

Master of American History and Government
Ashland University

AHG 503A:
Sectionalism and the Civil War
Sunday, July 1 to Friday, July 6, 2007

Instructors: Mac Owens and Thomas Krannawitter

1. Catalog description:

This course is a study of the sectional controversy beginning with the 1820 Missouri Compromise and culminating with the election of Abraham Lincoln and the eruption of civil war. It examines the political, social, and economic developments in the period leading to the Civil War, and traces the rise of Abraham Lincoln to political prominence as he struggled to preserve the union of the American states from the threat of slavery's expansion and, ultimately, a civil war.

2. Course content:

This course will examine how the regional existence of slavery widened the social and political divide in America and eventually led to a civil war. It will consider the debate over slavery's expansion, popular sovereignty, abolitionism, states' rights, secession, and constitutional self-government. It will focus on the political thought and practice of Abraham Lincoln as the preeminent political actor in the antebellum period. To place Lincoln's words and deeds in historical context, the course will also consider the writings of important figures like U.S. Senators John C. Calhoun and Stephen A. Douglas and abolitionist orators and editors William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass.

3. Student learning objectives:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- list the key provisions of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and explain the arguments of its key proponents and critics
- explain the salient issues and identify the key actors in the Nullification Crisis of the late 1820s and early 1830s
- articulate John C. Calhoun's "positive good" theory of slavery and "concurrent majority" theory of federal government
- distinguish the abolition movement from the broader anti-slavery movement, and contrast their respective aims and means with those of the American founders
- identify the leading opponents and defenders of slavery in mid-19th Century America
- explain the Compromise Measures of 1850 and the opposing arguments regarding its utility as a union-saving act
- distinguish Abraham Lincoln's anti-slavery politics from abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass
- explain the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, especially its doctrine of popular sovereignty

- explain why Stephen Douglas’s theory of “popular sovereignty” was opposed by Abraham Lincoln and the anti-slavery movement, as well as southern Democrats like Alexander Stephens
- define secession and explain why southerners chose secession instead of being ruled by a Republican president
- define constitutional self-government and explain why Lincoln believed secession was not a legal or constitutional right

4. Student assessment criteria:

Research paper: 15-20 page essay on a topic chosen in consultation with the professors. The chosen topic should address a central issue of the course. Due date: NLT two weeks after the completion of the course (July 20, 2007).

5. Required texts:

- Roy Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, ISBN 0-306-81075-1
- David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-6*, ISBN 0-06-131929-5
- William E. Cain, ed., *William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from “The Liberator”*, ISBN 0-312-10386-7
- Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, ISBN 0-8139-2104-X
- Ross M. Lence, ed., *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*, ISBN 0-86597-103-X
- Robert Walter Johannsen, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858*, ISBN 0195009215
- Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, ISBN 0-226-39112-4
- *Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States of America* (Ashbrook Center booklet)
- Course Pack (or “CP”) of additional primary source materials that range from Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* to modern scholarly commentary

Schedule

Sunday, 1 July

4:30-6:00 pm Session 1 Introduction to course: The Founders on Freedom and Slavery (Professor Krannawitter)

Topics:

- What did equality mean in the American Founding?
- Did equality include blacks?
- Why did the Constitution include compromises regarding slavery?
- Did the Founders view slavery as a good to be extended, or a necessary evil to be restricted?

Readings:

- Jefferson's Original Draft of Declaration of Independence (CP pg. 1)
- Final Text of Declaration of Independence (Ashbrook Center booklet)
- United States Constitution (Ashbrook Center booklet)
- Debates During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, excerpts (CP pg. 5)
- Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, excerpts (CP pg. 7)
- Jefferson, Letters to Benjamin Banneker, Henri Gregoire, Edward Coles, and Roger C. Weightman (CP pg. 9)
- Jefferson, First Inaugural Address (CP pg. 1)
- Thomas G. West, *Vindicating the Founders*, excerpts from Madison, Adams, Hamilton, Franklin, and Washington regarding slavery, 5 (CP pg. 21)
- Northwest Ordinance, excerpts (CP pg. 23)
- *Federalist* 31 (CP pg. 27)
- *Federalist* 49 (CP pg. 31)
- *Federalist* 54 (CP pg. 35)
- Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, chap. 14-17

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm: Session 2 Institute Lecture

Monday, 2 July

9:00-10:30 am Session 3 Equality, Slavery, and Federalism in the American Founding (Professor Krannawitter)

Focus: same as session 1

Readings: Same as session 1

10:45 am-12:15 pm Session 4 The Missouri Compromise of 1820 (Professor Owens)

Focus

- What kind of emancipation policy did Congressman Tallmadge want for the Missouri territory?
- What compromise did Congress work out to appease both the advocates of freedom and slavery?
- Did the Missouri Compromise solve or postpone the ultimate resolution of the slavery controversy?

