

History 316: The Era of the American
Civil War
Fall 2017: MW 4:10-5:25
Roberts Hall 210

Professor Michael McManus
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History 316 is an upper-level undergraduate course exploring the history of the United States during the years of the sectional crisis, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. We will explore the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War and attempt to understand the multiple meanings of this transforming event in American history. We will examine in particular the political impact of the slavery issue in bringing on secession and war, the soldiers experience, emancipation and Reconstruction.

Lectures are central to the course and you are required to attend them all, to be on time, to pay careful attention, to take detailed notes, and to remain present until they have concluded. In addition, you are to complete all reading assignments and make a determined effort to understand the topics covered and the author's interpretation of events. You are strongly encouraged to engage actively with the readings, take careful notes, and prepare an outline of the assignment.

Electronic devices can be intensely distracting to your fellow students and teacher. For this reason, cellphones must be turned off completely once you enter the classroom. Classroom use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices is deeply discouraged, taking notes by hand is strongly encouraged.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the evolution of slavery in the United States and its impact over time on slaves, southern whites, and the nation
- To examine and assess the intense political debates over the issue of slavery in the western territories, the failure of political party system to contain it, and its impact in bringing on the Civil War
- To appreciate the relationship between the war, preservation of the Union, and emancipation
- To grasp the complex problems associated with reconstruction, reunion and the persistence of racism
- To develop skills in reading and interpreting primary sources from the Civil War Era

REQUIRED READING

Books

Charles Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*

Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877*

James McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam-The Battle That Changed the Course of the Civil War*

James Oakes, *The Scorpion's Sting: Antislavery and the Coming of the Civil War*

Essays (D2L)

David Blight, "Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Remembered? Reunion and Race in the Memory of the Civil War, 1875-1913"

Brooks Simpson, "Consider the Alternatives: Reassessing Republican Reconstruction"

Kenneth Stampp, "The Irrepressible Conflict"

Garry Wills, "Lincoln's Greatest Speech"

Primary Source Documents (D2L)

"Appeal of the Independent Democrats," January 19, 1854

Benning, Brown, Stephens, Secession Speeches, November-December, 1860, Georgia
(Recommended only)

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Delivered July 5, 1852

Frederick Douglass on the Failure of Reconstruction and Hope for the Future, 1881

Frederick Douglass, Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, 1876

Frederick Douglass, Emancipation Proclaimed

Stephen A. Douglas, Springfield, IL Speech July 17, 1858

Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address." March 4, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions: Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois January 27, 1838"

Abraham Lincoln, House Divided Speech, July 16, 1858

Abraham Lincoln, Cooper Union Speech, February 27, 1860

Alexander Stephens, The Cornerstone Speech, March 21, 1861

EXAMINATIONS AND QUIZZES

- Examinations will be objective and taken electronically on D2L. The questions will come exclusively from the lectures and reading. Study guides will be provided. All exams must be completed by 5pm on the due date.
- September 29: fifty question exam.
- October 30: fifty question exam.
- December 9: fifty question exam.

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION SCHEDULE — READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

August 28: Introduction

August 30: Why Study the Civil War?

Reading: Kolchin, ch. 1.

Week 2

September 4: No class

September 6: America and the North at Mid-Century

Reading: Kolchin, ch. 2.

Week 3

September 11: The Antebellum South and Slavery

September 13: The Ideological Conflict over Slavery

Reading: Kolchin, ch. 3-4; Oakes, Introduction.

Week 4

September 18: The Sectional Conflict Takes Shape-The Territorial Question

September 20: The Compromise of 1850

Reading: Kolchin, ch. 5-6; Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

Week 5

September 25: Filibusterers, Fugitives, and Foreigners

September 27: “A Hell of a Storm.” Kansas-Nebraska and the Collapse of the Second Party System

Reading: Oakes, ch.1; “Appeal of the Independent Democrats,” January 19, 1854

September 29: First exam due

Week 6

October 2: The Birth of the Republican Party

October 4: Buchanan, Douglas and the Disruption of the Democracy

Reading: Oakes, ch. 2-3; Stephen A. Douglas, Springfield, IL Speech July 17, 1858; Abraham Lincoln, House Divided Speech, July 16, 1858

Week 7

October 9: John Brown’s Private War and the Deepening Crisis

October 11: The Election of 1860 and the Secession of the Lower South

Readings: Dew, 1-50; Abraham Lincoln, Cooper Union Speech, February 27, 1860; Alexander Stephens, The Cornerstone Speech, March 21, 1861; **Recommended Only:** Benning, Brown, Stephens on Secession

Week 8

October 16: The Logic of Rebellion and the Outbreak of War

October 18: Mobilizing for War

Readings: Dew, pp. 51-103; Stamp, “The Irrepressible Conflict”

Week 9

October 23: The War at Home and Abroad

October 25: Lincoln and Davis: A Study in Contrasts

Week 10

October 30: **October 27: Second Exam Due**

November 1: The Tides of War-1861-1863

Reading: Oakes, Chapter 4 and Epilogue.

Week 11

November 6: Civil War Soldiers: Why They Fought,

November 8: The Ordeal of Combat

Readings: Readings: McPherson, 3-156;

Week 12

November 13: Lee, Grant, and the Road to Appomattox

November 15: Abraham Lincoln and the Destruction of Slavery

Readings: Kolchin, ch. 7-Afterword; Douglass, Emancipation Proclaimed

Week 13

November 20: The Meaning and End of the War

November 22: No class

Readings: Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"; Garry Wills, "Lincoln's Greatest Speech"

Week 14

November 27: Presidential Reconstruction-Lincoln v. Johnson

November 29: Radical Reconstruction and the Impeachment of a President

Readings: David Blight, "Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Remembered? Reunion and Race in the Memory of the Civil War, 1875-1913" ; Brooks Simpson, "Consider the Alternatives: Reassessing Republican Reconstruction"; Frederick Douglass, "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, 1876

Week 15

December 4: Grant and the End of Reconstruction

December 6: Wrap up and review

Reading: Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions:
Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois

January 27, 1838"; Frederick Douglass on the Failure of Reconstruction and Hope for the Future,
1881

December 8: Final Exam due