

## History 557.03. The Civil War and Reconstruction



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### Overview and Objectives

This course describes and analyzes the history of America's greatest crisis, from its origins in the early nineteenth century through the abandonment of Reconstruction in 1877, with some attention to sectional reconciliation and the various ways in which the crisis is remembered. It interweaves the political, military, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of this experience in roughly equal proportions, with emphasis on the linkages between them.

Students will achieve an understanding of the main developments of the Civil War and Reconstruction era, the ways in which these developments reflected or shaped developments in general American history, and the main interpretations advanced by scholars who have studied this subject. They will also hone their skills at critical writing and analysis, and will gain greater insight into the way historians explore the human condition.

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### Requirements

Quizzes (8 @ about 4% each) 30%  
First Take Home Exam 20%  
Second Take Home Exam 20%  
Final Exam 30%

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## Texts

### *Required*

#### Textbook



*Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, by James M. McPherson

#### Reader



*\*\* Major Problems in Civil War & Reconstruction*, by Michael Perman \*\*

#### Monograph



*[Mothers of Invention : Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War \(study3.htm\)](#)*, by Drew Gilpin Faust (click link to access study guide)

#### Novel



*A Fool's Errand*, by Albion Tourgee

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## Enrollment

All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the department chair after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of each student.

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## Make-up Exam Policy

If for any family or medical reason you find it absolutely necessary to miss an examination, you must provide written documentation to substantiate the request in order to take a make-up. Whenever possible, notify me in advance. Make-up exams are administered by the department at certain scheduled times during the quarter. If you take a make-up, it will be at one of these times.

Please Note: An on-going family, personal, or medical problem will not be considered a valid reason to miss more than one examination or quiz. If you are unfortunate enough to be experiencing such a problem, you are advised to drop the course instead. If you remain in class, I will assume that you have made a well-considered decision to remain despite the problem, and that you accept the consequences of your decision. I will not make exceptions to this policy, so be forewarned.

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## Student Department

Please do not come to class late. If you do, please enter as unobtrusively as possible. Similarly, if you know you will need to leave early, please seat yourself close to an exit so that you can leave without distracting other students.

You should also be aware that quizzes are unannounced and will be given promptly at the beginning of class. If you are late, you will be deemed to have missed the quiz. In short, I have no sympathy whatever for students who cannot get to my class in a timely fashion.

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## Office Hours

Tuesdays, 12:30–1:18, 3:30–4:18; and by appointment.

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## Lecture Schedule

### Week 1.

#### Tuesday

1. Introductory matters; \_John Brown's Raid, October 1859
- \_ 2. Theories of Causation

#### Thursday

3. Origins of the Civil War, 1846–1850
4. The End of the Second Party System, 1850–1856

McPherson, 3–144; Perman, 31–63.

### Week 2.

#### Tuesday

5. The Rise of the Republicans, 1856–1860
6. The North and South Compared

McPherson, 145–201; Perman, 2–30.

#### Thursday

7. The Secession Crisis
8. Grand Strategy and Mobilization

McPherson, 202–338; Perman, 64–88.

### Week 3.

#### Tuesday

9. Concliation and Its Failure, April 1861–July 1862
10. Dodging the Obvious: The Quandary of Slavery

McPherson, 339–427; Perman, 89, 93–94 [McClellan letter], 277–280 [Butler document].

Thursday

11. \_The Bloodiest Day: Antietam, September 17, 1862

\_ 12. Wartime Diplomacy

McPherson, 511–567; Perman, 94–97 [Lee and E.P. Alexander documents];  
104–112 [Gallagher essay]; McPherson, all; skim Perman, 124–155.

Week 4.

Tuesday

13. The Wartime North

14. The Wartime South

McPherson, 591–625; Perman, 186–245

Thursday

15. The Limits of Mobilization: Finance

16. The Limits of Mobilization: Conscription; First Take Home Exam  
Distributed

McPherson, 428–453; Perman, 186–245

Week 5.

Tuesday

17. From Fredericksburg to Gettysburg

18. From Vicksburg to Chattanooga

McPherson, 568–590, 626–688; Perman, 98–101, 124–155; First Take Home Exam  
Due

Thursday

19. Bitter Jubilee: The Moment of Emancipation

20. The Civil War as an Interracial War

Begin reading Faust; Perman, 277–310.

Week 6.

