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Fulbright-Hays GPA 2022

A Study of Artistic Representations of the African Diaspora in Salvador, Brazil

Fulbright Curriculum Project

1. Rationale

I previously have taught a course at the senior seminar level on narratives of slave resistance, for which my syllabus concentrated on the history and literature coming out of the Caribbean and the U.S. (see below). A curriculum reform within my department (English & Writing) has now created a permanent course devoted to “Revolution,” and I am slated to teach this course next semester, Spring 2023. I am very gratified that my study in this Fulbright program has allowed me to create for this course a unit that will highlight the history of slave resistance in Brazil, thereby internationalizing the curriculum further. My ultimate goal is to restructure this course as one that treats the literature of the Americas, and the inclusion of Brazil in this unit is an important first step to reaching beyond North American narratives. I am imagining that this unit would work best toward the end of the course, when students have already learned much about other histories of slave revolt throughout the hemisphere, so that they can effectively compare and contrast the role of resistance in obstructing slavery in Brazil and reflect upon the visibility of important figures of slave resistance in contemporary Brazilian culture, as opposed to the relative obscurity of parallel figures (like Nat Turner, Gabriel Prosser, or the leaders of the Stono Rebellion) in U.S. society.

2. Curriculum Objectives

This course provides students with important historical context for the literary texts that they study, so that they can interpret the role of slave resistance both to the period prior to abolition and analyze the significance of narratives reflecting this history in the twentieth century. Students come away from the course with a broader understanding of the various forms that slave resistance took, and a sense of some of the major slave uprisings in the hemisphere (such as the Haitian Revolution, slave revolts in Jamaica and Cuba) and an understanding of how representations of this important history have been used in latter day texts to depict the need for continued resistance to social inequities.

The proposed unit will begin by providing students with an overview of slave resistance in Brazil, the largest slave colony in the Americas, with an especial emphasis placed upon the quilombos (communities founded by runaway slaves) and the leader Zumbi dos Palmares, and a few other signal revolts, such as the Revolt of the Malês (1835), and the Revolt of the Buzios (1798).

Then, different from what I have ever done in the course before, students will be asked to choose a female slave resistance heroine to research for a special independent project. I will provide them a list of about eight women that Jarid Arraes profiles in her untranslated book *Heroínas Negras Brasileiras: Em 15 Cordeis*, and summarize her

characterization of these women in her cordels, which are short pamphlets written in verse and sold cheaply to the public; I will explain the history of the form and its use by Arraes here. We will have extensive discussion of the mythologized icons of slave resistance Anastásia and Dandara, delving into recent controversy around whether or not they should be canonized as heroines of resistance if we cannot prove they ever lived. We will read about what we do know of these women and uptake as icons of present-day resistance for women in Brazil, as in the use of their image in art works, commemorative festivals, and protest posters. In addition, we will study historical figure Chica da Silva (1732-96) and discuss empowerment, exploitation and coercion, and debate to what degree sexuality should be considered a tool of the resisting slave.

From there, students will make their own choice of a female slave resistance heroine for a special research presentation they will make to their peers. They may extend beyond Brazil to include women like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, Carlota of Cuba, Nanny of the Maroons, Sarah Sally Bassett of Bermuda, or another figure from either history (like Sanité Belair or any of the other women who played a role in the Haitian Revolution or even a figure like Sally Hemmings, who might merit more investigation as a resisting figure.) Likewise, students might choose a figure from fiction, such as characters in William Wells Brown's novel *Clotel*, or from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, or other well-known material. Finally, students might opt to stick with the topic of Brazilian heroines, as by choosing someone else from Arraes's book. *Part of our discussions, I imagine, will surround to what degree reality, historical accuracy, or mythologization impact the cultural value of the figure.*

### 3. Guiding questions

#### **For pre-discussion/lecture sessions:**

- \*What did the plight of the enslaved look like in Brazil as opposed to those in the US or other colonies we have studied in the western hemisphere?
- \*What are some similarities and differences between U.S. slavery and Brazilian slavery?
- \*What strategies of resistance were employed by enslaved persons in Brazil and where do these parallel those we have studied in other countries?
- \*Where do we see differences between the ways that women resisted slavery in Brazil as opposed to in the U.S.?
- \*How do we know what we know about slave revolt? What kind of historical record is left and how does this impact our ability to connect with these leaders?

