

# SLAVE NARRATIVES

*A Seminar for Faculty Members*

June 13–16, 2010  
Yale University



David W. Blight

Class of 1954 Professor of American History  
Yale University



THE COUNCIL OF  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

# SLAVE NARRATIVES

Directed by  
David W. Blight,  
Class of 1954 Professor of American History  
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The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History are pleased to announce a multidisciplinary seminar for full-time faculty members in history, English, and related fields on Slave Narratives. The seminar, cosponsored by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), will be held at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. For those accepted to participate in the seminar, all expenses except travel to and from New Haven will be covered by the Gilder Lehrman Institute.

The genre of slave narratives is usually divided into three categories: biographies, fiction, and autobiographies, with the third category by far the largest. Autobiographies by former slaves were first published in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century and grew in scale as new texts were promoted and printed by the early abolition movement in Britain and the United States. This seminar for faculty members will examine in depth both antebellum and postbellum narratives. Before the Civil War approximately 65 narratives were published in English, many of them now classics by such authors as Harriet Jacobs, Solomon Northup, and William Wells Brown. The pre-emancipation narratives were often serious works of literature as well as works that fit into certain conventions and formulas. They tended to focus squarely on the oppression of slavery, on a former slave's indictment of the institution of bondage as a means of advancing the antislavery argument. The post-emancipation narratives, of which there are approximately 55 in existence, tended to be more success stories—triumphs over the past and visions of a more prosperous future. The most famous pre-war narrative is that of Frederick Douglass, and the most famous post-war narrative is that of Booker T. Washington. The seminar will cover both of these and several other books, including *A Slave No More*, that reveals two unique postbellum narratives as a means of understanding the experience of emancipation itself. Moreover, the seminar will use the slave narratives, as well as some other assigned secondary reading, to comprehend the lived experience of slaves themselves in the transition from bondage to freedom.



David W. Blight

David W. Blight, Class of 1954 Professor of American History at Yale University, is the author of *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom, Including their Narratives of Emancipation*, published in 2007, as well as *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, for which he won the 2001 Frederick Douglass Prize and the 2002 Bancroft and Lincoln Prizes. His other books include *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory and the Civil War*, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee*, and the edited volumes, *When This Cruel War is Over: The Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey Brewster*; *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; and *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W.E.B. DuBois. Blight was elected as a member of the Society of American Historians in 2002. Since 2004 he has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the New-York Historical Society and the board for African American Programs at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. He also serves on the board of advisors to the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and is involved in planning numerous conferences and events to commemorate both the Lincoln anniversary and the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

## PARTICIPANTS, LOCATION, AND EXPENSES

Up to 30 participants will be selected by competitive nomination. All full-time faculty members in history, English, and related fields at CIC and UNCF member institutions are eligible. The seminar will take place at Yale University and housing will be provided on campus. Room, board, books, and other expenses will be fully covered by the Institute. Participants or their institutions will be expected to provide transportation to and from New Haven.

## NOMINATION PROCESS

Faculty members who wish to participate must be nominated by the chief academic officer of the nominee's institution. Each institution may nominate more than one individual, and faculty members of any academic rank may be nominated. The nomination form is also available online at [www.cic.edu/projects\\_services/coops/gilder\\_lehrman.asp](http://www.cic.edu/projects_services/coops/gilder_lehrman.asp) and may be submitted by mail or by email. Each nomination packet should consist of the following:

- 1) Nomination letter from the chief academic officer;
- 2) Nomination form completed by the chief academic officer (please use the attached form for a paper submission or the electronic version available online for email submission);
- 3) Nominee's curriculum vitae; and
- 4) Nominee's statement of reasons for wishing to participate in the seminar and of anticipated outcomes (no more than one page).

## NOMINATION DEADLINE

Please send four copies of the completed nomination package to CIC by **March 15, 2010**.

# NOMINATION FORM

## *Slave Narratives*

A Seminar by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the  
Council of Independent Colleges, Cosponsored by the United Negro College Fund

Yale University  
June 13–16, 2010

Name of Faculty Member Being Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Rank: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Statement: *(Please use extra sheets as needed)*

Nominator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nominator's Name *(Please print)*: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit together as a package:

- 1) nomination letter from the chief academic officer;
- 2) nomination form;
- 3) nominee's curriculum vitae; and
- 4) nominee's statement.

Send original plus three copies to:

Stephen Gibson  
Director of Projects  
Council of Independent Colleges  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 320  
Washington, DC 20036-1142  
Email: [sgibson@cic.nche.edu](mailto:sgibson@cic.nche.edu)

**Nomination Deadline: Monday, March 15, 2010**

**Selection of Participants Announced: Friday, April 2, 2010**