

The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass

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Course Description

This course probes the nature of the life, work, and thought of the nineteenth-century abolitionist, orator, and author Frederick Douglass. We will examine in depth the public and private sides of Douglass's life and his importance as a thinker and as a political activist in the great dramas of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras.

Lecture Videos

This course consists of approximately 12 hours of instruction presented by Professor Blight, split into 24 lecture videos ranging from 25 minutes to 35 minutes in length. Below are the lecture titles and major themes as identified by Professor Blight. The videos provide the content needed to answer the course quizzes.

1. "Childhood of Extremes: Douglass's Enslaved Youth" - 2 videos
2. "Baltimore Dreams and Escape from Slavery" - 2 videos
3. "The Making of an Orator and a Writer" - 2 videos
4. "Douglass's Transition to Political Abolitionism" - 2 videos
5. "Douglass and Biblical Story" - 2 videos
6. "Douglass and the Meaning of the Civil War" - 2 videos
7. "Douglass and the Rise and Fall of Reconstruction" - 2 videos
8. "Radical Outsider Becomes the Political Insider" - 2 videos

9. “Ventures and Failures” - 2 videos
10. “Douglass’s Troubled Extended Family” - 2 videos
11. “Douglass and Haiti” - 2 videos
12. “Douglass and the American Conscience During Jim Crow” - 2 videos

Note: Course lectures were originally recorded for the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s online graduate program. You can disregard references to assignments, other coursework, and the use of content in classrooms discussed in the videos. They are not part of the History U program.

Resources

Select the Resources link for information about the primary and secondary resources, videos, and websites referred to in the course. Please note: History U participants are not required to read or purchase print materials. All quiz questions are drawn from the lectures.

Quizzes

The purpose of the 4 quizzes is to review your knowledge of the material covered in the lectures. No outside reading is required to answer the questions successfully. After watching the videos for lectures 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12, select and complete the corresponding quiz to test your knowledge and qualify for the Certificate of Completion.

Certificate of Completion

After finishing your course by scoring 80% or higher on each quiz, you will be able to download your certificate.

Please email historyschool@gilderlehrman.org with any questions.