

History/Afro-American Studies 393

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

Spring 2020

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00-5:15
1101 Humanities

This syllabus is your guide to the course. Look here first for answers to your questions. If you email a question to the teaching staff and do not receive an answer within a reasonable period, it is because the answer is in this document.

Teaching Staff

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Goals and Expectations of the Course

History 393 has three sets of goals.

First, course lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments offer an in-depth investigation of slavery, the sectional crisis, the Civil War, slave emancipation, Reconstruction; it also explores the relationship of these histories to the transformation and persistence of Native American societies.

Second, it seeks to 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

Third, it fulfills the Ethnic Studies requirement by investigating:

- the institutions, experiences, and ideas that sustained and justified African-American slavery
- how struggles over slavery shaped national politics and led to the Civil War
- the role of enslaved and free black people in transforming the war into an emancipation struggle
- the creation, course, and destruction of the nation's first broad experiment in multi-racial democracy
- the interaction of these histories with Native American life during this period
- the ways these histories reverberate in contemporary U.S. society

In pursuit of all three sets of goals, this course will ask you to ask critical question about what you have been taught or told about the Civil War and its relationship to the history of slavery, to think about why this history remains contested and controversial, and to learn to recognize what is at stake in these debates.

Course Principles and Social Contract

Studying history is not about memorizing names and dates, but about crafting those specifics into verifiable stories (narratives) that illuminate broader patterns of continuity and change (analyses). When you come to lecture, or when you sit down to do the reading, we want your undivided attention on the big picture and on the people, events, concepts, and themes that fill it with meaning. Course assignments and course policies are designed around those principles.

Open-book, open-note assignments

All course assignments will be open-book and open-note. We're much less interested in what you don't know than in how well you can make sense of what you've read and learned. Unless we specifically tell you otherwise, however, you must complete assignments by yourself, and all the work in them must be your own (for more on this, see the academic misconduct policy, below).

Eyes and ears on the material and the people in the room with you

We all know what happens when we have a screen and an internet connection available. You may be convinced that you are an excellent multi-tasker, but non-classroom activities on a screen do more than take you away from the course; they create a cone of distraction around and behind you. I am not on a high horse here—unless there is an explicit agreement that I must not pull out my phone (at the supper table, for example), I do it constantly. But I have also sat in the back of large lecture halls, observing my colleagues, and I know how many screens are filled with ESPN, messaging, and other non-classroom activities. It's incredibly distracting for you and for others, and it makes the work of the course itself secondary to that interaction.

You don't need to transcribe what's going on in the classroom to understand it; in fact, there's some **evidence** to suggest that this is counter-productive, even when you're not multi-tasking. We will provide outlines and lists of keywords for each class meeting; we'll then post all of these in pdf on Canvas. **Your job during our class meetings is to make sure you understand the main arguments, the meanings of the keywords, and how those meanings together build the argument.** You'll do this better by thoughtfully listening, taking selective notes, and asking questions than by trying to catch every word the professor says. That may or may not be true in your other courses, but it is true here.

In principle, the two paragraphs above constitute an argument against laptops in the classroom, and in the past this has been my policy. I have recently come to acknowledge that learning styles vary, however, and that some people may need a keyboard/screen interface to process information.

So here's the deal: **you may, if you wish, use a laptop in this course. If you do, you must turn off the wifi before lecture (or discussion section) begins and not turn it back on until lecture ends.** Phones and other devices—watches, tablets, toasters, whatever—must be silenced and set not to vibrate or send notifications (on an iPhone, for example, use the “do not disturb” setting) **and** placed out of sight and out of reach. If the message you are waiting for is so important that it can't remain unread or unanswered for seventy-five minutes, don't come to class that day.

The TA will sit at the back of the lecture hall and monitor laptop use. If you turn your wifi on, the TA will take note, ask you to shut it down, and inform me. If this occurs a second time, you will lose your laptop privileges for the remainder of the semester. Note that this does not mean that everyone gets one warning: that's no way to run a classroom. If we get to the point where three people have been warned, the entire class will go “on warning”; at this point, the policy will become one strike and your laptop is out.

Attendance

Some say that 80% of success is just showing up, and in this course that's not too far off. Lectures make up the analytical spine of the course, and sections are where you'll dig deeper into the readings and workshop your writing assignments. Further, **approximately 15 unannounced pass/fail writing exercises, during lecture, will make up 15% of your final grade.** If you do have to miss a lecture, you should make sure to obtain a classmate's notes. Do not ask the professor or teaching assistant to give you a recap of what you missed.

