

History 393

Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, 1848-1877

Spring 2014

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 1-2:15

Ingraham 22

This syllabus is your guide to the course. Look here first for answers to your questions. If you email the professor with a question and do not receive an answer, it is probably because the question is already answered on the syllabus.

Teaching Staff

Professor: Stephen Kantrowitz
5119 Humanities
office hours: Thursday, 8:30-10:30am
skantrow@wisc.edu

TA: Kate Wersan
4271 Humanities
office hours: TBA
wersan@wisc.edu

About the Course

History 393 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. It is designed to help you develop skills that are elements of the History Department's Goals of the Major, including:

- understanding and assessing primary sources
- understanding and assessing historical arguments and debates
- presenting original and coherent written arguments based on primary and secondary materials
- applying historical knowledge and skills to contemporary debates and representations

The course readings include book-length and shorter works of history, as well as a variety of narratives, speeches, and other personal and political writings from the nineteenth century. Reading assignments often exceed 100 pages per week.

Writing assignments ask you to read these texts closely, place them in their historical contexts, analyze their overt meanings as well as their tensions, contradictions, and silences, and make arguments about them.

There is no textbook, so many topics will only be covered in lecture.

Our Social Contract

Attendance and Attention

Lectures and sections are essential, central aspects of the course. We expect you to attend regularly, to be ready to listen or participate when the hour of instruction arrives, and to remain present until it has concluded. The professor and teaching assistants will make every effort to end lectures and sections on time. Do not begin packing up before class has ended. On rare occasions it may be absolutely necessary for a student to arrive late or leave early; in these cases, you must do so as unobtrusively as possible. You may not exit and re-enter to make phone calls, check e-mail, etc.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Students may not use laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices during lecture or discussion. Web surfing, chatting, and other internet activities are intensely distracting to you and those around you, including your teachers; long experience shows that these activities are irresistible when screens are available. I will provide detailed outlines for each lecture, which should allow you to take notes efficiently by hand; I will also post the powerpoint, including the outline, to learn@UW after lecture.

Academic Responsibility

We will pursue all cases of possible academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism. All work that you turn in should be your own. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism; claiming ignorance will not help you after the fact. If you repeat someone else's words, you must use quotation marks and must cite the relevant author, work, and page numbers (either in parentheses or in a footnote). Likewise, if you closely paraphrase another writer or rely on his or her ideas, you must acknowledge your debt with an appropriate citation.

Appropriation of another author's work without citation—whether or not you use direct quotations—always constitutes plagiarism. Some clear guidelines are available on the Writing Center's website at http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

Late Work and Missed Exercises

Missed deadlines are only considered "excused" if the student provides a note from a medical professional, dean, or academic advisor. In the absence of such a note, your work will be reduced by a tenth of its total possible point value for each day it is late (beginning, as in a taxi, the moment the official deadline has passed); i.e., the maximum possible value of one of your take-home essays (max. 20 points) turned in no more than 24 hours late would be 18, the maximum possible value at two days late would be 16, etc.

Special Needs and Requests

We will make every effort to accommodate students' documented needs. Students requiring accommodation for lectures, discussions, or assignments must work through the McBurney Center and must alert their T.A. at least two weeks prior to the requested accommodation.

Discussion Sections

Sections will begin meeting on **Friday, Jan. 24 and Monday, Jan. 27.**

Discussion sections are a required and critical element of the course; attendance, participation, and completion of the 50-word assignments due Thursday nights together account for **25%** of your final grade. You must come to section well prepared, having digested the assigned readings and completed whatever other tasks have been assigned.

Lecture

During the first week of lecture, we will encourage you to obtain the email addresses of two students sitting near you. If you miss lecture, obtain notes from one of them. Office hours are intended for follow-up questions and focused discussions of the course material, not as make-up sessions. I do not provide copies of my lecture notes.

Readings

Three books for the course will be available at [A Room of One's Own](#), 315 W. Gorham St., and will be placed on reserve at College Library. I recommend that you purchase them or share the cost with a classmate. **Please note: since screens are not permitted in discussion sections, do not purchase these as e-books.**

Required:

- Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (any edition ok)
- Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*
- Douglas Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction*

Other readings will be made available as PDF files or via links on the Learn@UW page; some are also linked via this syllabus. You may read these online outside of class; the teaching staff will inform you which ones must be printed and brought with you to section for discussion. You may share these printing costs with fellow students as long as there is one reading copy for every two students.

