assignment: 2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Kings 19; Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah 40-53, Jonah


II. Texts of Enlightenment and of the American Founders


9) Feb. 22: Radical visionary of freedom: Thomas Paine. Reading assignment: Common Sense (6-46); The American Crisis I (91-99), IV (147-150), V (168-176), XIII (348-354); The Age of Reason (665-688, 731-742)

10) Feb. 24: Madisonian visions of liberty. Reading assignment: Memorial and Remonstrance (online); Federalist Papers #10, 51, 55; The U.S. Constitution, 1787; The Bill of Rights, 1791 [deadline for Writing Center appointments to have taken place]

III. Nineteenth Century Reformers: Texts and Ideas; 1830s-1870s

11) March 1: Ralph Waldo Emerson’s declarations of independence. Reading assignment: The American Scholar; The Divinity School Address


13) March 8: William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass: attacking slavery in the 1830s and 40s. Reading assignment: The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, pp. 1-163

March 10: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

March 14-18: SPRING BREAK; NO CLASSES

14) March 22: Henry David Thoreau and personal freedom. Reading assignment: Walden, selected pages

15) March 24: The Grimke Sisters and Friends: The Women’s Movement in the 1830s and 40s. Reading assignment: Sarah Grimke Letters; Pastoral Letter of 1837; Eighty Years More (111-113)
16) March 29: Stanton and Anthony: declarations of independence. Reading assignment: *Eighty Years More* (114-180); *Declaration of Sentiments, 1848* (online)

17) March 31: The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and the future of slavery. Reading assignment: *Freedom National, Slavery Sectional* (Sumner); *The Fugitive Slave Law* (Emerson); *Slavery in Massachusetts* (Thoreau), *Fourth of July Speech, 1852* (Douglass)

18) April 5: Lincoln and Slavery (1809-1857) Reading assignment: *A.L. Selections* (48 pages); Frederick Douglass, 164-209

19) April 7: Lincoln and Slavery, 1858-1861. Reading assignment: AL Selections (131 pages); Frederick Douglass, pp. 193-240; “The Slave Power Conspiracy” (Douglass)

20) April 12: John Stuart Mill: Philosopher of Freedom. Reading assignment: *On Liberty*

21) April 14: The Path to Emancipation, 1861-1863. Reading assignment: AL Selections (73 pages); “The Present and Future of Colored Races and America” (Douglass)

April 19: **In-lecture workshop. No reading assignment. Bring in draft of Paper #2**

22) April 21: Walt Whitman and personal liberation. Reading assignment: *Song of Myself*

23) April 26: Lincoln and Slavery, 1863-1865. Reading assignment: AL Selections (27 pages); Frederick Douglass, 240-270; “Our Work Not Done,” “The Mission of the War” (Douglass)

IV. **Aftermath**

24) April 28: Freedom’s Aftermath: The promise and betrayal of Reconstruction. Reading assignment: 14th, 15 Amendments; *The Civil Rights Cases of 1883*; selected writings by Frederick Douglass; Robert Ingersoll, *Eulogy for Walt Whitman*

[SECOND PAPER DUE IN LECTURE]

25) May 3: Course Conclusion and Review.

**FINAL EXAM:** Thurs., May 12, 10-11:50, Silver 206

**Course Requirements**

- Two papers: first 5 pages, second 10 pages (first worth 15%, second 25% of your final grade)
- Midterm examination (15%) Final examination (20%)
- Participation: lecture attendance, recitation attendance and active participation, and weekly journal entry submission (1 page or less): 25%

Recitation is an essential part of the course. Attendance and active participation is required, as is attendance at all lectures.
Statement on Academic Integrity
Morse Academic Plan, College of Arts and Science

As a student at New York University, you have been admitted to a community of scholars who value free and open inquiry. Our work depends on honest assessment of ideas and their sources; and we expect you, as a member of our community, likewise to maintain the highest integrity in your academic work. Because of the central importance of these values to our intellectual life together, those who fail to maintain them will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism consists in presenting ideas and words without acknowledging their source and is an offense against academic integrity. Any of the following acts constitutes a crime of plagiarism.

- Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person's work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.
- Paraphrasing words or ideas from another's work without attribution.
- Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another person.
- Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.
- Submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors.

Other offenses against academic integrity include the following.

- Collaborating with other students on assignments without the express permission of the instructor.
- Giving your work to another student to submit as his or her own.
- Copying answers from other students during examinations.
- Using notes or other sources to answer exam questions without the instructor's permission.
- Secreting or destroying library or reference materials.
- Submitting as your own work a paper or results of research that you have purchased from a commercial firm or another person.

**Particular emphasis is placed on the use of papers and other materials to be found on the World-Wide Web, whether purchased or freely available. In addition to having access to the same search engines as students, faculty also have at their disposal a number of special websites devoted to detecting plagiarism from the web.**

Plagiarism and other cases of academic fraud are matters of fact, not intention. It is therefore crucial that you be diligent in assuring the integrity of your work.

- Use quotation marks to set off words that are not your own.
- Learn to use proper forms of attribution for source materials.
- Do your own original work in each class, without collaboration, unless otherwise instructed.
- Don't use published sources, the work of others, or material from the web without attribution.
- For further information, consult the Bulletin of the College of Arts and Science, the CAS Academic Handbook, and the Student's Guide to NYU.

revised 11/2005
Academic Guidelines for Students
Morse Academic Plan, College of Arts and Science

To help foster common academic expectations among students and instructors, the following guidelines for MAP courses are offered to students. While these represent minimum expectations across the curriculum, individual faculty members may set additional course requirements. Students should therefore consult the course syllabus for details of policies in each class.