#### **For individual projects:**

- \*What historical or fictional woman did you choose to analyze for your presentation? (Introduce your peers to this person in a brief summary.)
- \*What was the source material you drew from?
- \*What kinds of representations of this figure are visible in society today and what value does that have? [For example, you might choose Harriet Tubman, and specifically present not only a brief overview of her life, but also introduce your peers to any of the many monuments that exist to her in the U.S., the recent film *Harriet* (2019), use of her image in graffiti, or the Tubman twenty, which has yet to be put into circulation.]

If you are highlighting representational artefacts, research their production and find out about the historical context that led to their creation.

Address in your assignment:

(A.) the historical context of the person if real; the historical context of the setting if you choose a fictional character

(B.) the form of the identifiable artefacts: films; monuments; poems; autobiographies; political speeches; artworks, etc. and

(C.) the content of your text: is the form suited to purpose? Why or why not?

If appropriate: Where was this representation historically accurate, and where did it take creative license? Where it was historically inaccurate, did this serve a purpose for the contemporary spectator/reader?

**For closing discussion (after all student presentations have been given):**

\*How have images of slave resistance been used in contemporary culture?

\*How do representations of resisting enslaved women differ from those of enslaved men?

\*How do these representations treat acts of violence, sexuality, complicity, fragility, etc.

\*How are U.S. images/narratives similar or different to the way that legacies of slave resistance are preserved elsewhere, as in Brazilian culture, which we have learned about in this course?

\*What is the value of reflecting back on legacies of slave resistance?

\*Real or Imagined: Does it matter? What are our limitations in knowing the truth about these historical figures or persons given the limitations of the records?

\*Do texts have a different value if they are “historical accurate”? Who decides what constitutes *accuracy* and why is that important or unimportant to the figures’ uptake in culture today?

#### 4. Delivery Plan

*Week one:*

1. Course readings. Students will begin the unit with discussion of readings, mainly excerpts from various historical books on Anastácia, Dandara, and Chica da Silva, a documentary viewing, and two films. They will be asked to process what they have learned about the history of slavery in Brazil in a quiz.
2. Lecture. A lecture will be given to highlight aspects of the material that may be untranslated into English, and thus, difficult to access. I will provide my own translations of Arraes’s poems on revolutionary female heroines, and present various artistic renderings and other places where the images of these women are today found in Brazil. (In addition, I will show the class some photographs of monuments, installations, and markers celebrating Zumbi and other monuments to slave resistance that I captured in the Bahia region of Brazil.) We will discuss the representations of various historical personages, reflect on to what degree historical accuracy is important, and understand how their images are used today and to what effect.

*Week two:*

3. Student projects and presentations. Students will be given a detailed prompt with a rubric and a set of questions that they must answer in response to the assignment. (See Guiding Questions, above.) Students will identify a female icon of slave resistance (either fictional, mythological, or historic). They will research the history of the chosen figure or the cultural context of the myth/text's creation. I will provide them with a list of possible subjects, and we will have a special dedicated time when they can use references in the library such as Junius Rodriguez's three volume series, the *Encyclopedia of Slave Rebellion and Resistance*. Students will be given the option to choose from among the figures we have previously discussed in class, or to find another to study, so long as I pre-approve the topic. Students will be given class time to conference, to research, and to share their projects with their peers.

5. Assessment

**A unit quiz** will measure the students' successful understanding of the historical texts on slavery in Brazil and of my lecture on the female heroines of slave resistance at the end of the first week of this unit.

Students will produce a **short paper** on their chosen figure, which will be graded on the criteria of how well their ideas are expressed and how satisfactorily they have answered the questions above. In addition, they will receive a grade for a short presentation they will make to share their observations with the class, based on how effectively they have transmitted their ideas to the class. They will be asked to use visuals or a powerpoint.

6. Bibliography

These course materials will be integrated into my class on "Slave Rebellion and Slave Revolts" when I teach it in Spring 2023. (See a previous version of the course syllabus below the bibliography.)

Araujo, Ana Lucia (2012). "Zumbi and the Voices of the Emergent Public Memory of Slavery and Resistance in Brazil". *Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und Vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung*. 22: 95–111.