Attendance in section is required. More than one unexcused absence will significantly affect your section grade, which makes up 25% of your final grade. You must come to section well prepared, having digested the assigned readings and turned in the 50-word writing assignment and/or whatever other tasks we have assigned. You must have that week's reading assignment with you (book and/or downloaded or printed items from packet).

Credits and Workload

This course meets as a group for 4 hours per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

Late Work and Missed Exercises

Late work will lose a tenth of its total possible point value for each day it is late (beginning as soon as the official deadline has passed); i.e., a 20-point essay turned in no more than 24 hours late would lose two points, at two days late it would lose four points, etc.

Special Needs and Accommodations

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. Since there are no timed exams, there is no need to request this form of accommodation.

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. If you closely paraphrase other writers or rely on their ideas, you must similarly 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 at http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

Readings

The required books for the course will be available at A Room of One's Own, 315 W. Gorham St.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (any print edition)

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War*

Douglas Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America's Most Progressive Era*

The other required readings are included in a virtual course packet, accessible via Canvas. On the syllabus, they are marked in one of two ways, depending on how we will use them.

- = packet readings to be discussed in section
- * = packet readings to be discussed in section *and* lecture

All readings so marked must be downloaded or printed – i.e., must be available to you without a wifi connection! – prior to the beginning of lecture or section.

You should bring a 4x6 index card to each lecture in case of an impromptu note-card response (approximately 15 over the course of the semester).

Assignments and Grading

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

First take-home essay (15 pts): Due Sunday, 3/1, before midnight:

How central were the activities of Douglass and other abolitionists to the outbreak of the Civil War? In an essay of 1250-1500 words, make an argument in response to this question and support it with well-chosen examples drawn from course material (readings, lectures, and discussion). Your essay should focus on abolitionists and/or other forces to the degree that you believe they were important to the coming of the war (e.g., if in your view some other force or factor was about equally important, it should make up about half of your argument and analysis).

Second take-home essay (20 pts): Due Sunday, 4/5, before midnight

Over the past century, leading historians have offered a wide array of arguments about how slave emancipation came about during the Civil War. In 1935, W.E.B. Du Bois argued that when the secessionists made war on the U.S., they freed the slaves (although, as he pointed out, "it was the last thing [they] meant to do"). In Ken Burns' documentary *The Civil War* (1990), Barbara J. Fields declared that during the war "the slaves freed themselves." In *Freedom's Soldiers* (1990), a book about the wartime black regiments, Ira Berlin and his colleagues opened with the claim that "Freedom came by force of arms." In an essay of 1250-1500 words, make an argument in response to the question "Who (or What) Freed the Slaves?" You are free to argue this in any way that is supported by the course material. You are also free to quarrel with the form of the question and/or to provide an alternative question that, in your view, addresses the underlying issue(s) more effectively; in this case, you should explain (in no more than 50 words) why your version of the question is superior.

In-class impromptu written responses (15 pts): Approximately 15 P/F exercises over the semester

Final Essay (25 pts): Take-home essay, open book/open note, topic TBA. Due Tues., 5/5 by 9:45 p.m. to Canvas.

Section Participation (25 pts): Attendance and participation, including the weekly responses described below.

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

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

Our course “week” begins with lecture on Thursday, continues with lecture the following Tuesday, and concludes with your Thursday section meeting; we then begin the next “week” with that afternoon’s lecture.

Readings should be completed as early as possible in the week, but in any event before your section meets. Certain reading assignments, noted here with a “*,” will be part of workshops or other activities during that week’s lectures; be sure to have read these prior to lecture have a copy accessible to you during lecture.

Weekly responses are listed below for most weeks of the course. These assignments should respond directly to the prompt on the syllabus in 1) full sentences that 2) make a clear argument that is 3) based on the material for that week, and should be **between 40 and 60 words**. These assignments must be submitted to Canvas no later than 10 p.m. Wednesday night of the course week (the day before section meets). They may not be turned in late.

WEEK 1 **Sections begin meeting 1/23**

Lecture:
Tues 1/21 Introduction: Telling Stories about the Civil War Era

WEEK 2

Readings: • McCurry, "The Politics of Yeoman Households"
Douglass, *Narrative* (first half)

Lectures:
Thurs 1/23 Origins and Transformations of Racial Slavery
Tues 1/28 Slavery and the Antebellum South

Response: What were the "politics of yeoman households"?