Assignments and Grading

All assignments should be submitted to the appropriate learn@UW dropbox.

Short assignment, week 3 (5 pts): In an essay of 350-400 words, make an argument comparing Solomon Northup's critique of slavery with James Henry Hammond's critique of abolitionism. **Due Mon., 2/10, midnight.**

First take-home essay (20 pts): In what ways was the analysis of slavery offered by Northup and other abolitionists central to the coming of the Civil War? **Due Mon., 3/3, midnight.**

Second take-home essay (20 pts): topic TBA. **Due Tues., 4/15, midnight.**

It's Not Even Past (5 pts): This assignment takes its name from William Faulkner's reflection that "[t]he past is never dead. It's not even past." It asks you to think (and make an argument) about the resonance of this history in the contemporary world.

1) Read (or attend) one of the following:

- 5 blog posts (your choice) from [Civil War Memory](#)
- 5 entries (your choice) in the *New York Times's* "[Disunion](#)" series
- 5 articles from print or online periodicals (your choice) on the film version of *12 Years a Slave*
- Tony Horwitz, [150 Years of Misunderstanding the Civil War](#) and Ta-Nehisi Coates, [The Unromantic Slaughter of the Civil War](#)
- attend screening of "Slavery By Another Name," 4/25, 7pm, WHS auditorium

2) Write an essay of 250-300 words making an argument about how one important element of the history of the Civil War era continues to engage readers and/or audiences today. **Due any time before midnight, Thurs., 5/8.**

Final Essay (25 pts): Take-home essay, topic announced during the final week of classes. **Due Thurs., 5/15, 4:45 p.m.**

Course grading scale:	A = 92.5+
	AB = 87.5-92.4
	B = 82.5-87.4
	BC = 77.5-82.4
	C = 70-77.4
	D = 60-69.4
	F = Below 60

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

Our week begins with Tuesday's lecture, moves through Thursday's lecture, and concludes with your section meeting on Friday or Monday.

Readings should be completed as early as possible in the week, but in any event before your section meets.

50-word assignments must be submitted to the Learn@UW dropbox no later than midnight Thursday, after the week's second lecture (and before discussion sections meet).

• documents or articles available as .pdf files under "Content" at the course Learn@UW page

WEEK 1

Readings:

- McCurry, "The Politics of Yeoman Households"
- Begin reading Northup

1/21 Specters of Revolution

1/23 Slavery and the South

Sections begin meeting Fri., 1/24 and Mon., 1/27

WEEK 2

Readings:

- Northup, read at least through ch. 11
- Johnson, "The Carceral Landscape"
- George Aiken's stage adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)

Lectures:

1/28 "Free Labor" and the Emergence of Northern Distinctiveness

1/30 The Emergence of Abolitionism

50-word assignment: What is a "carceral landscape"?

WEEK 3

Readings:

- Northup, ch. 12 - end
- Hammond, "Letter to an English Abolitionist"

Lectures:

2/4 Proslavery and Anti-Abolitionism

No lecture on Thursday, 2/6

2/5-6 Prior to your discussion section, EITHER:

- 1) attend screening of *The Abolitionists*, Weds., 2/5, 7 pm, WHS auditorium; or
- 2) view [*Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property*](#) (2003)

Required essay, due Mon., 2/10, midnight: In 350-400 words, make an argument that compares Solomon Northup's critique of slavery with James Henry Hammond's critique of abolitionism; support your argument with brief, well-chosen examples or quotations from the texts.

Screen on your own (optional): *Amistad* (1997)

WEEK 4

Readings:

- Gorn, "Goodbye Boys, I Die a True American"
- White, "The Power of Whiteness"

Lectures:

- 2/11 Looking West
2/13 Compromises and Crises of the early 1850s

50-word assignment: Is "the power of whiteness" relevant to the world described in Gorn's article?

Screen on your own (optional): *Gangs of New York* (2002)
This film includes scenes of extreme violence

WEEK 5

Readings:

- South Carolina "Declaration of the Immediate Causes"
- Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone" Speech
- Trodd & Stauffer, eds., *A Meteor of War*, 109-139

Lectures:

- 2/18 Conspiracies, Real and Imagined
2/20 Secession, pt. 1

50-word assignment: In what ways are the "politics of yeoman households" reflected in the South Carolina Declaration or the Cornerstone speech?

