

Civil War and Reconstruction

HY231

Fall 2018 Block 4

Palmer 229 9:15-12:00

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Office hours: Tu/Th, 2-3:30 PM and by appt.

Course rationale

This course is designed to be an introduction to the Civil War and Reconstruction, roughly 1845-1877. It is not intended to be a play-by-play military history; rather, taking our lead from current scholarship, we will holistically explore the cultural, social, economic, political, and, yes, military history of the Civil War era. (Well, as holistically as possible in an 18-day block!) Instead of centering our study on what is sometimes called the “high politics” of this period (think presidents, generals, politicians), we will attempt to focus our examination on the experiences of everyday people, beginning with the experiences of people who began this period enslaved, and whose resistance was central to their later emancipation. What was it like to live through the middle of the nineteenth century? How did these experiences vary based on region and identity? We’ll certainly look at the national and regional politics of the period—we’ll need that grounding to answer these questions—but the reading and writing we will do together will have a different emphasis. This block, we will pay particular attention to embodied experience—work, war, injury, death, love, intimacy, grief—as we grapple with what the Civil War meant for people in the past, and what it still means today. Our study does not stop at war’s end. In recent years, scholars have been focusing increasingly on Reconstruction – on both the opportunities for participation in public life that Radical Reconstruction offered African American communities after the war, and the growth of organized violence and domestic terrorism targeting Black people and their allies. What did these changes mean for individuals? For the nation? And how does public memory of the Civil War and of Reconstruction shape conversations about justice and equity in contemporary America? We’ll finish our block with a recent novel that grapples with the meaning of freedom and the legacies of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Together we’ll consider the ways in which we still live these histories—in our politics, in our popular culture, and in our personal lives.

Learning outcomes

This course is designed to introduce you to key concepts in the history of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and to support you as you develop the skills historians use to make sense of the past. Your work for this course should demonstrate that you can:

- (a) explain key concepts and debates in the history and historiography of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction
- (b) locate, analyze, and interpret both visual and textual primary sources
- (c) craft arguments about the history of the Civil War and Reconstruction across texts, time, and space, and support them with evidence, in your writing and in conversation

Required texts (please acquire hard copies)

Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (2017)

Louis Masur, *The Civil War: A Concise History* (2011)

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (2010)

Ari Kelman and Jonathan Fetter-Vorm, *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War* (2015)

Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (2016)

These texts are available at the Colorado College Store. They are also on reserve at Tutt Library. All other assigned readings will be made available to you on Canvas; **please print* them out (double-sided, if you can) and bring them to class on the day we are scheduled to discuss them.**

*Yes, I'm asking you to print out materials for class; given that I am an environmental historian, this might seem strange, or at least a little hypocritical. But studying history is about digging into evidence and context. And it turns out that it is quite complicated to determine whether reading digital or print materials has a greater impact on your carbon footprint. (Factors include time spent reading, the specific emissions of the electricity you're using, the materials and energy used to produce our various devices, etc.) I'd like to encourage you to consider powering down (or putting to sleep) your technology and giving analog reading a try.

A note on participation

This course is designed to introduce you to—and immerse you in—the work historians do, and as such, it is organized around discussions of primary and secondary source material. Sometimes I'll lecture, sometimes we'll work in small groups, and sometimes we'll have conversations as a whole class. I expect that you will show up each day prepared to jump into these conversations. We'll talk more about how to read like a historian, and how to prepare for an analytical discussion—these are skills we will be practicing a lot this block—but **I want to highlight here that regular, thoughtful (and vocal) participation is necessary to do well in this course.**

Assignments

Short Writing Assignments (2)
Timeline Assignment
Primary Source Research Group Writing/Presentation
Battle Lines paper, 5-6 pages
Reconstruction Mini-lecture
Final Exam (Take-home essay, cumulative), 5-6 pages

Guidelines for submission of written work

You will submit short writing assignments via Canvas 30 minutes before class on the day they are due. The work you turn in for this class should be double-spaced (except when directed otherwise), in **12 pt Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins**. Put your name, the course number (HY217), and the date at the top of the first page. Everything you hand in is pledged work; please indicate this on your assignments. When citing ideas and/or texts that are not your own, please use a standard citation format (for historians, Chicago or MLA). Also, **remember to proofread!**

Grading*

Short Writing Assignments (2) 10%
Timeline Assignment 10%
Primary Source Research Group Presentation 15%
Battle Lines paper, 5-6 pages 15%
Reconstruction Mini-lecture 10%
Final Exam (Take-home essay, cumulative), 5-6 pages 20%
Participation 20%

***Note: you must complete ALL assignments in order to pass this course.**

Grading scale

For a full explanation of Colorado College policies on credit and grades, see the Academic Policies section of the Colorado College Catalog of Courses. I use the same grade schedule to calculate final grades in my courses: A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0; C- = 1.7; D+ = 1.3; D = 1.0; and NC = 0.0.

Please also review the college's statement on what these letters and numbers mean:

A – Excellent work that reflects superior understanding and insight, creativity, or skill.