WEEK 3

Readings: Douglass, *Narrative* (second half)
• Hammond, "Letter to an English Abolitionist," 1845
* T.T., "A Dream," *The Liberator*, April 2, 1831
* McCord, "Enfranchisement of Women," *Southern Quarterly Review*, April, 1852

Lectures:
Thurs 1/30 "Free Labor" and the Emergence of Northern Distinctiveness
Tues 2/4 The Politics of Freedom and the Politics of Equality

Response: How would Hammond, T.T., or McCord interpret Douglass’ fight with Covey?

WEEK 4

Readings: * *Congressional Globe*, Feb. 22, 1851, p. 312
* Whitman, "A Boston Ballad," 1854

Lectures:
Thurs 2/6 **NO LECTURE**
Tues 2/11 Northern Rebellions

Response: How does Whitman’s antislavery differ from Douglass’?

WEEK 5

Readings: * 1856 Republican Party Platform
* Kantrowitz, "Fighting Like Men"
* 1860 Republican Party Platform

Lectures:
Thurs 2/13 Three Ways of Looking at Kansas
Tues 2/18 The Crises of the late 1850s

Response: Explain why one difference between any two groups’ “antislavery” activities matters.

WEEK 6

- Readings:** Manning, 3-53
 * South Carolina "Declaration of the Immediate Causes," 1860
 * Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech," 1861
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 2/20 Secession, pt. 1
 Tues 2/25 Secession, pt. 2
- Response:** In what ways were the "politics of yeoman households" reflected in the South Carolina Declaration or the Cornerstone speech?

WEEK 7

- Readings:** Manning, 54-111
 * "The War, and Colored American Auxiliaries," *The Liberator*, Sept. 6, 1861, p. 144
 * Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, 1866, pp. 284-286
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 2/27 Going to War
 Tues 3/3 The War for Southern Independence?
- Response:** In what ways did the Confederate war inadvertently undermine the institution of slavery?

WEEK 8

- Readings:** Egerton, ch. 1
 * Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 1869, pp. 38-42
 * *The War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Vol. 14, pp. 298-308.
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 3/5 Who Freed the Slaves?
 Tues 3/10 The War for Emancipation
- Response:** How do the differences in the two accounts of the raid on the Combahee (Bradford and *War of the Rebellion*) reflect the authors' purposes and/or audiences?

WEEK 9 (NOTE THAT THIS WEEK IS INTERRUPTED BY SPRING BREAK)

- Readings:** Manning, 111-221
 * Louisiana labor regulations, 1863
 * Louisiana labor regulations, 1864
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 3/12 Gettysburg and the Fog of War
 Tues 3/24 Rehearsals for Reconstruction
- Response:** What explains the transformations of Union soldiers' perspectives on slave emancipation?

WEEK 10

- Readings:** Egerton, ch. 2
 * Glymph, "Rose's War and the Gendered Politics of a Slave Insurgency in the Civil War"
 * Patrick Cleburne's Proposal to Arm Slaves, 1864
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 3/26 The Threshold of Freedom
 Tues 3/31 Visions of Freedom

WEEK 11

- Readings:** Egerton, chs. 3-5
 • "Address by a Committee of Norfolk Blacks," 1865
 * *Laws of Mississippi*, 1865
- Lectures:**
 Thurs 4/2 Restoration and Reaction
 Tues 4/7 The Politics of Reconstruction
- Response:** What were the "Laws of Mississippi" designed to do?

WEEK 12

Readings:

Egerton, ch. 6

* "An Act to protect all Persons in the United States in their Civil Rights, and furnish the Means of their Vindication," April 9, 1866

* Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, (passed 1866, ratified 1868)

Lectures:

Thurs 4/9

Citizenship

Tues 4/14

Social Equality

Response:

What was the Fourteenth Amendment designed to do?

WEEK 13

Readings:

• DuBois, "Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers"

• Beckert, "Democracy and its Discontents"

* Pellew, "Pauperism in the State of New York," 1879

Lectures:

Thurs 4/16

Land

Tues 4/21

Coercion, Inequality, and the Contradictory Legacies of Emancipation

Response:

What were the limitations of "rights" as a vehicle for equality in the postwar era?

WEEK 14

Readings:

Egerton, ch. 7-end

* Robert B. Elliott speech, *Congressional Record*, Jan. 6, 1874, pp. 407-410

* Coates, "Unromantic Slaughter"

Lectures:

Thurs 4/23

Terror

Tues 4/28

Crises of Citizenship

Thurs 4/30

Finale: Reconstruction, Redemption, and Modern America

Response:

What would have been necessary in order for democratically elected governments to persist in the former Confederate states in the 1870s?

**FINAL TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT DUE: May 5, by 9:25 pm
(Topic announced in lecture no later than April 23)**