**The American Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1850-77**

**SOC 5148**

**The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities**

**Spring 2024, MWF 1:00, Burris 203**

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Wagoner 149 Office hours: MWF 11:00-12:50, T 1:00-2:50, or by appt.

**Course Description:** The American Civil War represents the seminal event in the nation’s history, and the period of Reconstruction that followed profoundly shaped the war’s impact and legacy. This course will give students a firm grasp of the events, people, and issues that led the nation to war. It will address how the war unfolded, explore the positive changes experienced by freedmen during the initial stages of Reconstruction, and discuss how and why the nation eventually reunified at the expense of African American political and civil rights. The course will cover military, political, social, and economic factors in the causes of the war and Reconstruction. As students explore the American Civil War era, they will develop historical research skills using both primary and secondary sources.

**Course Format:** The course typically will combine lecture and discussion. I will provide an overview of the day’s topic and we will discuss relevant assigned readings related to that topic.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completing this course students will be able to explain the political developments that led the nation to war, the war’s effect on slavery and African Americans, and the successes and failures of Reconstruction. They will be able to articulate the motivations of soldiers and political leaders and describe the goals and gains of African Americans.

**Course Content Note:** As with many history classes, the lectures, readings, and discussions will include a range of topics that may be triggering, emotionally distressing, and difficult for some students. Engaging with topics such as slavery and human suffering is essential to this discipline. History seeks to understand the experiences and thought processes of former generations, whether for good or ill. Sometimes the language and word choices used by people in the past may be insensitive or politically incorrect today. Nevertheless, the goal of history is to understand the past within its own context and time. If a reading, image shown in class, or discussion is truly troubling to anyone, please do not hesitate to talk to your instructor. In some circumstances, an alternative reading can be assigned.

**Academic Integrity**: Academic integrity is foundational to achievement at the Academy and throughout your college life. Cheating on tests, plagiarism on papers, and all forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please understand that severe penalties will arise for violating academic integrity and review the relevant policies outlined in the Academy Handbook.

The Humanities Division recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) provides some exciting new tools for academic work. However, AI also poses significant dangers for academic integrity. Passing off as your own any research, words, or ideas which you did not create is plagiarism. This holds true whether the material is copied from a source in print, taken from internet content, or generated by AI. For my courses, AI should not be used for writing papers. Period. Because the discipline of history emphasizes the importance of careful reading, independent research, and original writing, AI is an inappropriate shortcut. If you have any questions about this policy, please speak to me during office hours.

**Attendance, Unexcused Absence Policy, and Classroom Etiquette**: The Indiana Academy regards any absence from class as unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, or extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from class, the instructor reports the absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The instructor does not have discretion in this matter. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent-principal conferences, or detentions).

Any homework assignment missed because of an unexcused absence will not be made up for credit and will be given a zero. Any unexcused absence on the day of an exam or project will result in a 30% deduction for that assignment.

Come to class engaged and prepared to learn. I record attendance in powerschool a few minutes before class. If you are late, please see me afterwards to remind me to change your absence to tardy. Any student arriving fifteen minutes after the start of class will be counted absent for that period. There’s no reason to have your phone out during class or be wearing earbuds.

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**Disability**: Students with documented disabilities should notify me by the end of the first week of class, and I will make reasonable accommodation for you.

**Excused Absences**: In the event of a serious illness or family tragedy, please notify me as soon as possible. Appropriate documentation will be necessary to make up an exam. Missed work should be made up within **two days** of returning to class.

**Student Success**: I want you to succeed in this course. Please see me during office hours to discuss any concerns or questions you have about the course or assignments. I am always happy to talk about specific readings, the study of history, or life in general. If I become concerned about your performance in this course, engagement in class, or overall well-being, I will speak with you first and then may refer you to the appropriate counselor within the Academy.

**BSU Statement on Diversity**: “Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.”

**Required Texts:**

James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)

Albion Tourgée, *A Fool’s Errand* (1879)

Selected primary and secondary sources posted on Blackboard or accessible online.

**Assignments:**

Exams: There will be two exams that consist of a short objective section dealing with historical chronology, matching, or recognition of major persons or events; three or four short answer questions (generally answerable in a paragraph each); and one longer essay synthesizing broader interpretive themes. Exams are not cumulative.

Quizzes: Anticipate having a quiz every class. The purpose of this component is to reward you for reading and coming to class prepared to discuss the texts. Two lowest quiz scores will be dropped at semester’s end.

Discussion Participation: The purpose of class discussion is to sharpen critical thinking skills and challenge us to wrestle with important issues found in the secondary readings and primary sources. As an upper-level course, everyone should have something to add to the conversation each week. However, I am more concerned with the quality of a student’s comments rather than the quantity of one’s contributions.

Online research project: Students will read closely three consecutive weeks of a newspaper and produce a short synthesis paper on a chosen topic. Specific instructions will be provided later. Due date: **March 29**.

Oral Presentation: Each student will have 25 minutes to lead the class. Students must pick an approved topic not covered on the syllabus (for instance, a specific battle, influential person, or theme [guerrilla warfare, desertion, loyalty oaths, environmental effects of war, aspects of Grant’s presidency, for example). Students should use half their time by providing an overview of the subject based on one secondary monograph, and with the other half they will lead the class in a discussion of one relevant primary or secondary source related to their topic. Essentially, each student will serve as teacher for half the period, conveying their mastery of a specific topic and leading the class to understand it better. More detailed instructions will be provided later.

