

Unit by Hanover High School Social Studies, part of the 2022 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Title	Black Women and Their Bodies: How Slavery Laid the Groundwork for Healthcare Inequities for Women of Color
Unit Length	2–3 weeks / Four 80-minute lessons + final assessment
Grade Levels/Subject	10–12th grade U.S. History
Unit Overview	<p>This series of lessons is part of a broader course on Black women’s history, but can also be incorporated into a more general U.S. History course. <i>Black Women in American History</i> examines a diversity of Black women’s experiences, focusing on how these women engaged in freedom struggles while simultaneously defining their identities as women, wives, mothers, leaders, workers, and citizens. Studying the history of Black women in this country invites students to grapple with the complexity of our shared history.</p> <p>The unit <i>Black Women and Their Bodies: How Slavery Laid the Groundwork for Healthcare Inequities for Women of Color</i> focuses more specifically on how the institution of slavery enabled the white medical establishment to develop fallacies related to the Black body that persist in healthcare to this day, and manifest in inequitable access, treatment, and outcomes, particularly for Black women. White physicians in the early days of the republic experimented on enslaved women for advancements in medicine and science, particularly in regard to obstetric and gynecological practices. Revisiting these histories from the perspective of Black women reorients the historical narrative and sheds light on these women’s important contributions and agency.</p> <p>This unit will begin with background on matrilineal slavery and its legacy. Students will dissect primary documents, such as legislation codifying matrilineal slavery and slave auction records, in order to analyze how the commodification of Black women perpetuated the institution of slavery. Students will explore the concept of racial cognitive dissonance through the stories of J. Marion Sims and the women, Anarcha,</p>

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	<p>Betsey, and Lucy, whose bodies were used in experimentation, but also served as midwives for Sims’ medical practice. Students will view a contemporary art installation that reorients this history towards the perspective of women, and will end by studying contemporary legacies—in both the 20th and 21st centuries—of this history and how it has manifested in disparities in contemporary healthcare services and outcomes.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Inequities in healthcare services and outcomes based on gender and race can be traced to the legacy of slavery.</li> <li>→ Fallacies about Black bodies founded during enslavement were used to justify racial subjugation and mistreatment.</li> <li>→ Black women’s bodies, as well as their traditional knowledge of midwifery, were employed in developing the modern field of gynecology.</li> <li>→ Much of recorded history is from the perspective of white males; rewriting historical events to reflect the perspective of women offers an important correction to the historical record.</li> <li>→ People of color engage in advocacy and resistance to injustice and stereotyping.</li> </ul> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Why is it important to engage in a specific focus on Black women’s experiences in the context of American History?</li> <li>→ How were Black women’s role in slavery unique due to their race, sex, and reproductive potential?</li> <li>→ What does slavery have to do with healthcare inequities in the 21st century?</li> <li>→ How do stereotypes of Black bodies developed during slavery continue to influence contemporary medical practices and outcomes?</li> <li>→ How did enslaved women’s experiences factor into the story of reproductive research?</li> <li>→ Does shifting the historical narrative to reflect Black women’s stories change the way we understand the history of healthcare?</li> </ul>
<p>Objectives &amp; Outcomes</p>	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Engage in class discussions that focus on challenging concepts.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Analyze historical documents to draw conclusions about the legacy of matrilineal slavery and its implications for the expansion of the slave economy.</li> <li>→ Examine the contradiction in white doctors using enslaved women’s bodies for medical experimentation, while at the same time relying on enslaved women’s medical expertise in midwifery.</li> <li>→ Argue how stereotypes and abuse that stem from the legacy of slavery have had lasting effects on Black women’s advancement, as well as healthcare practices and outcomes.</li> <li>→ Articulate forms of advocacy and resistance to abuse and stereotyping that people of color have practiced.</li> </ul>
<p>Standards</p>	<p><a href="#">College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ D2 - History: Change, Continuity and Context (i.e. Understanding of History Content)</li> <li>→ D2 - History: Causation and Argumentation - (i.e. Presentation of Arguments and Evidence)</li> <li>→ D2 - History: Historical Sources and Evidence (i.e. Understanding of Sources and Evidence)</li> <li>→ D4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Common Core State Standards for ELA:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitation Resources and Further Reading</p>	<p>Core <i>1619 Project</i> Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <a href="#">“Medical Inequality”</a> by Linda Villarosa from <i>The 1619 Project</i> (magazine article) OR “Medicine” by Linda Villarosa from <i>The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story</i> (book chapter)</li> </ul> <p>Texts, Multimedia Resources, and Primary Source Documents Explored in Class:</p>

