

HIST 445
Civil War and Reconstruction
William G. Thomas
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Fall 2012
MWF 11:30 a.m.

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Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 1:00-2:30 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description:

This course covers the period from 1850 to 1877 in American history when the nation divided, fought the Civil War, and then afterward struggled to define the war and its meaning. The course explores the following major topics: slavery as the cause the war, the politics of Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans, the emancipation movement and end of slavery, the competing nationalism in North and South, war as an instrument of politics and society, the meaning of the surrender at Appomattox, and the successes and failures of the attempts at reconstruction of the Union.

Course Objectives:

- to give students the experience and opportunity to do history for themselves and participate in historical research through gathering evidence, communicating ideas, and engaging with scholarship.
- to improve fluency and proficiency in historical writing and historical thinking.
- to give students a deep and thorough knowledge of the Civil War era, in particular the social experience of battlefield and home front, the legal and political conflicts over secession, emancipation, and reconstruction, and the development of the U. S. nation-state.
- to give students experience with reading and analyzing a wide array of evidence-- letters, diaries, films, novels, art, and images.
- to develop in students an enthusiasm for history and historical thinking.

Required Texts (in order of assignments):

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Harriet Jacobs
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff
This Republic of Suffering, Drew Gilpin Faust
A Year in the South, Stephen Ash
The Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Ambrose Bierce
A Fool's Errand, Albion Tourgee

Required Electronic Archives:

- *Visualizing Emancipation and Hidden Patterns of the Civil War*, Edward L. Ayers, Scott Nesbit, and Robert Nelson, eds., University of Richmond
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>
- *Civil War Documents*, John Willis ed., (Sewanee)
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html
- *Secession Era Editorials*, Lloyd Benson ed., (Furman University)
<http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py>
- *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*, Edward L. Ayers, William G. Thomas, III, Anne S. Rubin, and Andrew Torget, eds., (University of Virginia)
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>

Reading and Assignments:

(note: all assignments are subject change and modification during the semester)

First Month Focus Project: The Emancipation Contest

The first two weeks of this course will be an intensive examination of Emancipation in preparation for all students to submit essays on September 4 for the National Endowment for the Humanities student contest: see rules here--

<http://emancipation.neh.gov/student-contest/>

The winning student in this national contest will be flown to Washington, D.C. for September 17th National Constitution Day event in the East Wing of the White House. The University of Nebraska will be airing the event live in the Student Union.

We will introduce the subject of emancipation in class and organize our efforts both as a team and individually. Note: if one of our class' students is selected as the national

winner, the entire class will receive 5 points (half letter grade) extra credit. In weeks three and four, you will present your essay or creative work to the class in 5-7 minutes to be scheduled.

Week 1 (August 20): Slavery and Freedom

Research: *Visualizing Emancipation*
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>

Friday Discussion: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs

Stephen Berry, "The Future of Civil War Studies"
<http://journalofthecivilwarera.com/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/>

Week 2 (August 27): Politics and Society in the 1850s
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 1

Research: *Visualizing Emancipation*
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>

Friday Discussion: *Civil War Documents*
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html

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

Week of Labor Day (September 3): Emancipation Contest Presentations in Class

NO CLASS September 3, Labor Day

Friday Discussion: *Civil War Documents*
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html

Alexander H. Stephens, "The Honor of This Country"

John C. Calhoun, "Southern Address"

William H. Seward, "A Higher Law"

Charles Sumner, "The Crime Against Kansas"

James Henry Hammond, "Cotton is King"

Secession Era Editorials--choose Dred Scott Decision
<http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py>

Albany, New York Evening Journal, 9 March 1857

Albany, New York Evening Journal, 10 March 1857

Richmond, Virginia, Enquirer, 10 March 1857

Charleston, South Carolina, Mercury, 17 March 1857

Week 3 (September 10): Election of 1860
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 2

Friday Discussion: *Valley of the Shadow*
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>

Staunton Spectator, 13 November 1860
Staunton Spectator, 27 November 1860
Staunton Republican Vindicator, 16 November 1860
Franklin Valley Spirit, 14 November 1860
Franklin Repository, 14 November 1860

Week 4 (September 17): Secession and Nation Building
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 3 and 4

Friday Discussion: *Civil War Documents*
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html

Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address"
Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech"
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Chiefly About War Matters"
George Templeton Strong, "Whether I am a Republican"

Michael Bernath, "Nationalism"
<http://journalofthecivilwarera.com/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies-nationalism/>

Week 5 (September 24): Mobilization and First Battles
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 5

Friday Discussion: *This Republic of Suffering*, Drew Gilpin Faust

Week 6 (October 1): Major Battles and Turning Points
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapters 6 and 7

