ENG 460-001 **Anti-Slavery Literature**

MW 3:30-4:45, CRT 368, Spring 2022

Professor Kristie Hamilton

In this course, we will study several of the most important American literary works of what historian Richard Bell has described as **“the defining liberation movement of the modern world”** (in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Fall 2018, p. 569). Taking our cue from Manisha Sinha’s comprehensive new historical account *The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition*, we will study writers from the long 19th-century who were allied in this radicalized movement—men and women, African American, Euro-American, and Native American, northern and southern, of elite and working classes, whose work takes the form of short fiction, speeches, poetry, essays, autobiographical slave narratives and novels. Among the authors and orators we will study are Phillis Wheately, David Walker, Lydia Maria Child, Frederick Douglass, Martin R. Delany, William Apess, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry David Thoreau, Angelina Grimké, William Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Wells Brown, Herman Melville, Sojourner Truth, John Brown, Frances E.W. Harper, and, finally, late 20th-century science fiction writer Octavia Butler.

While we may spend more time on novels and slave narratives, the shorter writings and speeches we’ll discuss will provide us with a tangible sense 1) of just how central African American writers and activists were in motivating the abolitionist movement, 2) of how widespread and diverse the movement grew to be, and 3) of what debates unfolded among committed people about how best to bring about this crucial political change—of what arguments, metaphors and narrative strategies were developed and WHY. I am very excited to be designing this course so that we can delve more deeply into this transformational body of literature and, in so doing, come to understand its continuing impact in the early decades of the 21st century.

**Six Required Texts**, available at UWM’s ecampus.com and elsewhere (prices are approximate):

1) Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (264 pp). ($10.50) ISBN: 978-0807083697

*2) Three Classic African-American Novels: Clotel, Iola Leroy, The Marrow of Tradition*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Vintage Classics. (New $15-18.00, Used if fine) ISBN: 978-0679727422

3) Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Dover Publications. ISBN:

978-0486284996 ($1.62-$3.00)

4) Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Dover Thrift Edition. ISBN:

978-0486419312 ($5.00)

5) Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 2nd edition ($14.83 new and less Used) ISBN:

978-0393933994

 6) Herman Mellville, *Bartleby and Benito Cereno*, Dover Edition. ISBN: 978-1717593405 (4.00)

Short works will be available as online texts and scanned texts during the semester.