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- [Aftershock](#) documentary trailer
- Legislating Reproduction: House of Burgesses 17th Century Laws text excerpts and student worksheet
  - ◆ [.pdf worksheet](#)
  - ◆ [.docx worksheet](#)
- [“Partus sequitur ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery”](#) by Jennifer Morgan, *Small Axe*
- [Slave Voyages](#) website data sets
- Commodified Womb primary source document packet
  - ◆ [.pdf packet](#)
  - ◆ [.docx packet](#)
- Dorothy Roberts TED Radio Hour, [“What’s Race Got to Do With Medicine?”](#)
- Deirdre Cooper Owens [lecture](#) at Pitzer College
- Vox Video: [“The US Medical System is Still Haunted by Slavery”](#)
- [“Life Story: Anarcha, Betsy, and Lucy”](#) from Women & the American Story
- SmartHistory video on the [Anarcha, Lucy, and Betsey Monument website](#): “Michelle Browder, Mothers of Gynecology” (6:10)
- [“America is Failing its Black Mothers”](#) by Amy Roeder, *Harvard Public Health*
- Case studies of medical inequity:
  - ◆ [Henrietta Lacks](#)
  - ◆ [Tuskegee Study](#)
  - ◆ [Fannie Lou Hamer and Forced Sterilization](#)

Resources for Final Project Research, Further Learning, or Teacher Preparation:

- [Medical Bondage](#), Deirdre Cooper Owens lecture at Carnegie Mellon
- [“J. Marion Sims: The Gynecologist Who Experimented on Slaves”](#) by Sarah Zhang, *The Atlantic*
- [“Mothers of Gynecology honored in Black maternal health conference in Montgomery.”](#) Throughline podcast
- [“Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2020”](#) by Donna L. Hoyert, CDC
- [Racial Disparities in Maternal Health](#)

**Black Women and Their Bodies: How Slavery Laid the Groundwork for Healthcare Inequities for Women of Color**

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <a href="#">“I Don’t Want to Die’: Fighting Maternal Mortality Among Black Women”</a> by Erica L. Green, <i>New York Times</i></li><li>→ <i>Aftershock</i> full documentary (only available on Hulu)</li></ul>
Performance Task	<p><a href="#">Final Project Description</a></p> <p>Students will create presentations in which they analyze how current inequities in medical practices and outcomes for women of color today can be traced to slavery. Students could also choose to examine how the narrative around medical racism is shifting and what evidence suggests this shift.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p><a href="#">Final Project Rubric</a></p>

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UNIT PACING/DAILY LESSONS

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today’s lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities	Lesson Materials
<i>Week 1</i>				
<b>Historical Overview of Matrilineal Slavery and Development of Racial Stereotypes</b>				
Lesson 1	<p><a href="#">Aftershock</a> documentary trailer</p> <p>Legislating Reproduction: House of Burgesses 17th Century Laws text excerpts and student worksheet                      → <a href="#">.pdf worksheet</a>                      → <a href="#">.docx worksheet</a></p> <p><a href="#">“Partus sequitur ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery”</a> by Jennifer Morgan, <i>Small Axe</i></p> <p><a href="#">Slave Voyages</a> website data sets</p> <p>Commodified Womb primary source document packet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">.pdf packet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">.docx packet</a></li> </ul>	<p><i>Why is it important to engage in a specific focus on Black women’s experiences in the context of American History?</i></p> <p><i>How were Black women’s role in slavery unique due to their race, sex, and reproductive potential?</i></p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Lesson Slides</a> as a scope and sequence lesson guide.</p> <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Watch the trailer for <a href="#">Aftershock</a> (slide 2).</li> <li>→ Review unit objectives and essential questions (slides 3-4).</li> <li>→ Students discuss how to engage in challenging conversations about race and women’s bodies (slides 5-6).</li> </ul> <p><b>Lesson 1:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce matrilineal slavery and its legacy essential questions (slide 7).</li> <li>2. Review the magnitude and general routes of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (slide 8).</li> </ol>	<a href="#">Lesson Slides</a>