Araujo, Ana Lucia. "Dandara and Luisa Mahin are considered heroines of Brazil—the Problem is that they never existed" 3 June 2019. The Intercept:  
<<https://theintercept.com/2019/06/03/dandara-luisa-mahin-panteao-patria/>>

*Escrava Anatstácia* (TV miniseries, 1990)

Furtado, Júnia Ferreira. *Chica da Silva: a Brazilian slave of the eighteenth century*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Handler, Jerome and Kelly E. Hayes, "Escrava Anastácia: The Iconographic History of a Brazilian Popular Saint" *African Diaspora* 2 (2009) 25-51,  
DOI: 10.1163/187254609X430768

*Quilombo*. (dir. Carlos Diegues) 1984.

Reis, Joao. *Slave Rebellion in Brazil, the Malê Uprising of 1835*. Johns Hopkins University Press. 1993.

Rodriguez, Junius P. *Encyclopedia of Slave Rebellion and Resistance, three volumes*.

Schwartz, Stuart. *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery*. University of Illinois Press (Chicago) 1992.

Wood, Marcus. *Black Milk: Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America*. Oxford UP, 2013.

*Xica* (Diegues, 1976).

### **Previous Syllabus:**

In my most recent iteration of this course, students were provided with access to Junius P. Rodriguez's *Encyclopedia of Slave Rebellion and Resistance*, and they were each tasked with choosing an aspect of slave resistance to work on for their major topics. I demonstrated what such an approach might look like in the form of a PowerPoint on Brazilian commemorations of Zumbi and the monuments regarding the 1798 "Revolt of the Alfaiates [Tailors]" aka Revolt of Buzios, that are found in Salvador); I also presented one of the graphic novels produced by Maurico Pestana, published by Olodum, also on the Revolt of the Tailors; finally, we had a lesson and discussion of *Thrall'd*, a videogame, for its representation of runaway slaves in Brazil.)

\*Unfortunately, we were not able to see *Xica*, as was intended on the syllabus, due to the film's limited availability and the fact that, because of the Covid pandemic, the course was offered as dual instruction, with students accessing the course both remotely and in-person. I hope to integrate that film effectively next time.

### **Fall 2020**

**Dr. Sarah J. Lauro**

**University of Tampa**

**College of Arts & Letters**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Office hours: Tu, Th 10:30-12:00 via ZOOM:

<https://utampa.zoom.us/j/8056393384?pwd=aVRjR1JMTjN6MEU5ZUdhZG41Zm10QT09#success>

- **Class meets: MWF 10-11:10, Plant Hall SCIENCE WING 303**

### **TEXTS AND SUPPLIES**

Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno" (Broadview edition, recommended)

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*

Kyle Baker's *Nat Turner* (a graphic novel)

Octavia Butler, *Kindred*

James McBride, *The Good Lord Bird*

Herbert Aptheker, *Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion*

Carter Jackson, *Force and Freedom*

A Netflix account, Amazon Prime account, or other means of locating the films that we will watch:

*Xica* (Diegues, 1976).

*Amistad* (Spielberg, 1997)

*Burn!* (Pontecorvo, 1969)

*Birth of A Nation* (Parker, 2016)

*Harriet* (Lemmons, 2019)

*Django Unchained* (Tarantino, 2012)

*Slaves* (Biberman, 1969 )

*Tula: The Revolt* (Leinders, 2013)

*Sankofa* (Germima, 1993)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION & INTRODUCTION**

This upper level seminar class offers an opportunity for students to follow a course of intense study on a single subject. We will examine literature about slave revolts and rebellions, the historical realities behind events that have been dramatized in literature, and theoretical writings about the lived condition of the slave and his or her strategies of resistance. We will work with secondary and non-fiction texts as well as fiction. In addition to guided study and course readings, students may either pursue independent research projects that will prepare them for graduate study or a project that will prepare them for the environment of the working world. From Steven Spielberg's acclaimed film *Amistad*, to Kyle Baker's graphic novel on Nat Turner, to representation of rebel slaves in videogames, students will have a chance to compare representations of the topic in other media in a major project.

