

Syllabus (Revisions to be Expected)
English/History 344
Uncle Tom's Cabin: Icon and Archive
Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-4:20
Professor Carol Lasser and Professor Sandra Zagarell
Rice 315 and Rice 126



Hammatt Billings, illustration from 1852 original edition

Uncle Tom's Cabin was runaway bestseller in the US and abroad when it was published in novel form in 1852. Never out of print, it has been, and remains, one of the most influential and controversial books ever penned by an American writer. It played a critical role in broadening anti-slavery sentiment as slavery moved into the political foreground in the decade before the Civil War.

In the 1850s it spawned Southern re-writes which purported to correct its false representations of slavery and slave owners. In the century and a half since its publication, some African Americans have found objectionable its endorsement of colonization, its portrayal of numerous Black characters, and the subservience its Christianity promotes, while others have welcomed its racial egalitarianism. Feminist scholars continue to grapple with its gender politics. Literary critics disagree about its merits as literature.

Uncle Tom's Cabin rapidly became the cultural icon it has remained in part because an enormous archive developed from it. Its characters, motifs, and certain aspects of its plot became part of popular culture, circulating in the form of figurines, games, "Tom" shows and much more. This course will engage with the novel as an icon and with the "Tom" archive through cultural and literary studies as well as historical analysis. As we explore the novel and its afterlives we will address questions of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and perhaps non-disciplinary approaches. In what ways can distinct perspectives enhance the reading of the novel and understanding of its historical contexts its and ongoing impact? Professors Lasser and Zagarell are wrestling with such questions and invite you to join us.

Purchase the following books at the Oberlin Bookstore (Note: if you wish to purchase these books elsewhere, you **must** be sure to purchase the editions listed here).

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Norton Critical Edition, Second Edition, edited by Elizabeth Ammons (2010)
- Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom's Children*, Harper Perennial Edition with introduction by Richard Yarborough (2004)
- Ishmael Reed, *Flight to Canada* (1976)

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Introductions

Tuesday, September 3: Introductions to the professors, the students, the course, the syllabus.

Thursday, September 5: NO CLASS in Recognition of Jewish New Year

To make up for this missed class, you will be required to attend the lecture of Professor Gillian Johns relevant to our reading of Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* on **Monday, December 2 at 7pm**, place and title TBA.

Assignments:

- Read the syllabus for English/History 344 carefully, and post any questions about the course or the syllabus on the Postings section of the class BlackBoard site by 8 pm on Monday, September 9.
- Read UTC, Preface and Chapters 1-11.



Portrait of Harriet Beecher Stowe by Alanson Fisher (1807-1884). Oil on canvas, 1853. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Week 2: Setting Text and Background

Tuesday, September 10: Harriet Beecher Stowe as Author and Historical Figure, a presentation by Professor Zagarell. In addition, we will (1) discuss your questions about the course and the syllabus, and (2) ask your reactions to your reading of UTC to date.

Assignment:

- Read UTC, Chapters 12-18 (that is, complete "Volume 1" of the text):
- Harriet Beecher Stowe to Henry Ward Beecher, February 1, 1851 on BlackBoard
- Read "Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Chronology," UTC Critical Edition, pp. 611-612.
- Read Joan Hedrick, "Harriet Beecher Stowe" from *American National Biography* (on BlackBoard)

Thursday, September 12: Stowe's Historical Context: Slavery, Race, Gender and Domesticity, a presentation by Professor Lasser. In addition, we will ask your reactions to your reading of UTC to date.

Assignment:

- Read UTC, Chapters 19-31.

Weeks 3 and 4: Literary Analysis

Tuesday, September 17: Overview and Starting Points

Assignments:

Complete your reading of UTC.

• Please also take some time to look at the illustrations from the first 1852 edition of UTC, created by Hammett Billings, online at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/uncletom/illustra/52illf.html>

- Write a posting, between 250 and 500, addressing these prompts:
 - What in UTC seemed familiar to you?
 - What in UTC surprised you?
 - What did you not understand?

Complete your Posting no later than **Monday, September 16 at 6pm**. You will be required to read other students' postings before class.