Readings:

- 1820 Missouri Compromise (CP pg. 39)
- *Congressional Globe*, Speeches for and against, including the Tallmadge Amendment (CP pg. 43)
- Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Holmes (CP pg. 51)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 1-2, “American Nationalism Achieves an Ominous Fulfillment” and “Portents of a Sectional Rift”

2:00-3:30 pm Session 5 Portents of Secession—The Nullification Crisis of 1828-33 (Professor Krannawitter)

Focus: Did states reserve the right of secession when they ratified the Constitution?

- Was the Tariff of 1828 (i.e., the “Tariff of Abominations”) an attempt by the North to oppress the South economically?
- What was Calhoun’s argument for states to resist the tariff?
- What was Jackson’s response to South Carolina?

Readings:

- Lence, *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*—
 - 1816 Speech on the Tariff, 299-310
 - 1828 “Exposition and Protest” responding to the 1828 Tariff, 311-370
- Irving H. Bartlett, *John C. Calhoun: A Biography*, chap. 7, “The Architect of Nullification” (CP pg. 53)
- Virginia, New York, and Rhode Island documents ratifying the Constitution, excerpts (CP pg. 63)
- *Federalist 22* (CP pg. 81)
- F.W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States* (1892), chaps. 2 and 3 excerpts (CP pg. 87)
- South Carolina’s 1832 Ordinance of Nullification (CP pg. 111)
- Andrew Jackson’s 1832 Proclamation on Nullification in response to South Carolina (CP pg. 113)
- Force Bill of 1833 (CP pg. 125)

Tuesday, 3 July

**9:00-10:30 am Session 6: John C. Calhoun and the New Science of Race and Politics
(Professor Krannawitter)**

Focus:

- Does Calhoun view slavery as a good to be preserved or an evil to be eliminated?
- What opinion does Calhoun provide regarding the principle that “all men are created equal”?
- What does Calhoun mean by a concurrent majority and how is it related to secession?

Readings:

- Lence, *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*—
 - *Disquisition* (1851), 3-79
 - 1837 “positive good” speech, 461-476
 - 1848 Oregon Bill speech, 539-570
- James Henley Thornwell, “A Southern Christian View of Slavery” (December 4, 1861), in *The Annals of America* (1968), 9:298-303 (CP pg. 127)
- Rev. Fred A. Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God* (1857) excerpts, 32-61 (CP pg. 131)
- Alexander Stephens’s 1861 “Cornerstone Speech” (CP pg. 147)

**10:45 am-12:15 pm Session 7 John C. Calhoun and the New Science of Race and Politics
(continued) (Professor Krannawitter)**

Focus: Same as session 6

Readings: Same as Session 6

**2:00-3:30 pm Session 8 Abolitionism, Emancipation, and Constitutional Self-Government
(Professor Owens)**

Focus:

- Regarding the abolition of slavery, what was William Lloyd Garrison’s goal and how did he seek to achieve it?
- What was Garrison’s view of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and how did this reflect his understanding of politics?
- What was Frederick Douglass’s view of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and how did this reflect his understanding of politics?
- Why did Lincoln believe abolitionism posed a threat to self-government, and how did he believe the antislavery cause should be promoted?

Readings:

- Cain, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight Against Slavery*
 - “To the Public” (January 1, 1831), 70-72

- “On the Constitution and the Union” (December 29, 1832), 87-89
- “Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention” (Dec. 14, 1833), 90-94
- “Declaration of Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention” (September 28, 1838), 101-105
- “Address to the Slaves of the United States” (June 2, 1843), 109-11
- “The American Union” (January 10, 1845), 112-15
- “Dred Scott and Disunion” (March 12, 1858), 148-50
- “Southern Desperation” (November 16, 1860), 162-63
- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (July 5, 1852) (CP pg. 153)
- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
 - 1837 Protest on the Slavery Question, 552
 - 1838 Address before the Young Men’s Lyceum, 76-85
 - 1842 Temperance Address, 131-41
 - 1845 Letter to Williamson Durley, 169-71
 - 1852 Eulogy on Henry Clay, 264-77

Wednesday, 4 July

9:00-10:30 am Session 9 The Mexican War of 1846-48 (Professor Owens)

Focus: What restriction did Congressman Wilmot ask for regarding any territory acquired from Mexico?