Tuesday

21. Wartime Reconstruction

22. *From the Rapidan to the James: Grant versus Lee, May–June 1864*

McPherson, 689–743; Perman, 101–103.

Thursday

23. Hard War

24. The Collapse of the Confederacy; Second Take Home Exam Distributed

McPherson, 743–852; Perman, 112–123.

Week 7.

Tuesday

25. Gender and the Civil War Era: The North

26. Gender and the Civil War Era: The South

Perman, 246–265; Faust, all; Second Take Home Exam Due

Thursday

27. Presidential Reconstruction, 1865–1866

28. The Failure of Self-Reconstruction

Begin reading Tourgee; Perman, 311–341.

Week 8.

Tuesday

29. The Making of Radical Reconstruction, 1867

30. *The New Orleans Riot*

Tourgee; Perman, 311–341.

Thursday

31. Southern Republicans in Power

32. The Evolution of Free Labor in the South

Tourgee; Perman, 345–400.

Week 9.

Tuesday

33. Changing Agendas in the North

34. "Ballot and Bullet": The White Conservative Counterrevolution

Tourgee; Perman, 401–430.

Thursday

35. The Road to Redemption

36. The End of Reconstruction

Tourgee; Perman, 401–430.

Week 10.

Tuesday

37. The Civil War Era Assessed

38. Discussion: The Meaning of the Civil War

McPherson, 853–862; Perman, 431–459.

Thursday

39. \_Antietam Battlefield Today

\_ 40. The Civil War and Public Memory

Readings TBA

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Final Examination: In the usual classroom, Monday, June 5, 1:30 PM – 3:18 PM

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How To Survive History 557.03:  
A Guide for Undergraduates

## Introduction

History 557.03 is an upper division course taught at an advanced level. It is also an elective. I therefore assume that students have chosen to take it because they are interested and motivated to learn the material. I also assume that students have an appropriate background in American history, which is why I strongly encourage you to have at least taken History 151 (American Civilization to 1877) before attempting this course.

The course requires about 200 pages of reading per week sometimes more, seldom less. If you accept this reality at the outset you will be all right. If you assume you can pick up everything from lecture or from a light skimming of the texts you will not do well. It's as simple as that. But don't assume that you can blow off the lectures, either. For one thing, paying attention to the lectures will help keep you on track, so that you don't overemphasize some issues while ignoring others. For another, good attendance helps generate a certain good will between instructor and student, because it more or less demonstrates that the student is trying. That good will can come in handy if you fall down on the mid-term and need a little extra help. Finally, there is almost always a strong positive correlation between good attendance and good course performance. So while lecture attendance is not required, it is strongly encouraged. Similarly, I encourage you to take full advantage of my office hours and those of the teaching associates. As a practical matter, you may wish to visit them in preference to myself, since they will be grading your examinations.

A NOTE REGARDING *BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM* : I selected *Battle Cry of Freedom* as the main text for the course because it is currently the standard one-volume work on the Civil War. Don't be daunted by its length. For one thing, the book is a pleasure to read. For another, much of it is composed of extended accounts of military operations. In most cases, these can be skimmed.

However, if you feel yourself absolutely unable to handle a book of this length, you may substitute Brooks D. Simpson, *America's Civil War* (Harlan Davidson, 1996). This book contains only 219 pages of text and covers most of the same ground as *Battle Cry of Freedom*. It can be ordered from any book store, though I recommend that you order it from SBX, which always handles these matters promptly and professionally. When ordering a book, it is helpful to have the ISBN. In the case of *America's Civil War* , it is 0-88295-929-8.

A NOTE REGARDING *MOTHERS OF INVENTION* : I selected this book in order to give students some exposure to the significance of the Civil War for gender relations; that is, the roles that men and women chose to play or were expected to play. The second take-home exam will be based exclusively on *Mothers of Invention* , so be sure to read it carefully.

A NOTE REGARDING *A FOOL'S ERRAND* : This is the thinly-disguised autobiography of a Northerner who attempted to make a new life for himself in the postwar South. It contains some of the most vivid illustrations of the nature and ultimate failure of Reconstruction. I have assigned it in preference to a regular textbook because from past experience I have learned

that students find textbooks on Reconstruction more confusing than helpful. Be sure to read it with care. Questions based on *A Fool's Errand* will figure prominently on the final exam.

