

Master of American History and Government
Ashland University

AHG 504A:
Civil War and Reconstruction
Sunday, June 29 to Friday, July 4, 2008

Instructors: Professors Mackubin Thomas Owens and Lucas Morel

1. Catalogue description and Course Content

This course explores the policy and strategy of the American Civil War and the politics of Reconstruction. We begin by looking at how the war has been “remembered” over the last 140 years. Then we will examine 1) the causes and consequences of the war; the goals and policies of the respective governments; 2) political, economic and strategic factors affecting both sides; 3) domestic politics in both the North and the South; 4) the fate of civil liberties during the war; 5) Union and Confederate diplomacy; 6) the respective strategies of the Union and Confederacy; 7) leadership, civil-military relations and the "politics of command;" and 8) emancipation as a political-military strategy and the role of black soldiers.

We will also examine the operational art of the war. To this end, we will analyze a number of campaigns, paying special attention to such factors as: 1) the strategic objectives of the campaign; 2) the plan and its implementation; 3) operational factors including movements, combats, deception, intelligence, and logistics; and 4) command relations.

Finally, we will examine in some detail the course of Reconstruction, a process that began before the guns were silent and continued for over a decade following the official end of hostilities. We will trace the debate between Lincoln and the Radical Republicans while the war was still raging, and follow its evolution from presidential Reconstruction (Lincoln and Johnson) to Radical Reconstruction and its consequences for the Grant administration, the "reconstructed" states, and the civil rights of the freedmen.

2. Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- a. understand how the Civil War and Reconstruction have shaped the political and social consciousness of Americans down to our day.
- b. understand the social and political conditions that produced and sustained this conflict from the 1840s to 1865
- c. understand the causes that impelled individuals to take up arms for or against the United States, most importantly the arguments for and against secession.
- d. understand the political and military objectives of the United States and the Confederacy, the strategies of both sides, and how military strategy related to the political goals in the conduct of the war.

e. understand how to analyze a military campaign, paying special attention to such factors as: a) the strategic objectives of the campaign; b) the plan and its implementation; c) operational factors including movements, combats, deception, intelligence, and logistics; and d) command relations.

f. understand the political, economic and strategic factors affecting both sides in the conflict, including the fate of civil liberties in time of war.

g. understand the role of emancipation as a political-military policy and its consequences for both the war and Reconstruction policy.

h. understand the role of African-American soldiers in the war.

i. understand the social and political consequences of the war and Reconstruction

Requirements

Students will submit a 15 page research paper/essay on an approved topic. The paper is due NLT two weeks after the end of the course.

Students auditing the course as a part of a Teaching American History Grant program must complete the readings and fully participate in the seminars during the week.

Required Texts

- Michael Les Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory*, University Press of America, ISBN: 978-0819155573
- David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) ISBN: 978-0674008199
- Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987) ISBN: 0-7006-0328-X
- Allen Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004) ISBN: 978-0743299657
- Richard M. McMurry, *Two Great Rebel Armies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989) ISBN: 978-0807845691
- James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ISBN: 978-0195168952
- Michael Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, (Harlan-Davidson), ISBN: 978-0882959955
- Kenneth Stampp, ed. *The Causes of the Civil War* (New York: Touchstone, 1991) ISBN: 978-0671751555
- Course Packet (CP) of additional reading materials. These materials are required texts for your course.

Schedule

Sunday, 29 June

4:30 – 6:00 pm Session 1 Introduction: The Legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction *Professor Owens*

Focus: There are many ways of remembering the Civil War. We see these in movies, Civil War art, and questions concerning the display of the Confederate flag. How do these different ways of remembering the war affect our views of the contemporary United States?

Required Readings:

Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Prologue, Chapters 1-2, 10. Epilogue

Recommended Readings:

Blight, *Race and Reunion*, Remainder of the book

7:30 – 9:00 pm Session 2 Institute Lecture

Location to be provided during check-in.