October 5 Emancipation Contest Due Date for Submission

Civil War Documents
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 7 July 1862

Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, 3 September 1862

Week 7 (October 8): The African American Experience
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 9
Take Home Mid Term Exam assigned and distributed

Valley of the Shadow
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>

Demus and Christy Family Letters--
<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/VoS/personalpapers/documents/franklin/p2demusletters.html>

Week 8 (October 15): Women's Experience in the Civil War
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapters 11 and 12

(NO CLASS October 15, Fall Break)

Wednesday Discussion: *Valley of the Shadow*

Diary of Nancy Emerson-- <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/EmeDiar>
Diary of Rachel Cormany-- <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/FD1006>

10/19 *Take Home Mid Term Exam Due*

Week 9 (October 22): Major Battles and Turning Points 1864
A Year in the South, Stephen Ash (begin reading)

Friday Discussion: *Civil War Documents*
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html
William T. Sherman to Henry W. Halleck, 24 December 1864
William T. Sherman, Orders to the Mayor and City Council of Atlanta
Patrick R. Cleburne, et al. to Joseph E. Johnston, et al., 2 January 1864
56th Virginia Regiment to Richmond Whig, 14 February 1865
Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"
Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"

Research: After the Civil War Project (see below)

Week 10 (October 29): Appomattox and Aftermath

Civil War Documents

http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents.html

Robert E. Lee, "Farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia"

U. S. Grant, "Meeting with Robert E. Lee, 9 April 1865"

William T. Sherman, "First Agreement with J. E. Johnston, 18 April 1865"

Friday Discussion: *A Year in the South*, Stephen Ash

Week 11 (November 5): Literature of the Civil War

Friday Discussion: *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Ambrose Bierce

Jim Downs, "Race"

<http://journalofthecivilwarera.com/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies-race/>

Research: After the Civil War Project (see below)

Week 12 (November 12): The Visual War--Images of the War
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 13

Sheldon Museum of Art Visit (November 21)

Research: After the Civil War Project (see below)

Week 13 Thanksgiving (November 19 and 21): Reconstruction's Beginning
A People at War, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carole Sheriff chapter 14

Thanksgiving Break November 22-25

Week 14 (November 26): Reconstruction

Friday Discussion: *A Fool's Errand: A Novel of the South During Reconstruction*,
Albion Tourgee

11/30 After the Civil War Essay Due Friday 5 p.m. (no class 11/14)

Topic: Select a newspaper and read 2 months from 1866.

In a 7 to 10-page essay assess the social, political, and economic conflicts occurring in the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of the war. What conflicts were most the significant, difficult to resolve, and why?

Use only:

1. Pennsylvania Civil War Newspapers
<http://digitalnewspapers.libraries.psu.edu/>
2. Valley of the Shadow Project
<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu>
3. Proquest Historical Newspapers (UNL Libraries)
4. 19th Century Newspapers (UNL Libraries)
5. 19th Century British Newspapers (UNL Libraries)

Week 15 (December 3): 15th Week --The Lost Cause and the Civil War in the
Sesquicentennial 2011

Final Exam in Exam Week 10:00 a.m. Friday December 11 10-12 noon

Grading:

Emancipation Contest Essay	15 % of Final Grade
Take Home Mid Term Exam	15 % of Final Grade
After the Civil War Essay	20 % of Final Grade
Final Exam	25 % of Final Grade
Discussion/Participation/Attendance	25 % of Final Grade

(Students taking this course P/N must receive a C or higher for a P.)

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University and reported to the Dean of Students.

Academic Policies and Expectations:

Late assignments will be marked down one half-letter grade per day that they overdue. No assignments will be accepted more than one week late without permission from the instructor. Assignments will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at class session. These essays should be concise, clear, consistent, and careful. They should not be in the first-person. They should use quotations where necessary from primary evidence and cite using Chicago Manual of Style 15th ed. in footnote format.

This course is a lecture and discussion format course. Students will be expected to attend lecture in preparation for writing essays and the final exam. All readings in the class will be tested on the final examination. Participation grading will be based on the student's attendance record and the quality of engagement and contribution to in-class discussions and assignments.

Academic freedom of expression is essential to reasoned discourse, learning, and scholarship. Students will be expected at all times to engage in analysis and discussion in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, honor, and dignity. Students will be expected to consider complex issues and controversial topics with respect for views that may differ from their own. Students should be familiar with and consult the following important resources in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska, describing the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty in the classroom:

1. The Student Code of Conduct-- <http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>
2. The Student in the Academic Community--Classroom Rights and Responsibilities
<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/community/two.shtml>

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.