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			<p>3. View the image of a slave deck (slide 9). Students can engage in a <a href="#">see/think/wonder image analysis</a>.</p> <p>4. Introduce how legislation defined matrilineal slavery using Jennifer Morgan’s quote (slide 10) and the primary source analysis activity, using <a href="#">this worksheet</a> (slide 11).</p> <p>5. Discuss primary document questions (slide 11).</p> <p>6. Transition students to 1808 and the Constitutional change that prohibited the importation of enslaved people (slide 12).</p> <p>7. Students should independently review the <a href="#">Slave Voyages</a> website following the instructions on the slide (slide 12).</p> <p>8. Students connect the hereditary slave laws with the Constitutional changes of 1808 in a small group discussion of the questions (slide 13).</p> <p>9. Students read two historians’ arguments about how “breeding” shifted for enslaved women and the concept of the “capitalized womb” (slide 14).</p> <p>10. Using the <a href="#">primary documents</a></p>	
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			<p>provided, students make inferences about how the lives of enslaved women changed between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (slide 15-16).</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read and annotate <a href="#">“Medical Inequality” by Linda Villarosa from <i>The 1619 Project</i></a> (slide 17).</p>	
<p>Lesson 2</p>	<p><a href="#">“Medical Inequality”</a> by Linda Villarosa from <i>The 1619 Project</i> (magazine article) OR “Medicine” by Linda Villarosa from <i>The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story</i> (book chapter)</p> <p>Dorothy Roberts TED Radio Hour, <a href="#">“What’s Race Got to Do With Medicine?”</a></p> <p>Deirdre Cooper Owens <a href="#">lecture</a> at Pitzer College</p> <p>Vox Video: <a href="#">“The US Medical System is Still Haunted by Slavery”</a></p>	<p><i>Why is it important to engage in a specific focus on Black women’s experiences in the context of American History?</i></p> <p><i>How do stereotypes of Black bodies developed during slavery continue to influence contemporary medical practices and outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>How did enslaved women’s experiences factor into the story of reproductive research?</i></p> <p><i>What does slavery have to do with healthcare inequities in the 21st century?</i></p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Lesson Slides</a> as a scope and sequence lesson guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As a class, listen to <a href="#">Dorothy Roberts: “What’s Race Got to Do with Medicine?”</a> (9 minutes) (slide 19).</li> <li>2. Students write journal responses on “Medical Inequality” and “What’s Race Got to Do with Medicine?” and then discuss (slide 20).</li> <li>3. Watch Deirdre Cooper Owens’ <a href="#">lecture</a> (5:51-21:44) and discuss the question: How are the history of enslaved bodies and contemporary health inequities connected? (slide 21).</li> <li>4. Watch the VOX video <a href="#">“The US Medical System is Still Haunted by Slavery”</a> as an introduction to the legacy of medical inequities (slide 22).</li> <li>5. Watch Deirdre Cooper Owens <a href="#">lecture</a></li> </ol>	<p><a href="#">Lesson Slides</a></p>