- Did Lincoln support the war against Mexico?
- How did America’s acquisition of territory exacerbate the slavery controversy?

Readings:

- David Wilmot’s Proviso (CP pg. 165)
- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
 - 1848 Speech against the Mexican War, 202-216
 - 1848 Letter to William H. Herndon, 220-21
 - 1860 Short Autobiography, 554
- 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (CP pg. 167)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 3-4, “Forging the Territorial Shears” and “The Deadlock of 1846-1850”

10:45 am-12:15 pm Session 10 The Great Compromise of 1850 and the Future of Slavery (Professor Owens)

Focus

- What were the various measures of the 1850 Compromise?
- What did antislavery advocates not like about the Compromise?
- What did proslavery advocates not like about the Compromise?

- What doctrine did Stephen Douglas claim was endorsed by the Compromise, and why did he think it was consistent with the intentions of founding fathers?

Readings:

- 1850 Compromise Measures (CP pg. 177)
- Stephen Douglas, “The Measures of Adjustment” (October 23, 1850), 5-31 (CP pg. 179)
- John C. Calhoun, “Speech Against Henry Clay’s Compromise Measures” (March 4, 1850), 1-5 (CP pg. 207)
- William Seward, “Speech to the United States Senate” (March 11, 1850), 1-16 (CP pg. 213)
- Henry Clay, “General Review of the Debate on the Compromise Bills” (July 22, 1850), 1-5 (CP pg. 229)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 5-6, “The Armistice of 1850” and “Fire-Eaters, Fugitives, and Finality”

2:00-3:30 pm Session 11 The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 (Professor Owens)

Focus:

- What were the key provisions of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act?
- What reasons did Douglas give to show that the 1854 Act was not a departure from previous federal actions towards slavery in the territories?
- What reasons did Lincoln give to show that the 1854 Act was a departure from previous federal actions towards slavery in the territories?

Readings:

- 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act (CP pg. 235)
- Stephen Douglas, “Nebraska Territory” (January 30, 1854), 1-2 (CP pg. 247)
- “An Appeal of the Independent Democrats” (January 19, 1854), 1-3 (CP pg. 251)
- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
 - 1854 Letter to J.M. Palmer, 279-80
 - 1854 Editorial on the Kansas-Nebraska Act (14th Section), 281-82
 - 1854 Speech at Peoria, 283-323
 - 1855 Letter to Owen Lovejoy, 328-29
 - 1855 Letter to Joshua F. Speed, 332-36
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 7-10, “A Railroad Promotion and Its Sequel,” “The Ebb Tide of Manifest Destiny,” “Two Wars in Kansas,” and “The Political Parties in Metamorphosis”

Thursday, 5 July

9:00-10:30 am Session 12 The 1857 Dred Scott Case and Lincoln’s Response (Professor Krannawitter)

Focus: Why does Taney argue that blacks cannot be American citizens?

- Why does Taney argue that Congress was without authority to pass the Missouri Compromise?
- What did Taney argue in the 1838 *Gruber* case?
- What do we learn from McClean and Curtis regarding black citizenship and voting rights in the American Founding?
- What is Lincoln's primary critique of Taney's opinion?
- Does Lincoln encourage disobedience of the Court's opinion regarding the fate of Dred Scott?

Readings:

- Chief Justice Taney's *Dred Scott* opinion for the majority, excerpts (CP pg. 255)
- Justice McLean and Justice Curtis dissents in *Dred Scott*, excerpts (CP pg. 285, 311)
- Taney's speech in the *Gruber* case, Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South*, 131 (CP pg. 357)
- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
- 1854 Fragments: On Slavery, 278-79
- 1855 Letter to George Robertson, 330-31
- 1857 *Dred Scott* Speech, 352-65
- 1858 Letter to James W. Somers, 384
- Lincoln, 1856 Address to the Republican Banquet in Chicago (CP pg. 363)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 11-12, "Dred Scott and the Law of the Land" and "Lecompton: The Descent Grows Steeper"
- Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, Appendix 2

10:45 am-12:15 pm Session 13 The 1858 Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Professor Krannawitter

Topic: How do Lincoln and Douglas try to portray each other as extremists?

- What is Lincoln's moral objection to Douglas's "popular sovereignty" doctrine?
- Is Douglas correct that "popular sovereignty" has always been the way Americans settled the question of slavery?
- Does Lincoln argue for immediate political and social equality for blacks?