Thursday, September 19: The Multiple Discourses of UTC, a presentation by Professor Zagarell

Assignments: Please read the following

- Lydia Sigourney, "Death of an Infant," at <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/death-of-an-infant-2/comments.asp>
- Lydia Sigourney, "Gift of a Bible" at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/ahq1232.0001.001/66?page=root;size=100;view=image>
- June Howard, "Sentimentalism," from *Keywords for American Culture*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: NYU Press, 2007), pp. 213-217 on BlackBoard
- George Frederickson, "Romantic Racialism in the North," in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 464-474
- Catherine E. Beecher, "The Peculiar Responsibilities of American Women," Chapter 1 of *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and At School*. Revised Edition. (Boston: T. H. Webb, 1842) pp. 26-top 28 of the excerpt online at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/sentimnt/snesceba1t.html>.
- Frank Drayton, "Mother, Home and Heaven" (1856) a parlor song at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/sentimnt/motherhomef.html>
- Stephen Johnson, "Introduction" (excerpt) pp. 5-9, to *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010) on BlackBoard
- And look at the minstrel playbills (posters advertising minstrel shows) at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/minstrel/mibillshp.htm#elements>

It has been well said, that, when domestic economy was perfected, there would be no need of political economy. Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *Live and Let Live* (New York, Harper Brothers, 1837) p. 121

Tuesday, September 24: Approaching UTC through Key Cruces

Reading Assignment: on selected cruces to familiarize you with working with cruces as a way of approaching *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* generative tensions

- Readings TBA

Group A Posting: questions for discussion

Thursday, September 26: Approaching UTC through Key Cruces

Reading Assignment: on selected cruces to familiarize you with working with cruces as a way of approaching UTC's generative tensions

- Readings TBA

Group B Posting: questions for discussion

Paper Assignment: Due Friday, September 27, midnight

Writing the Cruces

1000 words

Further information to be distributed

Please submit your paper electronically (in WORD or as a PDF) to BOTH carol.lasser@oberlin.edu and sandra.zagarell@oberlin.edu

Week 5: Rereading UTC in Historical Context

Tuesday, October 1: American Slavery in the Era of Uncle Tom, a presentation by Professor Lasser

Assignment: Read

- David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, Prologue and Chapters 9-11, pp. 1-11 and 175-230 (on BlackBoard)
- Angelina Grimke, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South" (1836), excerpt on BlackBoard, or entire pamphlet available <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abesaegat.html>
- Excerpt from George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South* (1854)
- Excerpt from Josiah Nott, *Letters for the South* (1844) These two readings are in one file on BlackBoard

Group A Posting: 9/2/13 Develop questions for group discussion

Thursday, October 3: The Politics of Slavery and Antislavery in the Era of Uncle Tom: The Fugitive Slave Law and the Higher Law, a presentation by Professor Lasser

Assignment:

- Read David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, Chapters 13-14, pp. 250-297 (on BlackBoard)
- David Walker, *From "Appeal, In Four Articles,"* (1830) in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 426-434
- William Lloyd Garrison, Inaugural Editorial, *The Liberator* (1831) (on BlackBoard)
- The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/fugitive.asp
- HBS, "Appeal to the Women of the Free States," (1854) in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 459-461

Group B Posting: Develop questions for Group Discussion

Paper Assignment: Due Monday, October 7

1,000 words

Rewriting the Cruces in Historical Context

Referring back to your previous paper if you wish, you will write a more historically grounded analysis of a selected crux from UTC. Details to be provided.



Uncle Tom and Little Eva (1853), by the African American artist Robert S. Duncanson. Please go to <http://utc.ath.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=utc/xml/responses/gallery/afillrsda.xml&style=utc/xsl/utc.xsl&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes> for further information

Week 6: Black and White Responses to UTC

Tuesday, October 8: Stowe's UTC and the American Slave Narrative

Assignment:

Read Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845); available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>

If you have already read Douglass, please consult with the professors to choose one of the following books to substitute for it:

- Josiah Henson, *Life of Josiah Henson* (1849) at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/henson49/henson49.html>
- Lewis Clarke, *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke* (1845) at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/clarke/menu.html>

Other required readings for this class:

- Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), excerpt on Blackboard
- Linda Brent [Harriet Jacobs], *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Chapter X, "A Perilous Passage in The Slave Girl's Life" <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11030/pg11030.html>

Group A Posting

Thursday, October 10: Black Responses to UTC: Frederick Douglass and the Black Press

Assignment:

Read: Frederick Douglass' Debate About HBS and UTC in his newspaper, *Frederick Douglass' Paper* (as follows):

- Literary Notice, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, April 1, 1852
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03at.html>
- Reviews by William G. Allen and "Ethiop" in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 499-503.
- Frederick Douglass, "A Day and A Night in Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, March 4, 1853
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03et.html>
- Frederick Douglass, "Mrs. Stowe's Visit to England," *Frederick Douglass' Paper* April 15, 1853 <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03it.html>
- Martin Delaney, "Uncle Tom," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, April 29, 1853
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03ot.html>
- "Issue of Half A Million Antislavery Tracts," *Frederick Douglass' Paper* April 29, 1853 <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03pt.html>
- Frederick Douglass, "Mrs. Stowe in England," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, May 6, 1853 <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03qt.html>
- Martin Delaney, With Reply by Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, May 6, 1853 <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar03rt.html>

And see also in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*:

- "What Are We Doing?" *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, February 2, 1855
<http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/12C59B595DD43B00/0D1D632596323D8A>