#### **400 – Level Courses [Advanced Research]**

- Are primarily for majors and minors
- Have pre-requisites of FYW 101 and one 200-level LIT course
- Are taught with an emphasis on student performance and production
- Have an emphasis on independent scholarship
- Require students to write and deliver a 10 to 12 page 'conference style' research paper
- Require students to prepare an abstract suitable for application to a conference

Lit 425 is an advanced level course geared to English majors and minors, but not exclusive to them. Prerequisites are required and familiarity with the basics of literary study is expected. A high level of engagement with the texts is expected but the practicum of the class will emphasize real world skills like critical thinking, communication with peers, group work and the like—a skill set that everyone will need in the working world. This class will be a model for what graduate-level study entails, and may in part help students decide if they want to pursue an advanced degree, but it will also hone skills like leadership and collaboration that everyone is likely to use in their careers.

LIT 425 students will produce a conference paper at the end of term, which they will deliver to the class. (We will have a few short assignments that prepare for that, including producing a project proposal, abstract, and bibliography.) Research will be conducted independently, though I am here to help and an appointment with me can always be made outside of class. In class, we will focus on the skills of group participation, discussion leading, and oral presentations in several assignments, including the conference paper presentation, which for some students may lead to presentation at an undergraduate conference.

Finally, LIT 425 is a seminar course, which means that it emphasizes student-led participatory learning with discussion rather than lecture. You should expect to do all the reading and be prepared to speak in class every day that we meet! Your “teacher” will be on the same level as all of the other students, an equal participant, not a leader in this course.

### **ORAL PRESENTATIONS/VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Students will each do a formal **oral presentation** (about 15 to 20 minutes) at the end of the term on a topic that they will select and develop as the major final project, the conference paper. Students are encouraged to create a powerpoint or other type of multimodal presentation to accompany the presentation of the paper, though this is not strictly required. A successful “A” grade presentation will do the following: present innovative research in a manner that is both accessible and entertaining, communicating clearly to one’s peers. Students should take this presentation seriously and are encouraged to dress professionally on this day, as they would at an academic conference. **See also the description of the major project, below.**

**Informal discussion leading:** Students will also be responsible for leading class discussion of one of the **historical document** selections that we will discuss. A successful “A” grade discussion leading will do the following: 1.) provide classmates with a handout giving the major points of the document and any necessary explanations or historical context; 2.) generate and lead the class through a series of engaging and original questions about the material; 3.) use creative elements whenever possible; and 4.) stimulate conversation about the specifics of the text. Students may work in pairs, or small groups, **but they must strive to keep the conversation going for at least 50 minutes.**

Finally, students will also be graded on their participation in class even when they are not the ones leading the conversation. A grade out of ten points will be given for the student’s intellectual contribution each week. Always come prepared to speak up.

## **FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Writing in this course is limited to three very **short assignments (a proposal of 250 words, an abstract of 200 words, and a Works Cited of 1-2 pages); the major assignment will be a 8-10 page (double-spaced) conference paper that will be delivered orally to the class and submitted for a grade.** I will describe these projects in much more detail once the semester begins, and you'll be provided with samples from my own scholarship, for all of these assignments. Essentially, these assignments provide an opportunity for you to formally develop your own innovative research project, work independently on this, and present your findings to the class; this is excellent preparation for the kind you are likely to be tasked with in the working world.

**Short assignment: Project proposal.** Before beginning your research, you will write a short (250 word) proposal (about a paragraph) describing the kind of research project you will do and submit it for approval. **Due: F 25 Sept**

**Short assignment: Works cited.** As you are beginning to write your conference paper, you will be asked to submit your list of references (1-2 pages single spaced; about one source per page written) for a grade and for approval. Your sources should be peer-reviewed, academic, and credible. **Due: M 12 Oct**

**Short assignment: Abstract.** Having drafted your paper, you will write a short summary of it, of the kind that are listed in academic conference proceedings and journals. Look at samples to get a feel for the tone of an abstract. 200 words (about a paragraph)  
**Due: F 20 Nov**

**Conference paper, to be submitted in hard copy, on the day of your presentation. (8-10 pp. double spaced + list of references).** A conference paper is different than a typical academic essay because it is written to be understood when presented verbally. It should be polished, but it can therefore be more creative and engaging than a typical research paper.

## **GRADING PERCENTAGES**

Below are the percentage breakdowns for all of your assignments in Eng 425.

Conference Paper	30%	
Oral Presentations	20%	Includes a formal presentation for your final project and a discussion leading of a chapter
Intellectual contribution	20%	participation in discussion
Small assignments:	30 %:	Proposal (5%), Abstract (10%), Works Cited (15% each)

## **ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND LATE POLICIES**

LIT 425 is a student-led seminar; therefore, attendance and participation are essential to student success. If a student misses more than two discussions, I may suggest withdrawing in order to avoid receiving an "F" in the course. Exceptions *may* be made in extraordinary circumstances with appropriate documentation, but it is the student's responsibility to discuss this matter with me.