## Quizzes

I administer quizzes weekly in order to test whether students have done the assigned reading. The quizzes are not announced in advance. They consist of a few (typically four) multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. The questions are drawn from the most important arguments and historical developments discussed in the readings. If you have absorbed the major points of the assigned reading, you should do well. If not, not.

You cannot make up a quiz if you miss class or even if you arrive in class while the quiz is underway. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped, which means that you can miss one quiz without penalty. Each additional missed quiz will result in a zero for that quiz. BE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THIS!

## Take Home Examinations

On Thursday of the quarter's fourth week and again during the sixth week, you will receive a take-home exam that requires you to write a 5-page essay on one out of three possible questions. (The exam questions will also be posted on the Web.) The essay should be typed, double-spaced, free of misspellings or grammatical faults. The essay is due in class the following Tuesday. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED barring a serious emergency. ***Computer or printer problems do not constitute an emergency and will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse.***

### 2. Essay

On Thursday of the quarter's fourth week you will receive a take-home exam that will require you to write a 5-page essay on one out of three possible questions. (The exam questions will also be posted on the Web.) The essay should be typed, double-spaced, free of misspellings or grammatical faults, and consistent with the guidelines set forth in Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. The essay is due in class the following Tuesday. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED barring a serious emergency. Computer or printer problems do not constitute an emergency and will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse.

An essay exam is mainly concerned with the student's grasp of the overarching concepts of the course and how these concepts organize and give meaning to the historical facts. Students frequently assume that the essay is just another way for them to demonstrate what they know about the material that has been presented in class. In fact, an essay principally tests your ability to think analytically and to explain your analysis on paper. This involves, in turn:

- a. an ability to write clearly, so that the reader is not baffled by misspellings, grammatical faults, run-on sentences, etc.;
- b. an ability to articulate a thesis; in other words, to assert a point of view concerning the question being discussed;

- c. an ability to prioritize. What issues are most important in answering the question? What is the most logical order in which to present them? What examples most clearly illustrate these critical issues?
- d. an ability to avoid the irrelevant: everything you write should relate directly and explicitly to the question posed;
- e. an ability to write an essay that is proportional to the length allowed. If asked to write a 5-page essay, you must tailor your depth of coverage so that you cover the whole question in 5 pages, without omitting important points or overemphasizing one point to the detriment of another.

For additional information about how to write a college essay exam, please see the following:

[Writing the Essay Type Examination](<http://www.history.ohio-state.edu/essayexm.htm>)

"[Essay Exam \(http://www.cstw.ohio-state.edu/tutor\\_hand.html#2\)](http://www.cstw.ohio-state.edu/tutor_hand.html#2)" handouts from the OSU Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing

### **Final Examination**

The final examination will be partly a take-home examination and partly held in class. The question for the take-home portion will be handed out on the last day of class and will address only material covered since the seventh week of the course. It is due at the beginning of the in-class final examination hour. The in-class portion of the examination will be an objective (i.e., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, etc.) test covering the entire course.

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### **Links**

[The U.S Civil War Center \(http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/\)](http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/) Comprehensive attempt to catalog all Civil War-related resources on the Web.

[Freedmen and Southern Society Project \(http://www.inform.umd.edu/ARHU/Depts/History/Freedman/home.html\)](http://www.inform.umd.edu/ARHU/Depts/History/Freedman/home.html) The homepage of an ambitious project to document the emancipation moment.

[Selected Civil War Photographs Home Page \(http://rs6.loc.gov/cwphome.html\)](http://rs6.loc.gov/cwphome.html) Over a thousand Civil War images.

[Historical United States Census Browser Census \(http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/\)](http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/) Data for the antebellum and Civil War eras can be highly revealing.



<http://www.dixienet.org/dixnet-main.htm> The Civil War still resonates in the minds of many, not just historically but also politically. Check out this ring of Southern nationalist and Neo-Confederate websites.

[HarpWeek \(http://app.harpweek.com/\)](http://app.harpweek.com/) This site, available through Ohiolink, contains all issues of Harper's Weekly published during the Civil War.





[\(http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/\)](http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/) **Valley of the Shadow** (<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/>) recreates the Civil War as it was experienced and understood in two American communities, one in Pennsylvania, the other in Virginia.



[\(http://www.jstor.org/\)](http://www.jstor.org/) **JSTOR** (<http://www.jstor.org/>) provides access to hundreds of scholarly articles and book reviews.

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[\*\*Return to the Current Syllabi Page \(../current.htm\)\*\*](http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/)