**Grading:**

2 exams 20% each

Quizzes 20%

Participation 10%

Primary source project 15%

Oral presentation 15%

Students must take both exams and complete all major projects to pass the class. Grades will be figured according to the plus-minus scale copied below:

94-100% = A “A” grades reflect the “wow” factor. This shows exceptional, extra-

90-93% = A- ordinary effort and rewards work of the highest excellence.

88-89% = B+

83-87% = B “B” grades reflect the “very good” factor. This shows effort exceeding

80-82% = B- average and work that is high quality, but short of excellence.

78-79% = C+

73-77% = C “C” grades reflect average work and satisfactory results.

70-72% = C-

0-69% = D\* “D\*” reflects unsatisfactory work.

**Course Schedule and Readings:**

Week 1, Jan. 5:

F—Compromise of 1850

Week 2, Jan. 8-12

M—Kansas-Nebraska Act

Appeal of Independent Democratic Senators, Jan. 1854

Stephen Douglas, Response in Congress, Jan. 1854

W—The Republican Party and Antislavery Politics

Republican Party Platform of 1856

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29619>

Abraham Lincoln, A House Divided Speech

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln2/1:508?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

William Seward, Speech on the Irrepressible Conflict <http://www.nyhistory.com/central/conflict.htm>

F— *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, chaps. 1-11

Week 3, Jan. 15-19:

M—No class, MLK birthday

W—*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, chaps. 12-19

F—*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, chaps. 20-30

Week 4, Jan. 22-26:

M—*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, chaps. 31-45

W—The Dred Scott Decision

Newspaper editorials and Frederick Douglass speech, May 11, 1857

F—Filibusters

Selected excerpts

Week 5, Jan. 29-Feb. 2:

M—John Brown: Terrorist or Martyr?

Excerpts from interview and trial

W—The Election of 1860 and Secession Debated

Georgia: Speeches of Toombs and Stephens

F—Secession Ordinances

South Carolina Declaration of Secession, Dec. 20, 1860

Georgia Report on Causes of Secession, Jan. 29, 1861

Secession Resolutions of Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Texas

Week 6: Feb 5-9

M—No class, extended weekend

W—Fort Sumter, Mobilization, and Bull Run

*Battle Cry of Freedom*, 264-75, 339-347

F— The Experiences and Ideals of Civil War Soldiers

Selected letters

Week 7: Feb. 12-16

M—George McClellan and the Eastern Theater in 1862

Selected McClellan letters

Lincoln letters, April 9, October 13, 1862

W—Emancipation

Michael Vorenberg essay

Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Sept. 22, 1862, *CW* 5:433-36.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln5/1:955?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

Emancipation Proclamation, Jan. 1, 1863, *CW* 6:28-31.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln6/1:53?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

F—Opponents of and Alternatives to Emancipation

S.S. Cox speech

Lincoln, Address on Colonization, Aug. 14, 1862, *CW*, 5:370-75.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln5/1:812?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

Week 8: Feb. 19-23

M—Who Freed the Slaves?

Essays of James M. McPherson and Ira Berlin

W—African American experiences and perspectives

Selected primary sources

F—Civil Liberties and Dissent

Excerpts of Vallandigham speech and Lincoln’s Corning letter

A. Hunter Dupree and Leslie H. Fishel Jr., “An Eyewitness Account of the New York Draft Riots, July, 1863,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (Dec. 1960): 472-79.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1888878.pdf?&acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>

Week 9: Feb. 26-Mar. 1

M—Religion

W—**Exam 1**

F—No class

Week 10: Mar. 4-8 Spring Break

Week 11: Mar. 11-15

No class—work on newspaper project

Week 12: Mar. 18-22

M—The Battle of Gettysburg

*Battle Cry of Freedom*, 646-65.

W—Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Hard War Policy

Letter of Calhoun et al. to Sherman and response, Sept. 11-12, 1864

F—The 13th Amendment

Week 13: Mar. 25-29

M—Death

Nicholas Marshall, “The Great Exaggeration: Death and the Civil War,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4 (March 2014): 3-27.

W—Presidential Reconstruction

Select speeches of Andrew Johnson

Mississippi Black Codes

F— **Present newspaper projects**

Week 14: April 1-5

M—No class, extended weekend

W—Radical Reconstruction

Speeches by Stevens, Morton, and Julian

F—The KKK and Violence in the South

Excerpts of African American testimonies

Week 15: April 8-12

M—Southern Redemption

Edward Pollard, The Lost Cause Regained

John B. Gordon, Address to the Colored People

W—*A Fool’s Errand*, chaps 1-16

F—*A Fool’s Errand*, chaps 17-28

Week 16: April 15-19

M—*A Fool’s Errand*, chaps 29-37

W—*A Fool’s Errand*, chaps 38-47

F—**Exam 2**

Week 17: April 22-26

M, W—Memory and the Civil War Era

Speeches by Early, Pryor, Douglass, Sherman, and Holmes

Frederick Douglass, “The Future of the Colored Race,” May 1886

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-future-of-the-colored-race/>

F—No class, extended weekend

Week 18: April 29-May 3

M, W, F—**Student presentations**