Readings:

- Johannsen, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (1st, 2nd and 7th debates)
- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
- 1858 House Divided Speech, 372-81
- 1858 Speech in Reply to Douglas at Chicago, 385-404
- 1858 Letter to J.N. Brown, 478-79
- 1858 Last Speech in Springfield, 480-81
- 1858 Letter to Doctor C.H. Ray, 482-82
- [August 1, 1858?] Fragment: On Slavery, 427

- 1858 Speech at Edwardsville, 469-74
- [October 1, 1858?] Fragment: On Slavery, 477-78
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chap. 13, “Lincoln, Douglas, and the Implications of Slavery”

2:00-3:30 pm Session 14 Watch the Movie *John Brown’s Holy War* (Professors Owens and Krannawitter)

Readings:

- Adam Gopnik, “John Brown’s Body,” 90-95 (CP pg. 363)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chap. 14, “Harpers Ferry: The Revolution that Failed”

Friday, 6 July

9:00-10:30 am Session 15 The Election of 1860

Professor Owens

Focus: How does Lincoln explain the connection between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence?

- How does Lincoln defend the Republican Party from southern criticisms?
- How did the two Democratic Party platforms differ from each other, and did they agree on any principles or policy proposals?
- What were the main differences between the Republican Party platform and the other party platforms?
- What primary reason did the Constitutional Union Party give for entering the national election against the Republican and Democratic Parties?
- What were Lincoln’s chief concerns or priorities as a Republican nominee for president in 1860?

Readings:

- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
 - 1858 Letter to Lyman Trumbull, 486-87
 - 1859 Letter to Henry L. Pierce and Others, 488-89
 - 1859 Letters to Salmon Portland Chase, 491-493
 - 1859 Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, 493-504
 - 1859 Letter to Jesse W. Fell, 510-12
 - 1860 Fragment: The Constitution and the Union, 513
 - 1860 Address at Cooper Institute, 517-36
 - 1860 Short Autobiography Written for the Campaign of 1860, 547-55
 - 1860 Letter to George T.M. Davis, 563
 - 1860 Letter to William Kellogg, 565-66

- 1860 Letter to John D. Jeffrees, 566-67
- Platform of the Alabama Democracy (CP pg. 369)
- Democratic Platform, 1860--Douglas Faction (CP pg. 371)
- Democratic Platform, 1860--Breckinridge Faction (CP pg. 373)
- Republican Platform, 1860 (CP pg. 375)
- 1860 Constitutional Union Party Platform (CP pg. 379)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 15-16, "Southern Maneuvers on the Eve of Conflict" and "The Election of 1860"

10:45 am-12:15 pm Session 16 Lincoln's Election and the Formation of the Confederate States of America (Professor Owens)

Focus: What reasons did southern secession commissioners give for secession?

- What reasons did Alexander Stephens give in defense of the Confederacy?
- What was Lincoln's understanding of the American union, self-government, slavery, and secession as the incoming president of the United States?
- Given that the Confederate Constitution was based on the U.S. Constitution, how did its changes reflect the central concerns of Confederate States?

Readings:

- Dew, *Apostles of Disunion*, Introduction, chaps. 1-5, Conclusion, and Appendix
- The Justifying Cause of Secession (CP pg. 381)
- Declaration of Causes of Seceding States (CP pg. 389)
- Ordinances of Secession (CP pg. 399)
- Mayor Wood's Recommendation of the Secession of New York City (CP pg. 407)
- President James Buchanan's December 1860 State of the Union Address (CP pg. 411)
- Crittenden Compromise (CP pg. 421)
- Alexander Stephens's Cornerstone Speech (CP pg. 147)
- December 1860 *New Orleans Daily Crescent* Editorial (CP pg. 425)
- Constitution of the Confederate States of America (CP pg. 429)
- Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chaps. 17-19, "The Nature of Southern Separatism," "The Lower South Secedes," and "Winter Crisis"

2:00-3:30 pm Session 17 Lincoln's Inauguration and the Civil War (Professor Owens)

Focus: What was the understanding of the incoming president of the United States regarding the American union, self-government, slavery, and secession?

Readings:

- Basler, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*—
 - 1860 Letter to Alexander H. Stephens, 567-68
 - 1860 Letter to George Ashmun, 543-44
 - 1861 Farewell Speech at Springfield, 568
 - 1861 Farewell Address to N.J. Senate, 574-75
 - 1861 Address in Independence Hall, 577-78
 - 1861 First Inaugural Address, 579-88
 - 1861 July 4th Message to Congress in Special Session, 594-609
 - Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chap. 20, “Fort Sumter: End and Beginning”