Also read:

- Robert Levine, "Uncle Tom's Cabin in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*: An Analysis of Reception" in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 562-568

If you are still tuned in, see also:

- C.V.S., "George Harris," *Provincial Freeman* [Toronto], July 22, 1854
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/afar64dt.html>

Group B Posting

Tuesday, October 15: Press and Politicians North and South Respond:

Assignment:

- Read these relatively immediate responses from Northern newspapers:
 - "Extraordinary Demand for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" *The Liberator*, April 9, 1852 at
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/notices/noar02adt.html>
 - "Uncle Tom's Cabin," *The National Era*, April 15, 1852 at
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/notices/noar01ft.html>
 - "American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society," (excerpt) *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, May 27, 1852 at
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/notices/noar03at.html>
 - Reprint from Lincoln (Maine) Democrat in *The Liberator*, September 3, 1852 at
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/notices/noar02lt.html>
 - "Uncle Tom's Cabin Leaks Badly," reprinted from the Journal of Commerce in the *New York Observer and Chronicle*, September 30, 1852 at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/notices/noar11bt.html>
- Read these Southern reactions to UTC
 - "The Other Side," *New Orleans Picayune*, June 12, 1852 at
<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/prar97bdt.html>

- "Valedictory," *Charleston Mercury*, August 13, 1852 at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/prar126ct.html>
- "Notice" *DeBow's Southern and western Review*, January 1853 at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/prno30ft.html>
- "Parson Brownlow's Opinion of Harriet Beecher Stowe," *Little Rock State Gazette and Democrat*, August 5, 1853 at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/prar179ct.html>
- Read *Uncle Tom's Cabin in Congress, 1852-1863* (document on BlackBoard) in conjunction with these additional files (also on BlackBoard)
 - August 23, 1852: remarks by Representative Horace Mann of Massachusetts
 - May 4, 1854: remarks by Representative Thomas Davis of Rhode Island
 - August 6, 1856: remarks by Representative Mark Trafton of Massachusetts
 - February 4, 1857: remarks by Representative John V. Wright of Tennessee
- Read Thomas F. Gossett, "Anti-Uncle Tom Literature," in *UTC Critical Edition*, pp. 477-489



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**Week 7: Consuming Uncle Tom in the Age of Stowe:
 Popular and Consumer Culture**

Thursday, October 17: UTC as Popular and Consumer Culture, a presentation by Professor Zagarell

Assignment: Readings TBA

*******FALL BREAK*******

Assignment with Visual Archive

Using the PhotoBucket Archive (and, optionally, also artifacts presented on the “Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture”), think about the presentation of UTC images. (To get to the PhotoBucket Archive, go to <http://s1290.photobucket.com/> and use the Library tab to pull down Tags. If you need to log in, the Username is utcvisual and the Password is utc344)

What do you learn from this non-textual material about UTC, its place in American culture, and the range of reactions to it?

Your project should include at least 6 images and is due in class on Tuesday, October 29

Week 8: Moving Ahead

Tuesday, October 29: Library Resources

Meet in the Library Classroom. Please be prepared to stay until 4:30 today.

Assignment: Come to class with at least three preliminary ideas about your final paper for the course. We will collect them from you, so be sure to write them up legibly and keep a copy for yourself.

Thursday, October 31: Old Tropes and New: Building the Archive with Material Objects and More

This class will start with presentations by several students on their photo projects.

Your choice of topic for your final paper is due in class today, October 31

Weeks 9 through 12: Talking With—and Back to—Uncle Tom

Tuesday, November 5: Race in America at the Turn of the 20th Century

Assignment:

- David Blight, “A Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Remembered? Reunion and Race in the Memory of the Civil War, 1875-1913,” pp. 120-152 in *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002) (on BlackBoard)
- Booker T. Washington, “Speech at the Atlanta Exposition” (1895) from *Up From Slavery* (on BlackBoard)
- W.E.B. DuBois, “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)(on BlackBoard)

Group A Postings

Thursday, November 7: Uncle Tom from the Turn of the Twentieth Century into the Harlem Renaissance

Assignment: Readings TBA

Tuesday, November 12: Uncle Tom’s Children

Assignment: Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom’s Children*, selections:

- Richard Yarborough Introduction to Harper Perennial Edition

- "Big Boy Leaves Home"
- "Fire and Cloud"
- "Bright and Morning Star"

Group B Postings

You must submit a progress report on your final paper by noon on Wednesday, November 13

Thursday, November 14: James Baldwin's *Uncle Tom*, a presentation by Professor Zagarell. We will also set aside time for some discussion of progress reports during this class

Assignment:

- James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel" (1955) in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 532-539

Tuesday, November 19: Feminists v. Feminists on Stowe, Race and Sentimentality

Assignment:

