

History 46
TTH 2:40-3:55
Trotter 203
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: M. & W. 3-5;
T. 4-5; Th. 10-12; or by appt.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

More words have been written and published about the American Civil War than any other event in the history of the United States. How can we explain this fascination with the war? Was it simply the unprecedented carnage, the more than 600,000 soldiers' deaths, the scores of wounded, and the psychological scars of a generation? Were the men and women who fought on both sides exemplary of some special dispensation of courage and resolve? Were they to be pitied for their folly? Or have Americans, North and South, looked back to the Civil War to fight again and again the conflicts that prompted the war in the first place -- the incompatibility of the nation's noblest ideas of liberty and equality with its entrenched systems and discourses of racial inequality? Has the war ever finished?

This course examines the sectional conflict that prompted the Civil War, the secession crisis, the war years, and Reconstruction, concentrating on the perspective of social and cultural history. Central themes of American history emerge -- freedom, equality, self-determination, racial justice and injustice, economic and class conflict, and constructions of gender and sexual power. The course also focuses on the power of memory, and the conflicts over memory, that have shaped the cultural meanings of the Civil War for the century and a half since the surrender at Appomattox.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Books to purchase: The following books are available at the College Bookstore:

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (1998).

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over* (2007).

Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention* (1996).

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* (2008).

Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War* (2001).

Eric Foner, *Forever Free* (2005)

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion* (2001).

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, vol. 2 (any edition from 1982 to the present) is recommended but not ordered at the bookstore. See www.abe.com for affordable used copies of this text.

Blackboard & Reserve Readings:

Additional required and recommended readings will be available on Blackboard or General Reserves at McCabe Library. Student "blog" postings are part of the required texts for the course.

Films:

Films comprise an integral part of the assigned "texts" for this course. There will be scheduled "film nights" during the second half of the semester, and the films will be on video reserve at McCabe Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class participation: Students are required to attend all class meetings, complete all assigned readings (purchased books & Blackboard), and be prepared to discuss the readings each week. Students are expected to contribute actively to the collective learning experience of the course. *The following is the History Department policy on attendance: "Students are required to attend all classes for the successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade."* NOTE FOR FALL 2009: DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF EXPERIENCING A FEVER OR OTHER FLU SYMPTOMS.

Writing Assignments:

Papers: Two papers (approximately 2000 words each) will be written over the course of the semester. These will not be research papers, but essays on the assigned readings and recommended supplemental readings. Descriptions of the topics, sources, and expectations for the papers are in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

Blackboard Blogs: Five times during the semester, each student will post a reflective essay (a sort of weblog, or "blog") onto the "Blogs" folder on the course's Blackboard site. These essays will be based on various brief research assignments, and should be analytical essays of no more than 1000 words. These blogs are expected to exhibit the same quality of work as an academic essay, although in the form of a journal entry.

Blog Assignments:

1. Secession: Read an editorial written during the secession crisis (1860-61) from either a Southern or Northern newspaper, and interpret its historical meaning and significance.
2. Friends and Pacifists: Find a document in either of Swarthmore's two resident archives (the Friends Historical Library or the Peace Collection), and write your interpretation.
3. Magazines and Civil War Memory: Find any item (story, play, print, history, memoir) published in an American magazine during the fifty years following the Civil War (1865-1915), and discuss what it reveals about memories and representations of the Civil War.
4. Film Review: Write a review of one of the numerous feature films set in Civil War.
5. Web Site Review: Find and interpret a current web site devoted to the experience or meaning of the Civil War today.

More details on these blog assignments can be found on Blackboard.

Final Examination: The final exam will take place at the end of the semester, either on the scheduled exam date, or as a take-home exam, to be arranged by the professor.

N.B. Students must complete all writing assignments to pass this course.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Part 1. Fissures in the Republic: The Antebellum Years

Week 1:

Sept. 1 – Introduction . . . & the Antebellum Transformation of the North

Readings:

Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free*, ch. 2 & 3.

Sept. 3 – Into the Recent Past: Still Fighting the Civil War in the Late 20th Century

Readings:

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 1-4, 6.

Week 2:

Sept. 8 – Antebellum White Southern Culture, Slavery & African American Lives

Readings:

William W. Freehling, *The South vs. The South* (2001), ch. 2.

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul* (1999), ch. 3.

Eric Foner, *Forever Free*, pp. 3-40.

Advertisements for Runaway Slaves, North Carolina Newspapers (1820-60)

Sept. 10 – Sectional Conflict on the Eve of the Civil War

Readings:

Selected primary-source readings: John Brown's Raid, Harper's Ferry (1859).

Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970), ch. 1-2.

Week 3:

Sept. 15 – Secession & the War Begins

Readings:

Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion* (2001), Introduction, ch. 1, 4, Conclusion.
Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union (1860).

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire* (1982), ch. 13.

Blackboard Blog # 1 Due By 2:40pm

Part 2. House Divided: The Civil War and Reconstruction

Sept. 17 – What They Fought For

Readings:

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over*, pp. 3-80, 113-145.

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, ch. 14-15.

Week 4:

Sept. 22 – Emancipation: Who Freed the Slaves?