Screen on your own (optional): *Santa Fe Trail* (1940); *The Skin Game* (1971)

WEEK 6

Readings:

Manning, 3-53

Lectures:

- 2/25 Secession, pt. 2
2/27 Telling Stories about the Civil War

First take-home essay due, Mon., 3/3, midnight: In an essay of 1200-1300 words, make an argument in response to this question: In what ways was the analysis of slavery offered by Northup and other abolitionists central to the coming of the Civil War?

WEEK 7

Readings:

- Manning, 54-111
• Glymph, "Nothing But Deception in Them': The War Within"

Lectures:

- 3/4 The Confederacy at War
3/6 The War Within

50-word assignment: What were the most important causes of the wartime disintegration of plantation households?

Screen on your own (optional): *Cold Mountain* (2003)

WEEK 8

Readings:

- Egerton, ch. 1
- Cecelski, "Abraham H. Galloway"
- Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, 27-77
- Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (1869), 38-42

Lectures:

- 3/11 Who Freed the Slaves?
- 3/13 The War for Emancipation

50-word assignment: Who freed the slaves?

Screen on your own (required): *Glory* (1989) – streaming link via learn@uw

WEEK 9

Readings:

- Manning, 111-221
- Forten, *Journal*, 27-33, 158-185

Lectures:

- 3/25 The Borders of Belonging, from Mankato to Massachusetts
- 3/27 Gettysburg and the Fog of War

50-word assignment: Did Forten's understanding of the South change in ways that can be compared to Union soldiers' evolution?

Screen on your own (optional): *Gettysburg* (1993)

WEEK 10

Readings:

- Egerton, ch. 2
- [Patrick Cleburne's Proposal to Arm Slaves](#)
- Kevin Levin, "[Teaching Civil War History 2.0](#)" ([New York Times](#), Jan. 21, 2011)
- Sampson and Levin, "The Loyalty of Silas Chandler," *Civil War Times* (Feb. 2012)

Lectures:

- 4/1 Rehearsals for Reconstruction
- 4/3 The Hard Hand of War

50-word assignment: Could Cleburne's plan have worked?

Screen on your own (optional): *Twelve Years a Slave* (2012) [pending availability]

This film contains scenes of extreme violence, including sexual assault

WEEK 11

Readings:

- Egerton, chs. 3-5
- "Address by a Committee of Norfolk Blacks"
- State of Mississippi, "An Act to Confer Civil Rights on Freedmen, and for other purposes"

Lectures:

- 4/8 1865
- 4/10 Visions of Freedom in the Postwar Nation

50-word assignment: In what ways do the Norfolk "Address" and the Mississippi legislation deal with the same questions?

WEEK 12**Readings:**

Egerton, ch. 6

- Stanley, "Beggars Can't Be Choosers: Compulsion and Contract in Postbellum America"

Lectures:4/15 **Second take-home essay due by midnight**

4/17 The Transformation of Reconstruction

50-word assignment: What forms of compulsion did Americans find legitimate in the aftermath of slave emancipation?

Screen on your own (optional): *Sommersby* (1993)

WEEK 13**Readings:**

• Saunt, "The Paradox of Freedom"

• DuBois, "Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers"

• Beckert, "Democracy and its Discontents"

Lectures:

4/22 Reconstruction and Citizenship

4/24 Reconstruction and the West

50-word assignment: Did "Reconstruction" take place in the North and West?

WEEK 14**Readings:**

Egerton, ch. 7-8

Perman, ed., *Major Problems*, 342-76;Wish, ed., *Reconstruction in the South*, 153-171**Lectures:**

4/29 White Terror vs. Radical Reconstruction

5/1 The Crisis of Reconstruction

50-word assignment: Do the competing explanations offered for Klan (or Klan-like) activity represent various perspectives on a common set of facts, flatly contradictory stories, or something else?

Screen on your own (optional): *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

WEEK 15**Readings:**

Egerton, chs. 9-10

- Janda, "Shutting the Gates of Mercy"

Lectures:5/6 **Redeployment and "Redemption"**5/8 **The Meanings of Freedom**

50-word assignment: What would have been necessary in order for democratically elected Republican governments to continue to govern in former Confederate states past 1876?

Screen on your own (optional): *Gone With the Wind* (1939)

*****FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE: May 15, 4:45*****