- Jane P. Tompkins, "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History," in UTC Critical Edition, pp. 539-561.
- Gillian Brown, "Domestic Politics In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," pp. 13-38 plus notes, in *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) on BlackBoard
- Lauren Berlant, excerpt from *The Female Complaint: On the Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008)
- Review June Howard, "Sentimentalism," from *Keywords for American Culture*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: NYU Press, 2007), pp. 213-217 (on BlackBoard)

Short Posts from Both Group A and Group B (ALL POST)

Concluding Weeks: Sites of Controversy over UTC in the late 20th Century



Property of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, CT
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Thursday, November 21: : UTC on Film

Assignment:

- Please read the description of the film *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Edison/Porter (1903) edition at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/films/mv03hp.html>
- then view the film online at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/prar179ct.html>
- Please watch at least part of the 1927 Film Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
 - Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVFcTV5vFG8>
 - Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0blfUaMoFyM>
 - Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xf5RMvIxASM>
 - Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRjVJdu7TGO>
- Also watch *Jungle Jinks: Uncle Tom and Eva*," (Disney, 1938) at <http://www.youtube.com/watcoeqC0DwTOU>
- Please watch part of "Dimples" available at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/films/cameos/hollywood.html> (you must scroll down to find the film—and you may want to browse other films)

Tuesday, November 26: Rereading Fugitive Slave Narrative: Ishmael Reed

Assignment:

- Ishmael Reed, *Flight to Canada* (entire)

Thursday, November 28: No Class—Thanksgiving

Weeks 13 and 14: Bringing it All Back Home

<p>Monday, December 2 at 7pm: Required Class: Lecture by Professor Gillian Johns Place TBA</p>

Tuesday, December 3: Reed and Beyond: with reference to the presentation by Professor Johns

Thursday, December 5: Responding to Uncle Tom in the Late 20th Century: Other Media including Dance, Visual Arts and Music: Bill T. Jones, Kara Walker and Others

Assignment :

- Talamishah Tillet, Chapter 2: "The Milder and More Amusing Phases of Slavery: Uncle Tom's Cabin and Black Satire," in *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (BlackBoard)

We will schedule individual appointments on Wednesday-Friday, December 4-6

Precise (500-750 words) of your final project is due
December 9 at 5pm
Please Post Your Précis on BlackBoard

Tuesday, December 10: Presentations of Précis

Thursday, December 12: Class Wrap Up and Celebration

<p>According to College Regulations</p>

Your Final Paper is due
Friday, December 20 at 9 pm
Extensions can only be arranged by presentation of an
Official Incomplete issued by the Dean of Studies Office

Class Requirements and Assignments

Preparation

You are expected to complete assignments, including readings, by the class for which they are due.

Participation

Your regular presence and genuine participation in discussion will be important aspects of your contribution to the class. Attendance is mandatory unless you are ill and can bring documentation; if you have an emergency situation, speak to one of your professors (or email us)-- in advance if possible.

Evaluation

You cannot pass the course unless you have completed all the assignments including readings, postings, worksheets, projects and papers. Grades will be determined as follows:

- Approximately one-third based on class participation, including relevant class postings
- Approximately one-third based on shorter written work
- Approximately one-third on your final project, including all interim stages.

For all assignments you are expected to meet the deadlines.

Written work submitted late will be penalized and may not receive written comments.

Calendar of Assignments:

Writing Assignments

September 16: Overview Questions about UTC

September 27: Writing the Cruces

October 7: The Cruces in Historical Context

October 29: Visual Archive Assignment

Final Paper Deadlines

October 29: List of several preliminary topics

October 31: Preferred topic submitted

November 12: Progress report due

December 9: Précis due (please post)

December 20: Final paper due

Postings

September 16 (All groups)

September 24/26

October 1/3

October 8/10

November 7/12

November 14 (All Groups)
December 9 (All Groups post Précis)

Honor Code

All assignments are governed by the Oberlin College Honor Code. For more information see <http://new.oberlin.edu/conservatory/academic-resources-and-support/honor-code.dot>
And
<http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf>

CONTACT US:

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Re: Email:

We check email regularly during weekdays and will try to respond to emails quickly. However, that only goes for weekdays; and it only goes for emails during regular workday hours

Disability Accommodations

Please notify your professors by September 16 if you have a diagnosed disability that will require special accommodations.

No Cell Phones During Class!

Cell Phones Must Be Turned Off During Class!

If your cell phone rings, you will be required to bring treats to feed the class as part of your public shaming and apology.

Final Notes

We don't want to have to say these things but....

Sometimes people come to class late or drift in and out to use the bathroom or for other reasons. That's disruptive and it breaks the flow of the class. Please get to class on time and try to take care of all needs before class begins (We understand, of course, that emergencies cannot be foreseen). You're welcome to bring beverages to class.

Be sure to bring whatever text we're working with to class every time we're discussing it