Readings:

Barbara J. Fields, "Who Freed the Slaves?," in Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War: An Illustrated History* (1990), 178-81.

James M. McPherson, "Who Freed the Slaves?," *Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War* (1996), 192-207.

Ira Berlin, "Who Freed the Slaves?: Emancipation and Its Meaning," in David W. Blight and Brooks D. Simpson, ed., *Union and Emancipation* (1997), 105-21.

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over*, pp. 81-111.

Sept. 24 – The War's Turning Points

Readings:

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was Over*, pp. 147-212.

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, ch. 17-19, 23.

Week 5:

Sept. 29 – The Carnage of War

Readings:

Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle* (1997), ch. 1 & 3.

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, ch. 2.

Oct. 1 – Soldiering and Manhood (plus)

Conscientious Objectors and Pacifists During the Civil War

Readings:

Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (1993), ch. 1, 5.

Jim Cullen, "'I's a Man Now': Gender and African American Men," in C.

Clinton & N. Silber, *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (1992), 76-91.

Peter Brock, ed., *Liberty and Conscience: A Documentary History . . .*, pp. 117-20, 139-79.

Blackboard Blog # 2 Due By 2:40pm

Week 6:

Oct. 6 – The Confederate Home Front

Readings:

Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*.

Oct. 8 – Spies, Cross-Dressers, and Political Women: Gender in the North

Readings:

Lyde Cullen Sizer, “Acting Her Part: Union Women Spies,” in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, ed., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (1992), 114-133.

Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (2005), ch. 4.

Paper # 1 Due in Class

Fall Break: Oct. 10 thru 18

Week 7:

Oct. 20 – Killing and Dying in America

Readings:

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, pp. xi-101.

Oct. 22 – Counting the Costs: The Meaning of Death in the Civil War

Readings:

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, pp. 102-271.

Week 8:

Oct. 27 – Civil War in the Cultural Imagination: Songs and Stories

Readings:

Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War*, Introduction - ch. 2.

Oct. 29 – Civil War in the Cultural Imagination: Race and Gender

Readings:

Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War*, ch. 3-7.

“Interpreting the Civil War: Jeff Davis in Drag,” companion web site for Bruce Dorsey and Woody Register, eds., *Crosscurrents in American Cultural History* (Houghton Mifflin, 2009).

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, ch. 25.

Blackboard Blog # 3 Due by 2:40pm

Week 9:

Nov. 3 – Emancipation & Reconstruction

Readings:

Eric Foner, *Forever Free*, ch. 2-4.

Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," in *The Black Public Sphere* (1995).

Nov. 5 – Reconstruction

Readings:

Eric Foner, *Forever Free*, ch. 5-7 [up to p. 213].

"White Terror," in Bruce Dorsey and Woody Register, eds., *Crosscurrents in American Cultural History*.

Part 3. Remembering, Forgetting, and Erasing: The Civil War in Memory and Popular Culture

Week 10:

Nov. 10 – The Study of History and Memory

Readings:

Russ Catronovo, *Fathering the Nation* (1995), ch. 3.

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Prologue & ch. 1.

Nov. 12 – Reconstruction and the War over Memory: The Lost Cause

Readings:

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, ch. 2-4, 8.

Gary W. Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History: A Persistent Legacy," in *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory* (1998), 199-226.

Moses Drury Hoge, "Oration at Erection of Statue to Stonewall Jackson" (1875).

Week 11:

Nov. 17 – African American Memories and Counter-memories.

Readings:

Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (2003), ch. 4.

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, ch. 9.

Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors* (1892).

Eric Foner, *Forever Free*, pp. 214-224

Nov. 19 – *Birth of a Nation*: History Doesn't Get Any Worse Than This

Readings:

Birth of a Nation (1915), dir. D. W. Griffith.

David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Epilogue.
Bruce Chadwick, *The Reel Civil War: Mythmaking in American Film* (2001), ch.
6-8.

Week 12:

Nov. 24 – No Class: Civil War Movies

Blackboard Blog # 4 Due by 2:40pm

Nov. 26 – No Class: Thanksgiving break

Week 13:

Dec. 1 – *Gone with the Wind*: The Lost Cause Meets the Great Depression

Readings:

Gone with the Wind (1939), dir. Victor Fleming.
Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture*, ch. 1-3
Bruce Chadwick, *The Reel Civil War*, ch. 10-11.
Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 11.

Dec. 3 – Ken Burns's Civil War

Readings:

The Civil War, dir. Ken Burns, reel 1, 9.
Eric Foner, "Ken Burns and the Romance of Reunion," in Robert Brent
Toplin, ed., *Ken Burns's The Civil War*, 101-18.
Leon Litwack, "Telling the Story: The Historian, the Filmmaker, and the Civil
War," in Robert Brent Toplin, ed., *Ken Burns's The Civil War*, 119-140.

Blackboard Blog # 5 Due by 2:40pm

Week 14:

Dec. 8 – Re-enactors, Battle Flags, and Disney: Contemporary Popular Culture and
Current Controversies

Readings:

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 8-10, 12-15.
Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture*, ch. 4-6.

Paper # 2 Due: Dec. 10

Final Examination: **Date**_____ **Time**_____