Attendance
Inasmuch as students have voluntarily sought admission to the University, they are expected to attend all class meetings, including all lectures and all meetings of associated recitation, workshop, or laboratory sections. Students may be excused for documented medical or personal emergency and will receive reasonable accommodation for the observance of religious holidays. In these cases, they should contact their instructors in advance or, in cases of emergency, as soon as is practicable. Students are responsible for making up any material or assignments they miss.

Classroom Decorum
The classroom is a space for free and open inquiry and for the critical evaluation of ideas, and it should be free of personal prejudice. Students and instructors alike have an obligation to all members of the class to create an educational atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which differences of opinion can be subjected to deliberate and reasonable examination without animus.

As a matter of courtesy to their fellow students and instructors, students should arrive at class promptly, prepared and ready to participate. Students are reminded particularly to shut off all cellular telephones and pagers and, except in cases of emergency, to remain in the classroom for the duration of the lecture or section meeting. If it is necessary to leave or enter a room once class has begun, students should do so quietly and with as little disruption as possible. Under University policy, disruptive classroom behavior may be subject to faculty review and disciplinary sanction.

Completion of Assignments
Students are expected to submit course work on time and to retain copies of their work until a final grade has been received for the course. Instructors are not obliged to accept late work and may assign a failing or reduced grade to such assignments.

Students who encounter sudden and incapacitating illness or an other comparably grave circumstance that prevents them from completing the final examination or assignment in a course may request a temporary mark of Incomplete from the course instructor. To receive an Incomplete, students must have completed all other requirements for the course, including satisfactory attendance, and there must be a strong likelihood they will pass the course when all work is completed.

Questions and Concerns
Up-to-date course information is available on the MAP website: www.nyu.edu/cas/map. Questions, concerns, comments, and feedback may be directed to the following members of the MAP staff, located in 903 Silver Center, 212-998-8119. Complaints will remain confidential.

Director: Prof. Joy Connolly morse.plan@nyu.edu
Associate Director for the FCC: Prof. Vincent Renzi map.fcc@nyu.edu
Associate Director for the FSI: Prof. Trace Jordan map.fsi@nyu.edu
Department Administrator: Ms Janet Lebeda morse.plan@nyu.edu

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Why MAP?
A Guide for Students

What is the MAP?
The Morse Academic Plan is the group of core courses that every student must complete in order to earn a degree from the College of Arts and Science. It represents the considered judgment of the faculty about what every College graduate should know as a part of his or her liberal arts education. In other undergraduate divisions at NYU, faculty of those schools have adopted parts of the MAP to provide a core experience in the liberal arts for their students as well. Because it is shared by students across different schools, majors, and programs, the MAP is also sometimes called the general education curriculum.

What’s “liberal” about the liberal arts?
“Liberal” comes from the Latin word liber, meaning “free.” In ancient Greece and Rome, liberal education was the pursuit of free men, that is, those with the means and leisure to be able to devote themselves to learning, rather than to labor.

Today when we speak of “liberal education,” we mean an education in the “liberal arts,” an education for men and women that frees intellectual capacities and the imagination through the study of human endeavor on a broad scale, from music, art, and philosophy, to encounters with nature and with cultures of other times and places.

What are the “liberal arts”?
Sometimes also called the “arts and sciences” or “liberal arts and sciences,” in the medieval university curriculum they were seven in number: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

Today, the liberal arts encompass all the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences—all those areas of inquiry that are pursued for the sake of expanding human knowledge, rather than as training for a particular profession.

(over)
What's the practical value of liberal education?

Education in the liberal arts builds your critical, analytic, and communications skills, giving you the preparation you need to flourish in the world of work and to become a productive member of society.

More than this, however, education in the liberal arts is preparation for life as a responsible, actively engaged citizen, equipping you with the open-mindedness and soundness of judgment necessary to reason, act, and lead. Indeed, this University—and the whole enterprise of higher education in the United States—was founded on the belief that college graduates have a special opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the common good.

What are the faculty's specific goals for the MAP?

In designing the MAP, the faculty sought to ensure that students would expand their capacity to communicate effectively, by improving their writing and gaining proficiency in a foreign language. This is why every undergraduate must complete Writing the Essay or its equivalent, and why the University maintains extensive opportunities for language study both in New York and at the global sites, as well as the non-credit Speaking Freely program.

The faculty also wanted to provide every student with opportunities to build his or her quantitative skills and to study the natural sciences. These studies give you the knowledge you need to be an independent-minded citizen in a world increasingly shaped by science and technology, where urgent questions of policy require prudent, well-informed judgments. We aim, too, to foster your appreciation of mathematics and the sciences as liberal pursuits.

We likewise believe that students should gain knowledge of the social sciences, which study how humans communicate, organize their communities, worship, use language, and engage in trade and diplomacy. Because the fine and performing arts connect us in unexpected ways, give pleasure, and reveal new perspectives on the world, the MAP also includes courses in Expressive Culture.

Finally, students should come to think of themselves as citizens of a larger world by gaining the ability to comprehend how people remote from themselves understand, experience, and imagine their lives. They should also come to know themselves better by engaging critically with the significant ideas that have shaped contemporary culture. For these reasons, all students in the MAP complete a course in Cultures and Contexts and a course in Texts and Ideas.

Does all this mean that you will take a few courses outside your main interests and comfort zone? That is our intention: Stretching the mind and rethinking old assumptions and beliefs are important preparation for your future. The MAP represents our commitment as a faculty to assuring you an undergraduate education that will equip you for success in your later careers and prepare you for a life of thinking critically and creatively about who you are, who you want to be, and how to better the world we live in.

September, 2010