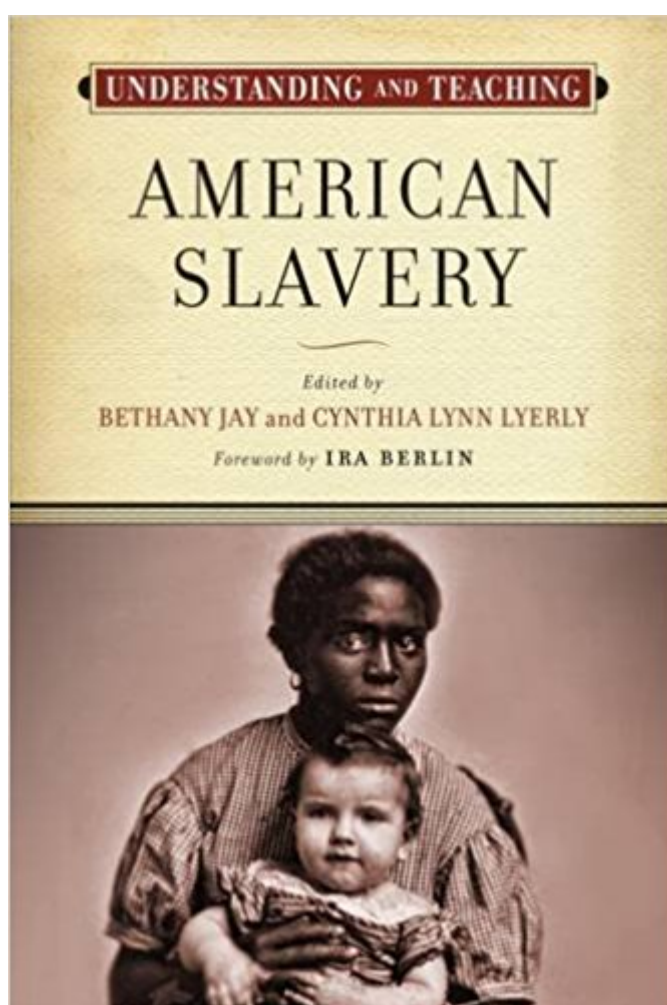


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# Understanding And Teaching American Slavery (The Harvey Goldberg Series For Understanding And Teaching History)



## Synopsis

Perhaps no topic in U.S. history is as emotionally fraught as the nation's centuries-long entanglement with slavery. How can teachers get students to understand the racist underpinnings of that institution and to acknowledge its legacies in contemporary America? How can they overcome students' shame, anger, guilt, or denial? How can they incorporate into the classroom important primary sources that may contain obsolete and racist terms, images, and ideas? This book, designed for college and high school teachers, is a critical resource for understanding and teaching this challenging topic in all its complexity.

Opening with Ira Berlin's reflections on ten elements that are essential to include in any course on this topic, *Understanding and Teaching American Slavery* offers practical advice for teaching specific content, utilizing sources, and getting students to think critically. Contributors address, among other topics, slavery and the nation's founders, the diverse experiences of the enslaved, slavery's role in the Civil War, and the relationship between slavery and the northern economy. Other chapters offer ideas for teaching through slave narratives, runaway ads, spirituals, films, and material culture. Taken together, the essays in the volume help instructors tackle problems, discover opportunities, and guide students in grappling with the ugliest truths of America's past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Understanding and Teaching American Slavery purports to do what any thinking person in this country might consider an impossible task: provide an academic scheme for explaining the insidious institution of slavery in this country and its continuing ramifications within American culture. The book's editors--Bethany Jay, associate professor of history at Salem State University, and Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, associate professor of history at Boston College--have done just that. This slim volume contains a compelling introduction by the editors, and an even more powerful argument from Ira Berlin on the need to teach the history of slavery. Berlin, Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Maryland, identifies ten "essential elements" that he believes should be incorporated into every curriculum on the subject: "appreciating these ten elements in the history of slavery opens the door to a conversation that may transform not only our students but also the society in which they live." This is a primary purpose of this book: recognizing and comprehending the pervasiveness of slavery in the history of this country, its continuing influence on the culture and institutions of this country, and, by opening discussions on these delicate issues, fundamentally changing American society. Nonacademic readers will find provocative facts on nearly every page, information that will enlighten everyone and stir even the most timid soul to a deeper reflection on the issue of race. The legacy of slavery that continues to marginalize people of color, to keep them "in their place," is explicated in abundantly clear terms. The book is divided into three parts, each part dealing with a different aspect of teaching slavery while never straying from the guiding principal stated by Jay and Lyerly: "This book is our effort to ... grapple with the ugly truths of America's past." Their effort is comprehensive and honest. Each essayist contributes innovative insights into slavery and the concept of history, using stimulating techniques, such as slave narratives, film, and art. Each chapter reinforces the idea that there is nothing in American culture not affected by slavery. Every teacher should read this book and be reinvigorated in his or her task of presenting history accurately and thoroughly. Every citizen should read this book and be rededicated to the ideals of this society--equality and fairness.

JOHN SENGER (Spring 2016)

Foreword Reviews

“Many instructors find the subject of slavery intimidating. This volume provides them with the necessary background content, as well as effective and interesting sources and methods, for engaging students and steering them away from common misperceptions.”

•Roy E. Finkenbine, author of *Sources of the African-American Past*

“A substantial contribution. Appropriate for instructors at both the college and secondary school levels, this book provides ample background information and practical classroom activities along with advice on pedagogy.”

•Nicholas J. Aieta, recipient of the American Historical Association's Eugene Asher Distinguished Teaching Award

“Every

teacher should read this book and be reinvigorated in the task of presenting history accurately and thoroughly. Every citizen should read this book and be rededicated to the ideals of this society—equality and fairness.

•Foreword Reviews—“A book that has the potential to change the way that slavery is taught in American schools. It takes a comprehensive look at slavery across American history, offering dozens of concrete suggestions for teaching strategies and learning objects that could be used in all K-12 social studies classrooms.

•Education Week —“Profoundly useful. . . . Although the variety and ingenuity of teaching methods presented here are exceptional, the contributors are even more effective at calling out the difficult realities educators have with teaching slavery—such as discussing the sensitive issue of race; identifying slavery as a national, not just a Southern, institution; and reconciling its cruelty with the growth of American politics and economics. . . . Accessible and relevant to any classroom at any level.

•Choice

Bethany Jay is an associate professor of history at Salem State University. Cynthia Lynn Lyerly is an associate professor of history at Boston College.

I even recommended to a colleague of mine who now teaches Afro-American History.

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