

History 46
TTH 11:20-12:35
Trotter 203
Fall 2014

Bruce Dorsey
Trotter 214 x8095
Office Hrs: T/Th. 12:40-2:00;
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).

James Oakes, *Freedom National* (2013)

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning* (2010).

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

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

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

Moodle & Reserve Readings:

Additional required and recommended readings for class or for the paper assignments will be available on Moodle or General Reserves at McCabe Library. Note: 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 & Moodle), and be prepared to discuss the readings each week. Students are expected to contribute actively to the collective learning experience of the course.

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 Paper Assignments folder on Moodle. **Paper # 1 is due Oct. 24; Paper # 2 is due Dec. 11.**

Blogs: Five times during the semester, each student will post a reflective essay (a sort of “blog”) onto the “Blogs” folder on the course’s Moodle site. These essays will be based on brief research assignments, and should be essays of no more than 800 words. Blog essays should be analytical, and although they can be more informal, like a journal entry, they should display an attention to good writing.

Blog Assignments: (More details can be found on Moodle)

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 during the Civil War and produced between 1939 and 1965.
5. Web Site Review: Find and interpret a current web site devoted to the experience or meaning of the Civil War today.

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.

POLICIES:

Evaluation/Grading:

Class participation:	10%
Papers:	50%
Blogs	25%
Final Examination	15%

Note: Students must complete all writing assignments (including the Final Exam) to pass this course.

Attendance & Communication: The following is the History Department policy on attendance & communication: *“Students are required to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean’s Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since History professors will contact you via email. We also expect you to use email to contact History professors.”*

Laptops & Electronic Devices: To facilitate discussion and to avoid distractions, I am going to ask that you do not use a laptop or any other electronic device in class. Please silence and put away your mobile phone during class. (Disability accommodations requiring the use of a computer are not covered by this policy.)

Accommodations for disability: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/academic-advising-and-support/student-disability-service.xml>. You are also welcome to contact me privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Part 1. Fissures in the Republic: The Antebellum Years

Week 1:

Sept. 2 – Introduction . . . & the Antebellum Transformation of the North

Readings:

Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free* (1992), ch. 2 & 3.

Sept. 4 – 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.

Barak Obama, "Presidential Proclamation: Civil War Sesquicentennial," April 12, 2011.

Week 2:

Sept. 9 – Antebellum White Southern Culture, Slavery & African American Lives

Readings:

David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (2006), 175-204.

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853), excerpt [50pp]
[*Twelve Years a Slave* (2013), dir. Steve McQueen.]

Sept. 11 – Sectional Conflict on the Eve of the Civil War

Readings:

James Oakes, *Freedom National*, Preface & ch. 1.

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

Week 3:

Sept. 16 – Secession & the War Begins

Readings:

Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion* (2001), pp. 1-21, 51-58, 74-81.

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, ch. 1-2.

James Oakes, *Freedom National*, ch. 2-3.

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

Blackboard Blog # 1 Due By 11:20am

Part 2. House Divided: The Civil War and Reconstruction

Sept. 18 – What They Fought For

Readings:

Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (2007), ch. 2.

James Oakes, *Freedom National*, pp. 166-91.

James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades* (1997), ch. 1-2, 8-9 [skim ch. 10].

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

Week 4:

Sept. 23 – Emancipation (Who Freed the Slaves?) & Slavery's Deliberate Destruction

Readings:

James Oakes, *Freedom National*, pp. 106-44, 224-25, 237-45, 277-392, 410-429

Sept. 25 – The War's Turning Points

Readings:

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

Week 5:

Sept. 30 – 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.

Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (2012), ch. 4.

Oct. 2 – 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 . . .* (2012), pp. 117-20, 139-79.

Blackboard Blog # 2 Due By 11:20am

Week 6:

Oct. 7 – The Confederate Home Front

Readings:

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, pp. 85-193, 214-33, 252-88, [skim 317-52]

Thavolia Glymph, "Rose's War and the Gendered Politics of a Slave Insurgency in the Civil War," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (2013), 501-32.

Oct. 9 – Spies, Cross-Dressers, & Political Women: Gender in the North & Border States

Readings:

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

LeeAnn Whites, "The Tale of Three Kates: Outlaw Women, Loyalty, and Missouri's Long Civil War," in S. Berry, ed., *Weirding the War* (2011), 73-94.

Fall Break: Oct. 14 & 16**Week 7:**

Oct. 21 – Killing and Dying in America

Readings:

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

Oct. 23 – Counting the Costs: The Meaning of Death in the Civil War

Readings:

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

Paper # 1 Due Oct. 24 by 5pm**Week 8:**

Oct. 28 – Civil War in the Cultural Imagination: Songs and Stories

Readings:

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

Oct. 30 – 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," draft for Bruce Dorsey and Woody Register, eds., *Crosscurrents in American Culture* (Houghton Mifflin, 2009), 2nd edition.

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

Week 9:

Nov. 4 – Emancipation & Reconstruction

Readings:

Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (2012), 3-14, 18-41.

Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (2005), 76-100.

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).

Blackboard Blog # 3 Due by 11:20am

Nov. 6 – Reconstruction

Readings:

Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (2007), 39-77.

Douglas R. Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction* (2014), ch. 7.

Eric Foner, *Forever Free*, pp. 107-49, 159-80.

"White Terror," in Dorsey & Register, eds., *Crosscurrents in American Culture*.

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

Week 10:

Nov. 11 – The Study of History and Memory

Readings:

Michael DeGruccio, "Letting the War Slip through Our Hands: Material Culture and the Weakness of Words in the Civil War Era," in Stephen Berry, ed., *Weirding the War* (2011), 15-35.

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

Nov. 13 – 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.

Week 11:

Nov. 18 – African American Memories and Counter-memories.

Readings:

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War?" *The Atlantic*, Nov. 30, 2011.

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.

Nov. 20 – *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. 25 – *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* (1995), ch. 3.
 Bruce Chadwick, *The Reel Civil War*, ch. 10-11.
 Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 11.

Blackboard Blog # 4 Due by 11:20am

Nov. 27 – No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday): Watch Civil War Movies

Week 13:

Dec. 2 – Tourism and Gettysburg: The Making of an American Shrine

Readings:

Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (2003), Intro. & ch. 5 & 8.

Dec. 4 – 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* (1996), 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 11:20am

Week 14:

Dec. 9 – 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. 11 by 5pm

Final Examination: Date _____ Time _____