B – Good work that reflects a high level of understanding and insight, creativity, or skill.

C – Adequate work that indicates readiness to continue study in the field.

D – Marginal work, only minimally adequate, raising serious question about readiness to continue in the field.

S – Work that falls in the range of A to C-.

CR – Work equivalent to a D+ or D.

NC – Failing work, clearly inadequate, and unworthy of credit.

Policy on absences and lateness

Because discussion is central to the study and practice of history, attendance is critically important. As such, unexcused absences will impact your grade in this class: for each unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter. If you do miss a class meeting, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and making up the work so that you are prepared for the next class meeting. Please be on time; lateness will also affect your grade. If you need to miss class due to illness, emergency, athletics, religious observance, etc., please talk with me as soon as you can. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade in the course.

Late work

I will accept late work; however, it is in your best interest to submit work on time, as late assignments will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late, and one full increment for assignments graded check plus, check, check minus. So, a B+ paper turned in up to 24 hours after the deadline would earn a B-; a B+ paper submitted 2 days late would earn a C, etc. **If you know you are going to be late with an assignment, talk to me as soon as you can. I very rarely grant extensions on late work on or after the due date.** Also, please note that the majority of assignments in this course are short, and directly related to the plan for class discussion on the date they are due. Completing the assignment is often a critical part of preparing for that day's activities.

Colorado College policies

I respect and adhere to Colorado College policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays, assistance available to students with disabilities, plagiarism and academic integrity, sexual harassment, and racial or ethnic discrimination. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with these policies and encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with me.

Inclusion and diversity in the classroom

We are going to talk about hard things this block—the history of the Civil War and Reconstruction is, in many ways, a history of violence, and I don't just mean the violence that occurred on the battlefield. To understand this history, as well as how our historical narratives have developed, we're going to need a discussion space that is equal parts rigorous and generous – to the scholars we'll read, and to each member of our discussions.

I am committed to fostering a classroom community that is productive for all participants, and to do that, I'm going to need your help. We'll talk together about what this looks like, but here, as we begin, I want to highlight how important it is that we appreciate and respect that a diversity of identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives only enriches the work we will do together. After all, the discipline of history is built on using a range of source material to construct arguments about the past. Which actors and perspectives we look for—and which voices we find in the historical record—help to shape the arguments we make and the stories we tell.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities, whether learning differences or physical disabilities. I am happy to provide these accommodations. If you experience a disability and are requesting accommodations for this course, please speak with me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss how best to put accommodations in place. If you have not already done so, please connect with Accessibility Resources (Armstrong 211, 719-227-8285), the office responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.

Academic honesty

It is expected that you will abide by the Colorado College Honor Code. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, and in particular, the policy on plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or proper citation, please ask! (And of course, we'll review what this means in the context of the work we'll be doing together this block.)

A note on technology

The technological developments of the last few decades have transformed the ways that historians research and write history. Digital photography in the archive, electronic access to scholarly journals and digitized materials, new software to help with organizing sources and ideas—there are so many reasons why I'm thrilled to be a historian in the digital age. I imagine that we will all use digital tools to complete the work we'll do together this block, but I ask that we do our best to focus on each other instead of our screens when engaged in group conversation. One way to make this easier is to bring hard copies of the assigned readings to class – that way, you can mark key passages and make notes in the margins ahead of time!

You are welcome to use whatever method of note-taking works best for you during class, though I expect that any screens you have out/on are being used **ONLY** for active engagement with the course, and not for multi-tasking, as this hinders not only your learning, but also the learning of those around you. We all share responsibility for creating and maintaining an equitable and generous learning environment and community.

When you have reached this part of the syllabus, please do two things:

- (1) Confirm that you can access the Canvas site for this course. If all works, great. If you do not have access, note this in the email you send me when you complete the next step, and I can manually add you to the site.
- (2) Send me an email! (My contact information is on page one of the syllabus.) Introduce yourself, indicate your preferred name and pronouns, and let me know if you need me to manually add you to the Canvas site.

Finally, welcome! I'm really looking forward to the reading, writing, discussing, and learning we are all going to do together this block!

Course calendar (subject to change)

Please come to class ready to discuss the readings listed for each day. Writing assignments, unless otherwise noted, are due to Canvas by 8:30 AM before class. Readings with (C) next to them on this calendar can be found on Canvas.

Week 1: Experiences of Enslaved People

Monday, 11/26 Introductions and Expectations

In class: Timeline exercise. What knowledge do we have about the Civil War and Reconstruction? What narratives have we received through formal and informal learning? Discuss "Teaching Hard History: American Slavery," Southern Poverty Law Center (2018), circulated ahead of time via email.

