

History/Afro-American Studies 393

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

Spring 2022

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00-5:15
1121 Humanities

This syllabus is your guide to the course. Look here first for answers to your questions.

Teaching Staff

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Goals and Expectations of the Course

Learning Outcomes

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 in the context of U.S. conquest and settlement.

Second, the course develops 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, the course fulfills the Ethnic Studies requirement by investigating:

- the institutions, experiences, and ideas that sustained and opposed 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 ways Native peoples shaped and were shaped by this era, and the ways this history does and does not fit into conventional understanding of the period
- the ways these histories reverberate in contemporary U.S. society

In pursuit of all three goals, we expect you to think critically about what you have previously been taught about the Civil War and its relationship to the history of slavery and freedom, to consider why this history remains contested and controversial, and to learn to recognize what is at stake in these debates.

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.

Course Designations and Attributes

Counts toward the Ethnic Studies requirement
Humanities or Social Science breadth requirement
Intermediate level
Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

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

discussion section, 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 are 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 as they teach, and I know how many screens are filled with ESPN, messaging, shopping, and other non-classroom activities. It's incredibly distracting, not just for the surfer but for those sitting around and behind them. It makes the work of the course secondary to that interaction and distraction.

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 often been my policy. However, I acknowledge that learning styles vary and that for some people a keyboard/screen interface may be essential to processing information effectively.

So here's the deal: you may, if you wish, use a laptop in this course. If you do, you must turn off the internet connection before lecture (or section) begins. You may not turn it back on until the period is over or the instructor tells you to do so. 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). They must be 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 only exception to this policy is for documented accommodations.

The TA will sit at the back of the lecture hall and monitor electronics use. If you begin using your laptop for non-class purposes, 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.

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 weekly response. You must have that week's reading assignment with you in a form you can access without a live internet connection.

Late Work and Missed Exercises

Late midterm essays will lose a tenth of their total possible point value for each day they are 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; turned in no more than 48 hours late it would lose four points, etc. **Weekly responses may not be turned in late.**

Special Needs and Accommodations

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

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. Almost every semester I am forced to report one or more students for academic misconduct. Please make this one of the happy semesters where that is not necessary.

Readings

The required books for the course are:

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

This book is widely available in print, often at a very low cost.

It is freely available online at <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html>.

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

This book is widely available in print, new and used, and in eBook, via online sources.

There is no freely available electronic edition.

Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*

This book is widely available in print, new and used, and in eBook, from online sources.

There is no freely available electronic edition.

The other required readings are included in a virtual course packet, accessible via Canvas.

Readings in the virtual course packet marked with an asterisk (*) may be the basis of in-class writing assignments. You must have a copy of these readings downloaded before the first lecture of the relevant week.

Assignments and Grading

All assignments listed here should be submitted through Canvas. Those who are not using laptops in lecture may compose their in-class writing assignments on a 4x6 notecard, with their name at the top, and turn these in at the end of that lecture.

First midterm essay	15% of your final grade
Second midterm essay	20%
Final take-home essay	25%
Impromptu in-class writing	15%
Section participation	25%

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 = <60

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

Our course “week” begins with lecture on Wednesday, continues with lecture the following Monday, and concludes with your section meeting (Monday afternoon or Tuesday).

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 required for most weeks of the course. These are an essential part of your section participation grade, which is 25% of your total course grade. These responses must be between 50 and 75 words. They should respond directly to that week’s prompt (available on the syllabus and on Canvas) in

1. full sentences that
2. make a clear argument and are
3. based on the assigned reading for that week.

Weekly responses will only receive credit if they meet these three criteria. We will spend time in section during the first weeks focusing on how to meet these requirements. If necessary, students will be directed to the History Lab (<https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>) for further help meeting these goals.

These assignments must be submitted to Canvas no later than Monday at noon (for Monday discussion sections) or Monday at 10 pm (for Tuesday sections). These assignments constitute a significant fraction of your section participation grade for that week. They may not be turned in late.

Impromptu writing assignments will take place approximately once a week during lecture. These are pass/fail responses to an in-class prompt. Taken together they will constitute 15% of your course grade.

WEEK 1

Sections begin meeting Monday 1/31 and Tuesday 2/1

Lecture:

W 1/26 Telling Stories about the Civil War Era
M 1/31 Origins and Transformations of Racial Slavery

Readings: Douglass, *Narrative* (preface through chapter 9)

Response: How does Douglass’s assertion that “few slaves could boast of a kinder master and mistress than myself” fit into his searing critique of the institution of slavery?

WEEK 2

Lectures:

W 2/2 Slavery and the Emergence of Southern Distinctiveness
M 2/7 "Free Labor" and the Limits of Compulsion

Readings: Douglass, *Narrative* (chapter 10 - end)
* McCurry, “The Politics of Yeoman Households”

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

WEEK 3

Lectures:

W 2/9 The Proper Limits of Equality
M 2/14 The Proper Limits of Slavery

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 3-33
Hammond, “Letter to an English Abolitionist,” 1845
* T.T., “A Dream,” *The Liberator*, April 2, 1831
* Whitman, “A Boston Ballad,” 1854

Response: What were the two most important elements of Hammond’s critique of abolitionism?