As noted in the percentages above, 25% of your final grade is based on your participation, which I will determine at the end of the semester by evaluating your contributions as a speaker, writer, listener, and attentive observer of the class. You'll get weekly grades on your performance in the discussions, so see me early if you are not sure of how to improve your grade in this department. Note that this potentially represents a full grade swing for your final average. In other words, if you are not in class, you cannot participate in the fundamental work of our course, and that will precipitate a failing grade quite rapidly. **Stay in touch with me if you can't make it to class, and make sure you're on time, as these things count!** See the comportment rubric at the end of this document for further guidance.

Assignments will be lowered by one full letter grade for each day that they are late; there will be no make-ups for missed presentations unless in the most extreme of circumstances, and given prior approval.

**I will expect your full attention when you are in class:** That means that you must turn off cell phones, close laptops, and stay awake for our discussions. These are courtesies to your classmates, but they also reinforce our goal of engagement in this course. When you demonstrate classroom etiquette, it clearly shows up in your final grade for the course. **If you are caught TEXTING, I reserve the right to ask you to leave for the remainder of the period and you will not be allowed to make up any work missed.**

### **READING SCHEDULE AND DATES**

*What follows is a tentative schedule of dates for readings and for writing assignments. All assignments are to be completed by the dates below, unless otherwise noted in class or on Blackboard. We'll try to stick closely to this schedule, but note that all of these assignments and due dates are subject to change.*

W Aug 26 Introductions  
F Aug 28 Watch before class: *Slaves*

M Aug 31 *Benito Cereno*, first half  
W Sep 2 *Benito Cereno*, second half  
F Sep 4 discussion: Burn!

M Sep 7 LABOR DAY  
W Sep 9 Carpentier, part 1  
F Sep 11 discussion: Xica

M Sep 14 Carpentier, part 2  
W Sep 16 Carpentier, part 3  
F Sep 18 discussion: Sankofa

M Sep 21 Carpentier, part 4  
W Sep 23 Historical document 1: **Herbert Aptheker, Introduction; The Environment; The Event Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion**  
F Sep 25 **PROPOSALS DUE**

M Sep 28 **Full text of Nat Turner's historical confessions; AND Kyle Baker's Nat Turner (illustrated)**

W Sep 30 Historical document 2: Ch. 1 in Carter Jackson, Force and Freedom

F Oct 2 discussion: Tula: The Revolt

M Oct 5 *Kindred*: Prologue; The River; The Fire

W Oct 7: Historical document 3: Muriel Rukeyser, The Amistad Mutiny (scan on BB).

F Oct 9 discussion: Amistad

M Oct 12 *Kindred*: The Fall; **WORKS CITED DUE**

W Oct 14 Historical document 4: Ch. 2 in Carter Jackson, Force and Freedom

F Oct 16 discussion: Django Unchained

M Oct 19 *Kindred*: The Fight

W Oct 21 Historical document 5: Ch. 4 in Carter Jackson, Force and Freedom

F Oct 23 discussion: Birth of A Nation

M Oct 26 *Kindred*: The Storm

W Oct 28 *Kindred*: The Rope and Epilogue

F Oct 30 discussion: Harriet

M Nov 2 *The Good Lord Bird*: Prologue-N\*gger Bob

W Nov 4 *The Good Lord Bird*: Prisoner Again- end Part I.

F Nov 6 *The Good Lord Bird*: Part II-Squeezed

M Nov 9 *The Good Lord Bird*: Busting Out-Rousing the Hive

W Nov 11 *The Good Lord Bird*: The Plan- The Rail Man

F Nov 13 sample presentation: Thralled videogame: Slave Resistance in Brazil

M Nov 16 *The Good Lord Bird*: Annie--Attack

W Nov 18 *The Good Lord Bird*: A Bowl of Confusion- end

F Nov 20 **ABSTRACTS DUE**; Presentations Begin

M Nov 23 Presentations

W Nov 25 Thanksgiving

F Nov 27 Thanksgiving

**Final Exam Period: Mon Nov 30 10 AM-11:20 Last Presentations, via ZOOM**