Attendance is mandatory.

Monday, 30 June

9:00-10:30am Session 3 The Impending Crisis - *Professor Owens*

Focus: There were many social, political, economic, and technological forces at work during the antebellum period. What were some of them and how did they contribute to the crisis that led to the dissolution of the Union?

Readings:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 3-201

10:45-12:15 Session 4 Causes of the War - *Professor Morel*

Focus: What were the causes that impelled southerners to break up the Union in 1860? Was the Civil War an “irrepressible conflict? Why or why not?

Required Readings:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 202-275

Recommended Readings

Stampp, *The Causes of the Civil War*

Monday, 30 June, cont'd

4:30-6:00 pm Session 5 Civil War Diplomacy - Professor Morel

Focus: the founders believed that a strong union was necessary for republican government to succeed in America. President Lincoln needed to prevent European powers from exploiting the rebellion to discredit republican government and expand their power in the Western Hemisphere. How did his administration keep the great powers at bay? What were the conflicting views among and within the great powers (especially Great Britain) about the American Civil War? What problems of international law did the unclear “nature of the war” present?

Required Readings:

Norman Graebner, “Northern Diplomacy and European Neutrality,” in *Why the North Won the Civil War*, 55-78. (CP pg. 5)

Henry Blumenthal, “Confederate Diplomacy: Popular Notions and International Realities,” *Journal of Southern History* 32 (1966), 151-71. (CP pg.19)

Max Beloff, “Great Britain and the American Civil War,” *History* 37 (1952), 40-48. (CP pg. 41)

Josiah Herson, “British Sympathies,” *Journal of Southern History* 33 (1967), 356-67. (CP pg. 45)

Recommended Readings:

McPherson, ch. 18.

Tuesday, 1 July

9:00-10:30am Session 6 Influences on the Combatants: Union and Confederate Strategy
Professor Owens

Focus: What impact did Napoleon and the French military tradition have on the two sides? How about technology? How critical was America’s own military tradition? What were the goals of Union and Confederate strategies? What were the obstacles that both sides faced?

Required Readings:

Jones, “The European Inheritance” (CP pg. 59)

Owens, “Lincoln as Commander-in-chief (CP pg 89)

<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Owens, “Grant and Lee” (CP pg 101) <http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Recommended Readings:

Epstein, “The Transformation of War” (SCP, 3)

McMurray, *Two Great Rebel Armies*

Tuesday, 1 July, cont'd

10:45-12:15 Session 7 From Limited to Total War: 1861-1863 - Professor Owens

Focus: Although there were many bloody battles in 1861-62, most historians argue that the objectives of the war were still limited. What were these objectives and how did they affect the conduct of the war? The intensity of the war increased substantially in 1863. What conditions changed to bring about this situation?

Required Readings:

Owens, "From Beaver Dam Creek to Antietam: Lee's Virginia-Maryland Campaign of 1862 (CP pg 109) <http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>
Owens, "Opening the Gateway to Victory: The 1862 Campaigns in the West" (CP pg 119)

Recommended Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 276-674

4:30-6:00pm Session 8 Domestic Politics in the North - Professor Morel

Focus: Victory in the Civil War required Lincoln to maintain the unity and dominance of the Republican party. The war also facilitated monumental changes in national policy, reviving the Federalist-Whig agenda of national mercantilism. How did Lincoln and the Republicans maintain public support for their policies? What opposition challenged them? How did the American political economy develop during the war?

Required Readings:

Eric L. McKittrick, "Party Politics in the Union and Confederate War Effort," in *The American Party Systems*, ed. Chambers and Burnham (1967), 117-151. (CP pg 125)
Philip S. Paludan, "The American Civil War Considered as a Crisis in Law and Order," *American Historical Review* 77 (1972). (CP pg143)

Recommended Readings:

McPherson, chap. 14

Wednesday, 2 July

9:00-10:30am Session 9 Transition to "Total War": 1863 - Professor Owens

Focus: Historians argue that the conduct of the Civil War after 1863 adumbrates the total wars of the 20th century. How valid is this argument?