WEEK 4**Lectures:**

W 2/16 Three Ways of Looking at Kansas
 M 2/21 Disorders of Polity and Household

Readings: * Freeport Debate, Aug. 27, 1858
 * 1860 Republican Party Platform

Response: Over the past weeks we have seen how abolitionists and anti-abolitionists (e.g., Frederick Douglass and James Henry Hammond) framed their arguments about slavery. Identify and describe an important difference between this struggle and the debate over slavery between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas.

WEEK 5**Lectures:**

W 2/23 Secession and a Divided South
 M 2/28 Causes

Readings: Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 3-53
 * South Carolina "Declaration of the Immediate Causes," 1860
 * Alexander Stephens, "Corner-stone Speech," 1861

Response: In what ways were the "politics of yeoman households" reflected in the South Carolina Declaration and/or the Corner-stone speech?

WEEK 6**Lectures:**

W 3/2 The War for Southern Independence?
 M 3/7 Drawn into War

Readings: Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 54-111
 Dinwoodie, "The Long War"
 * "The War, and Colored American Auxiliaries," *The Liberator*, Sept. 6, 1861, p. 144

Response: Identify and describe an important unintended consequence of secession.

FIRST MIDTERM ESSAY (15 Pts) DUE FRIDAY 3/4 BEFORE MIDNIGHT

Struggles over slavery's morality, political implications, and geography were central to the crisis of the United States in the 1840s and 1850s; the challenge is to explain how these factors interacted to produce the crisis of 1860-61 and the war that followed. In an essay of 1250-1500 words, make an argument about 1) how one group of Americans—defined in any way that makes sense to you, but defined carefully—understood the meaning of these struggles, 2) how that understanding shaped the part that they played in the crisis of the 1840s and 1850s, and 3) the relationship of their actions to the crisis of 1860-61.

WEEK 7**Lectures:**

W 3/9 "Who Freed the Slaves?"
 M 3/21 The War for Emancipation

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 41-75
 * Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 1869, pp. 38-42
 * *The War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Vol. 14, pp. 298-308.

Response: How do the differences in the two accounts of the raid on the Combahee (Bradford and *War of the Rebellion*) reflect the authors' different purposes and/or audiences?

WEEK 8**Lectures:**

W 3/23 Gettysburg and the Fog of War
 M 3/28 Rehearsals for Reconstruction

Readings: Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 111-221
 * Louisiana labor regulations, 1863
 * Louisiana labor regulations, 1864
 * Layli Long Soldier, "38" (<https://onbeing.org/poetry/38/>)

Response: Identify and describe one or two specific ways in which the events of the Civil War reshaped U.S. soldiers' perspectives on its meaning and purpose.

WEEK 9

Lectures:

W 3/30 What Should Freedom Mean?
 M 4/4 Visions of Freedom

Readings: Glymph, "Rose's War and the Gendered Politics of a Slave Insurgency in the Civil War"
 * Patrick Cleburne's Proposal to Arm Slaves, 1864

Response: How did the history of enslavement shape the ways that African Americans seized freedom during the war?

WEEK 10

Lectures:

W 4/6 Restoration and Reaction
 M 4/11 The Politics of Reconstruction

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 76-149
 "Address by a Committee of Norfolk Blacks," 1865
 * *Laws of Mississippi*, 1865

Response: How did these "laws of Mississippi" seek to shape and limit freedom?

SECOND MIDTERM ESSAY (20 pts) DUE FRIDAY 4/8 BEFORE MIDNIGHT

Over the past century, 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 declared 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), the historian Barbara J. Fields declared that during the war "the slaves freed themselves." *Freedom's Soldiers* (1990), a book about the black regiments in the Civil War U.S. Army, opens with the claim that "Freedom came by force of arms." In an essay of 1250-1500 words, join this historical debate by making an argument in response to the question "Who (or What) freed the enslaved?" 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.

WEEK 11

Lectures:

W 4/13 Equality after Slavery
 M 4/18 Land

Readings: Kantrowitz, "Not Quite Constitutionalized"
 * "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner," *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 20, 1869

Response: Why did Timothy Howe describe the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk as "not quite constitutionalized," and what was the significance of that assertion?

WEEK 12

Lectures:

W 4/20 Wage Dependency
 M 4/25 Terror

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 159-180
Beckert, "Democracy and its Discontents"

Response: What were the limitations of "rights" in ensuring equality in the postwar era?

WEEK 13

Lectures:
W 4/27 Crises of Citizenship
M 5/2 The World the Counter-Revolution Made

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 189-224
* Robert B. Elliott speech, *Congressional Record*, Jan. 6, 1874, pp. 407-410
* Coates, "Unromantic Slaughter"

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

Week 14

Lecture:
W 5/4 Final lecture

Readings: Foner, *Forever Free*, 225-238
Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, 85-117

**FINAL TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE: May 8, by 7:05 pm
(Topic announced in lecture no later than April 25)**

Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully evaluates and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full [teaching and learning data transparency statement](#).

Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability who has an approved accommodation that includes recording. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities, with the exception of sharing copies of your personal notes as a notetaker through the McBurney Disability Resource Center. Students are otherwise prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Useful Links

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising and Career Services](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)
- [Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)

Course Evaluations

UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called [AEFIS](#). For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.