[11:15 First Monday: Dr. Jean Twenge, "Cultural Trends Shaping iGen: Individualism, Insecurity, and the Internet"]

Tuesday, 11/27 Language, Sources, and the Archive

Read: THE SYLLABUS; P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. "[Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help](#)" (link on Canvas); Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (2017), pp. 1-90 AND "Note on Sources: A History of People and Corpses" pp. 205-212. Write: **Short Writing Assignment (SWA) #1: analytical response on history and the archive**

Wednesday, 11/28 Reading the Primary Sources of American Slavery

Read: Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, pp. 90-147 AND Marisa Fuentes, "Jane" in *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp.13-45 (C).
In class: *Freedom on the Move* database workshop

Thursday, 11/29 Value, Commodification, and Race

Read: Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, pp.147-197
Write: **SWA #2: Berry precis + FOTM paragraph**
In class: *Underground*, "Minty," S2E06

Friday, 11/30 Enslaved People's Words and Actions: Print Culture, Abolition, and the Genre of the Slave Narrative

Read: Stephanie Camp, "Amalgamation Prints Stuck Up in Her Cabin: Print Culture, the Home, and the Roots of Resistance" in *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 93-116 (C) AND the account assigned to your table, drawn from <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/alphaautobio.html> (excerpts from narratives written by Frederick Douglass, Henry "Box" Brown, Moses Grandy, William Grimes, Harriet Jacobs, Sojourner Truth, and James Williams).
In class: primary source workshop

Week 2: Disunion and Civil War

Monday, 12/3 Politics and the Lead Up to Fort Sumter

Read: Louis Masur, *The Civil War: A Concise History* (2011), all (it's concise!), and Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (2010), pp.1-84 (Preface and Chapters 1-2).

Write: **Timeline activity based on Masur (see prompt)**

Prompt distributed and groups assigned for primary source research group presentations.

Tuesday, 12/4 The Home Front(s)

Read: Continue reading McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, pp. 85-177 (Chapters 3-4)

In class: discussion and group research/preparation time for presentations

Wednesday, 12/5

Read: McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, pp.178-262 (Chapters 5-6)

In class: **primary source presentations**

Thursday, 12/6 Emancipation

Read: Finish McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, pp. 263-361 (Chapters 7, 8, and Epilogue)

In class: **primary source presentations**

Friday, 12/7 Narrative and Representation 9-10:30 OR 10:30-12

Read: Ari Kelman and Jonathan Fetter-Vorm, *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), all.

Write: **Choose a frame or page from *Battle Lines* and use it to write a 1-2 page analytical response in preparation for both our discussion and your paper! Bring to class.**

Prompt for *Battle Lines* paper distributed in class.

Week 3: Reconstruction and the Lost Cause Narrative

Monday, 12/10 Framing Reconstruction

Read: David Blight, "The Civil War Isn't Over," 8 April 2015, *The Atlantic* (C) and Kidada E. Williams, "[Maintaining a Radical Vision of African Americans in the Age of Freedom](#)," from "Forum: The Future of Reconstruction Studies" in *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 2017 (C)

In class: look at Freedman's Bureau records

Tuesday, 12/11 WRITING DAY/NO CLASS

***Battle Lines* Paper due to Canvas at 3 PM.**

Remember you have reading for tomorrow! These pieces are short but important, so save some time and energy for them.

Wednesday, 12/12 Radical Reconstruction and Birthright Citizenship

Read: Please read the text of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, which you can find here: <http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/constitution/>, as well as Frederick Douglass, "Reconstruction," *The Atlantic Monthly* December 1866 (C); Martha S. Jones, excerpt from *Birthright Citizenship: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.1-15, and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "President Trump Wants to Use Executive Order to End Birthright Citizenship," 30 October 2018, *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/30/us/politics/trump-birthright-citizenship.html> (C).

Prompt for mini-lecture assignment distributed in class.

Thursday, 12/13 Redemption/The End of Reconstruction

Read: excerpt from Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003) (C) **and your assigned mini-lecture article or chapter.**

In class: mini-lecture preparation and workshop

Friday, 12/14 New Directions in Civil War and Reconstruction Scholarship

Read: short op-ed by historians Gregory Downs and Kate Masur, "How to Remember Reconstruction," 16 November 2018, *The New York Times*,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/16/opinion/reconstruction-american-civil-war.html> (C)

Write: **presentation outline/notes (follow handout) and submit slides, if using, by 9:00 AM**

In class: **mini-lectures and group discussion**

Week 4: Memory and the Present

Monday, 12/17 Slavery, Freedom, and Fiction 9:00-10:30 OR 10:30-12:00

Read: all of Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* and show up for the appropriate smaller group discussion.

Prompt for final exam (which will require you to draw on Whitehead) distributed today.

Tuesday, 12/18 Remembering: The Civil War in the 21st Century

Read: Selections centered on Civil War memory in the present, to be finalized together.

Possibilities include articles on Confederate monuments, on Charlottesville, on new projects working to remember critical figures like Denmark Vesey and Ida B. Wells, on new museums dedicated remembering slavery (Whitney Museum in Louisiana), or to memorializing victims of white supremacy (National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Alabama), or to federal proposals for designating historic sites focused on Reconstruction.

Wednesday, 12/19 WRITING DAY/NO CLASS

**FINAL EXAM DUE TO CANVAS ON WEDNESDAY BY 12:00 NOON.
HAPPY WINTER BREAK!**