In retrospect, most of us conclude that Union victory was assured by at least the fall of 1864 when Sherman captured Atlanta most likely assuring Lincoln's reelection. Why did the Confederacy continue to resist? Why did they give up

when they did? Could resistance have continued? Did it in fact continue during Reconstruction?

Required Readings:

Owens, "Another Tale of May: Grant's Vicksburg Campaign (CP pg. 167)

<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Owens, "Lee's Invasion of Pennsylvania (CP pg 173)

<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Owens, "From Stones River to Chattanooga" (CP pg 183)

<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Recommended Reading:

McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 675-688, 718-852

10:45-12:15 Session 10 Civil Liberties, North and South - Professor Owens

Focus: Lincoln claimed to be fighting a war that would lead to "a new birth of freedom," yet some claim he violated civil liberties on an unprecedented scale. How can a war for liberty be reconciled with such violations of civil liberties?

Were the steps he took during the war constitutional? Why or why not? Was he ever a "dictator" as Clinton Rossiter has claimed?

Compare and contrast Taney's opinion ex parte Merryman and Lincoln's apologia in his letter to Erastus Corning and the New York Democrats.

Required Readings:

Owens, "Vigilance and Responsibility: Civil Liberties During the Civil War (CP pg 195)

<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Lincoln, Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus (CP pg 205)

Taney, "Ex Parte Merryman" from Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America during the Great Rebellion, 1860-1865* (CP pg 207)

Lincoln: Letter to Erastus Corning and Others (CP pg 217)

Recommended Readings:

McPherson, Chapter 20, pp. 591-625

Fehrenbacher, "Lincoln and the Constitution" (SCP, 29)

1:30-3:00 pm Session 11 Domestic Politics in the South - Professor Morel

Focus: The Confederate States seceded in order to preserve slavery and state sovereignty. Yet they immediately faced the need to establish a strong central government to sustain a modern war. This war threatened the very principles and institutions to which the new regime was dedicated. How did the Confederate

leaders establish a new federal constitution and state governments? What domestic political problems did they encounter as they tried to carry on the war?

Required Readings:

Richard F. Bense, "Southern Leviathan: The Development of Central State Authority in the CSA," *Studies in American Political Development* 2 (1986), 68-136. (CP pg 225)

David Donald, "Died of Democracy," in *Why the North Won the Civil War*, ed. Donald (New York, 1960), 79-90. (CP pg 261)

David M. Potter, "Jefferson Davis and the Political Factors in Confederate Defeat," *ibid.*, 91-112. (CP pg 267)

Alexander H. Stephens, Cornerstone Speech (CP pg 279)

The Constitution of the Confederate States of America. (CP pg 291)

Recommended Reading:

McPherson, chaps. 14 and 23

3:30-5:30 pm **Optional Session: War Movie *Glory***

Thursday, 3 July

9:00-10:30 am Session 12 **Emancipation and Black Troops - *Professor Owens***

Focus: The Emancipation Proclamation did not free a single slave under the authority of the Federal government, e.g. the border states of Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware, or Missouri. What did it accomplish?

On emancipation, Lincoln moved too slowly for the radicals and abolitionists and too fast for the Democrats. How would you assess Lincoln's actions?

How do you respond to the charge that recruiting black troops only raised the stakes and hardened the position of the Confederacy? What was the effect of black recruitment? Was the outcome primarily positive or negative?