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			<p>(43:45-49:00) on J. Marion Sims and discuss the concept of “racial cognitive dissonance” (slide 23).</p> <p>6. Look at the <i>Health and Sale Statuses</i> auction record (slide 24) and ask students where they see examples of racial cognitive dissonance from the record.</p>	
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Week 2 Mothers of Gynecology and Contemporary Legacies				
Lesson 3	<p><a href="#">“Life Story: Anarcha, Betsy, and Lucy”</a> from Women &amp; the American Story</p> <p>Mothers of Gynecology Monument image (<a href="#">slide 28</a>)</p> <p>SmartHistory video on the <a href="#">Anarcha, Lucy, and Betsey Monument website</a>: “Michelle Browder, Mothers of Gynecology” (6:10)</p>	<p><i>Why is it important to engage in a specific focus on Black women’s experiences in the context of American History?</i></p> <p><i>How did enslaved women’s experiences factor into the story of reproductive research?</i></p> <p><i>Does shifting the historical narrative to reflect Black women’s stories change the way we understand the history of healthcare?</i></p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Lesson Slides</a> as a scope and sequence lesson guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students begin with an image analysis: See/Think/Wonder in response to a depiction of Lucy, Betsey, Anarcha, and J. Marion Sims (slide 26).</li> <li>2. Learn about the mothers of modern gynecology, Lucy, Betsey, Anarcha, by reading a Women &amp; the American Story <a href="#">article</a> and responding to discussion questions (slide 27).</li> <li>3. Review the images and follow the questions on the slide to engage in an analysis and discussion of Mothers of Gynecology Monument (slide 28).</li> <li>4. Watch the <a href="#">video</a> of the Mothers of Gynecology monument and respond to the prompt: <i>I used to think _____, now I think _____</i> (slide 28).</li> </ol>	<p><a href="#">Lesson Slides</a></p>
Lesson 4	<p><a href="#">“America is Failing its Black Mothers”</a> by Amy Roeder, Harvard Public Health</p>	<p><i>What does slavery have to do with health care inequities in the 20th</i></p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Lesson Slides</a> as a scope and sequence lesson guide.</p>	<p><a href="#">Lesson Slides</a></p> <p><b>Student Presentation Note</b></p>

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	<p>Case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <a href="#">Henrietta Lacks</a></li> <li>→ <a href="#">Tuskegee Study</a></li> <li>→ <a href="#">Fannie Lou Hamer and Forced Sterilization</a></li> </ul>	<p><i>and 21st centuries?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the examples of health care inequities (slide 30). As a group, each team will prepare a Google Slide presentation on their topic, then present to the class.</li> <li>2. As students listen to presentations, they can complete the <a href="#">note catcher</a>.</li> </ol> <p>Homework in preparation for Final Project: Read "<a href="#">America is Failing its Black Mothers</a>" (slide 31).</p>	<p><b>Catcher</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <a href="#">.pdf note catcher</a></li> <li>→ <a href="#">.docx note catcher</a></li> </ul>
<p>Final Project</p>	<p>All resources from the unit to date</p>	<p><i>What does slavery have to do with health care inequities in the 21st century?</i></p> <p><i>How do stereotypes of Black bodies developed during slavery continue to influence contemporary medical practices and outcomes?</i></p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Lesson Slides</a> as a scope and sequence lesson guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the <a href="#">Final Project Assignment</a> (slide 32). The Final Project Assignment asks students to create a presentation where they analyze how current inequities in the medical field can be traced to slavery or how the narrative around medical racism is shifting today. Review advocacy organizations to demonstrate examples of how medical racism is shifting today (examples on slide 33).</li> <li>2. Work through the step-by-step of the <a href="#">Final Project</a> description. The project could span 2-3 class periods.</li> </ol>	<p><b><a href="#">Lesson Slides</a></b></p> <p><b>Final Project Assignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <a href="#">.pdf assignment</a></li> <li>→ <a href="#">.docx assignment</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Final Project Rubric</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <a href="#">.pdf rubric</a></li> <li>→ <a href="#">.docx rubric</a></li> </ul>

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			<p>3. Spend a class period presenting final projects and conducting peer review of the presentations.</p> <p><i>Alternative Idea:</i> Create the project as a bulletin board for display <i>around the school</i>.</p> <p><b>Learning Extension:</b> Watch <i>Aftershock</i> as a class (only available on Hulu) (slide 34).</p>	
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