

Convict Labor in the American South from the Civil War to the Great Depression
Directed Reading

Instructor: Dr. Karin Shapiro

Student: Jackson Skeen

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Course Description:

This independent study will examine the convict labor system that emerged in the post-Civil War South. The student will explore the political and economic contexts in which convict leasing developed, analyze the demographics of those ensnared in convict labor, note the geographic variations in the convict lease system, and highlight the conditions in which convicts lived and labored. Throughout the semester, we will draw connections between convict leasing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the modern-day carceral state. In addition to a much deeper understanding of the convict lease system, the student will gain research experience and competence working with large quantities of critical texts. Readings will consist chiefly of academic accounts of convict leasing and prison labor conditions in the South from 1865 to roughly 1928.

Class format:

This course consists primarily of independent readings, combined with bi-weekly meetings to 1) discuss the various monographs the student has read and 2) regularly review the direction of the student's inquiry.

Reading Material:

Available from Duke University Libraries.

Scheduled Meetings and Work Expectations:

Meetings with Professor Shapiro will take place every two Fridays, with the first meeting falling on Friday, January 13th. Meetings will occur on a weekly basis as needed. By noon on the Wednesday of each week, the student will submit written summaries of the books, along with key questions that have emerged.

Course Requirements:

The grade in the course will be based on:

1. Biweekly written work on the student's developing analysis of convict leasing and prison labor in the American South: 50%
2. Class discussions: 50%

Thematic Organization¹:

An Introduction to Convict Labor and Leasing in the American South

Ayers, Edward L. *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

¹ Texts may be repeated in different sections when applicable.

Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Doubleday, 2008.

Cable, George W. "The Convict Lease System In The Southern States." *Century Illustrated Magazine* Feb. 1884: 582-600. -- 5, xxvii, 582

Lichtenstein, Alex. *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South*. London: Verso, 1996.

Mancini, Matthew J. *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996.

McLennan, Rebecca M. *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877--1913: A History of the South*. Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

Convict Labor in Alabama

Curtin, Mary Ellen. *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865–1900*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.

Kelly, Brian. *Race, Class, and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-21*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 2001.

Letwin, Daniel. *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878-1921*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1998.

McCarthy, Bernard J. "The Social Functions of Correctional Policy: A Case Study of the Alabama Convict Lease System 1845–1928." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* (1985) 9: 185-196.

Convict Labor in Georgia

Ayers, Edward L. *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877--1913: A History of the South*. Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

Convict Labor in Louisiana

Carleton, Mark T. *Politics and Punishment: The History of the Louisiana State Penal System*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.

Convict Labor in Mississippi

Oshinsky, David. *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*. Free Press, 1997.

Taylor, William Banks. *Brokered Justice: Race, Politics, and Mississippi Prisons, 1798-1992*. Columbus: Ohio State U, 1993.

Taylor, William Banks. *Down on Parchman Farm: The Great Prison in the Mississippi Delta*. Ohio State University Press, 1999.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877--1913: A History of the South*. Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

Convict Labor in Tennessee

Ayers, Edward L. *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

Shapiro, Karin A. *A New South Rebellion: The Battle against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coalfields, 1871-1896*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877--1913: A History of the South*. Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

Convict Labor in Texas

Blue, Ethan. *Doing Time in the Depression: Everyday Life in Texas and California Prisons*. New York: New York UP, 2012.

Walker, Donald R. *Penology for Profit: A History of the Texas Prison System, 1867-1912*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988.

Convict Labor in Virginia

Ayers, Edward L. *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984.

Nelson, Scott Reynolds. *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American Legend*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

Convict Labor and Women

Curtin, Mary Ellen. *Black Prisoners and Their World, Alabama, 1865–1900*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.

LeFlouria, Talitha L. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Films Exploring Race and Incarceration

13th. Dir. Ava DuVernay. Netflix, 2016.

The Farm: Angola, USA. Dir. Liz Garbus and Wilbert Rideau. Gabriel Films, 1998.

A History of Anti-Black Racism in the U.S.

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*. 2011.

Hartman, Sadiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

Present-Day Implications of the Practice of Convict Leasing

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New, 2012. Print. -- just focus on lease

Lichtenstein, Alex. "Flocatex and the Fiscal Limits of Mass Incarceration: Toward a New Political Economy of the Postwar Carceral State." *The Journal of American History* 102.1 (2015): 113-25. Print.

Raza, A.E. "Legacies of the Racialization of Incarceration: From Convict-Lease to the Prison Industrial Complex." *Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies* 11 (2011): 159-XII.

Thompson, Heather Ann. "Rethinking Working-Class Struggle through the Lens of the Carceral State: Toward a Labor History of Inmates and Guards." *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* (Fall 2011).

Thompson, Heather Ann. "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* (December 2010).