Required Readings:

Owens, "Emancipation as a Political-Military Strategy (CP pg 313)
<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>

Lincoln, "Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation" (CP pg 319)

Lincoln: Annual Message to Congress (1862) (CP pg 321)

Lincoln: January 1, 1863 Final Emancipation Proclamation (CP pg 335)

Lincoln: March 26, 1863 Letter to Governor Andrew Johnson (CP pg 337)

Lincoln: August 5, 1863 Letter to General N.P. Banks (CP pg 339)

Lincoln: August 26, 1863 Letter to James C. Conkling (CP pg 341)

Lincoln: March 13, 1864 Letter to Governor Michael Hahn (CP pg 345)

Lincoln: October 10, 1864 Letter to Henry W. Hoffman (CP pg 347)

Lincoln, "Order of Retaliation" (CP pg 349)

Lincoln, "To Stephen A. Hulburt" (CP pg 351)
Lincoln, "To Nathaniel Banks" (CP pg 353)
Lincoln: Annual Message to Congress (1864) (CP pg 355)
Frederick Douglass, "Condition of the Country" (February 1863) (CP pg 367)
Douglass, "Men of Color, To Arms!" (Mar 1863) (CP pg 369)

Suggested Readings:

Allen Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*
Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm*
Douglass, "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln" (SCP, 39)
Fehrenbacher, "Only His Stepchildren: Lincoln and the Negro" (SCP, 45)

10:45-12:15

Session 13 War Termination - Professor Owens

Focus: Given the many presumed material advantages the North possessed, why did it take so long for the Union to prevail? What finally led to the collapse of Confederate conventional military resistance? Why did the South not continue the war using guerrilla tactics? In what way was the era of Reconstruction a continuation of the war? Which side ultimately won?

Required Readings

Owens, "Why Did the South Lose? (CP pg 373)
<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>
Owens, "A Tale of Two Mays in Wartime" (CP pg 379)
<http://www.ashbrook.org/tools/printerpage.asp>
Owens, "The Atlanta Campaign" (CP pg 387)
Owens, "From Atlanta to Durham Station, and Spring Hill to Nashville" (CP pg 387)
Owens, "Petersburg to Appomattox" (CP pg 387)

4:30-6:00 pm

Session 14 Reconstruction I: Lincoln, Johnson, and Restoration
Professor Morel

Focus: How did the uncertain "nature of the war" shape the problem of defining "reconstruction"? What were the fundamental theories available? How did Lincoln and Congress differ in their views of postwar policy on both substantive and procedural grounds?

Required Readings:

Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory*,
Part I, chapters 1-2; Part II, chapters 1-4
Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, Chapter 1

Recommended Readings:

McPherson, 698-717, 838-44

Friday, 4 July

9:00-10:30 am

Session 15 Reconstruction II: Moderate Congressional Reconstruction

Professor Morel

Focus: What was the principal reason for and elements of congressional reconstruction policy up to the Fourteenth Amendment? How did they define the extent and limits of “civil rights”?

Readings:

Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory*,

Part I, chapter 3; Part II: chapters 5-10

Perman, *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, Chapter 2

10:45-12:15

Session 16 Reconstruction III: Radical Congressional Reconstruction

Professor Morel

Focus: What caused Congress to turn to a more radical Reconstruction policy? How “radical” was Radical Reconstruction? What did it do and fail to do?

Readings:

Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory*,

Part I, Chapters 4-7; Part II: Chapters 11-21

1:30-3:00pm

Session 17 Reconstruction IV: Restoration and the Court

Professor Morel

Focus: How did the “redemption” of the former Confederate states come about? How faithfully did the Supreme Court interpret the Reconstruction amendments and statutes? How did its interpretation change over time, and reflect changing attitudes about race and federal power in the late 19th century?

Readings:

Benedict, “Preserving Federalism: The Conservative Basis of Radical Reconstruction,” *Journal of American History* 61 (1974), 65-90 (CP pg 391).

Benedict, “Preserving Federalism: Reconstruction and the Waite Court,” *Supreme Court Review* 1978, 39-79 (CP pg 417).

Slaughterhouse Cases, 83 U.S. 36 (1873). (CP pg 459)

Civil Rights Cases, 109 U.S. 3 (1883). (CP pg 465)

Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). (CP pg 471)

