

# The Civil War Era

Peter S. Carmichael

**Lecture: M, F 2:00-3:15**

**1215 HHRA**

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**GOAL:** To look behind the legends that have influenced how Americans understand secession, war, and reunion. We will confront a number of beliefs, including that abolitionist provocateurs fomented the crisis, that slavery was not the central issue of the conflict, that northerners fought for black freedom, and that white Southerners presented a united front during the war. The war came as part of an ongoing struggle around the world among people coming to grips with new relationships within emerging nation-states leaning towards industrial capitalism and mass democracy. This class blends lectures, discussions, essays, and readings into a comprehensive survey of the period 1848 to 1876.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

To recognize the important political and military events of the Civil War Era.

To describe the coming of the Civil War, Northern victory/Southern defeat, and the process of Reconstruction.

To analyze primary sources

To assess secondary scholarship on the Civil War era in light of your own research and reading of primary sources.

## EVALUATION METHODS AND GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

**Exams.** Both exams will be essays and you will need blue books. The second exam is not cumulative and will cover the war years and Reconstruction. In both exams students will have an opportunity to describe and analyze critical historical developments of the Civil War Era

**Response Papers.** During the semester students will read four assigned books beside the Roland text. From these, they will write a 2 to 3 page paper (750 to 850 words) on three books (Faust, Shaara, and LeConte). You will be quizzed on Dew but you will not write a paper. You will respond to questions that have been posted on the document section of Blackboard. The response papers will provide students with an opportunity to assess primary sources and secondary scholarship.

**Discussions.** We will use discussion periods to puzzle through the motivations of people in this cataclysmic time. Sessions will explore why nonslaveholders would fight a war for slavery, how the war challenged the identities of Northern and Southern women, did the war usher in a revolution in the South, and so on. Students will write a one-page response to the assigned readings in class. **The questions will not always be announced before class so it is essential to prepare and take notes from the book.** I will take the 10 highest scores. There are no make-ups for these written exercises, regardless of the excuse. These papers will be on a 5 point system, for a total of 50 points. The remainder of the 50 points allotted for this portion of the grade will come from participation during the semester. Discussions provide students to evaluate primary and secondary source material.

**Newspaper Project.** Each student will examine either a Northern or Southern community with the purpose of understanding how civilians and soldiers responded to the changing nature of the war. What were the expectations and sentiment of the people? What was the basis of their loyalty and identity? How did the war challenge their understanding of the world? Students will chronicle the experience of their chosen community by focusing on a single week of the war. You must place your community's experience within the broader trends of the war in a five page paper that will be due in April. See Blackboard Documents for a more detailed description of this project. In this assignment, students will analyze primary source material and develop their own ideas about the impact of the war on civilians.

**Attendance.** Unexcused absences or a lack of preparation will hurt the student's final discussion grade. You will receive three excused absences. For every absence after three, I will deduct three percentage points from your final grade.

## READINGS

Gabor Boritt, [Why the Confederacy Lost](#)  
Drew Gilpin Faust, [James Henry Hammond of the Old South](#)  
Charles Dew, [Apostles of Disunion](#)  
Aaron Sheehan-Dean, [Struggle for a Vast Future](#)  
Michael Shaara, [Killer Angels](#)

Emma LeConte, When the World Ended  
Charles Roland, An American Iliad (Recommended)  
\*Designates articles on Blackboard

## GRADING

First Examination	100 points
Second Examination	150 points
Response Papers	150 (50 points each)
Discussion/ Participation	100 points
Newspaper Project	100 points

## PARTICIPATION

**This assessment will be based on two criteria:**

- 1) Thorough preparation for this class is essential. All readings should be done before class. It is imperative that you have either handwritten or typed notes that outline the central questions and arguments of the assigned readings.
- 2) It is essential that you contribute to class on a consistent basis, that you intellectually engage with your peers, and that you are an active listener. In order to create an inviting environment for everyone to participate, please follow the guidelines:
  - Be ready to explain the broader argument and sub-themes of the assigned material and how the various readings fit together or diverge.
  - Instead of just criticizing a book or article, focus on understanding the contributions of the assigned readings and why they have had a lasting influence on the field.
  - You should feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and support them with evidence. You should also be willing to change your mind and concede to others when they make persuasive, well-reasoned arguments. Please challenge each other in a polite and courteous manner.
  - The success of a discussion depends on group interaction. Listen carefully and respond to your peers. There should be a dynamic give-and-take between the discussion leaders and the rest of the class. This can only happen if you elaborate upon the assertions of classmates or ask for clarification if you don't understand. Simply answering the questions will not lead to vigorous debate, and the discussion leaders will end up giving a monologue.
  - Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week One** August 14 and 16 **Start reading James Henry Hammond**  
*Moonlight & Magnolias: The Lost Cause & Its Impact*  
**Discussion: August 16** \*Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth"

**Week Two** August 21 and 23

*The North and South at Mid-century*

**Discussion: August 21** \*Genoveses, "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy"

**August 23** Blair, "Extremists at the Gate," in **Struggle for a Vast Future**

**Week Three** August 28 and 30

*Fruits of Manifest Destiny: The Territories, Slavery, and Politics*

**Discussion: August 28** \*Foner, "Slavery and the Republican Ideology" and "The Republican Critique of the South;

**Week Four** September 4 (no class) and September 6 **Start reading Apostles of Disunion**

*Slavery vs. Free Labor*

**Discussion: James Henry Hammond Paper Due (September 6) on James Henry Hammond**

**Week Five** September 11 and 13

*Republicans Win: Secession Begins*

**Discussion (September 11):**\*Edmondston, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 50-54;  
\*Lincoln, Speeches and Writings, "First Inaugural Address,"215-224."

**Discussion (September 13)** Dew, Apostles of Disunion (Quiz)

**Week Six** September 18 and 23

*The Creation of the Confederate Nation*

**Examination: September 18 (Weeks 1-5)**

**Discussion (September 23)** Carwardine, "I would not be Master" in Struggle for a Vast Future

**Week Seven** September 25 and 27

1861

**Discussion (September 25 ):** McPherson, "American Victory, American Defeat," in Why the Confederacy Lost; **(September 27)** \*Beringer, et. al. "Religion and the Chosen People," 82-102.

**Week Eight** October 2 and 4 (Make an appointment with the Teaching Assistant during Week 8 or Week 9)

*Roller Coaster Ride of 1862*

**Discussion: October 2** \*Edmondston, Journal of a Secesh Lady,124-125, 205-209 and Bynum, "We never yielded in the Struggle," in Struggle for a Vast

Future; **October 4** Krick, "Leadership on the Battlefield," in Struggle for a Vast Future

**Week Nine** October 9 (Fall Break) and October 11  
*Wartime Reconstruction*

**Discussion, October 11** \*Gallagher, "The Autumn of 1862," 1-13; \*Davidson, Davidson Diary and Letters, 46-50; **October 11** Vorenberg, "The world will forever applaud," in A Vast Struggle; \*Alexander, Alexander Letters, 243-247; \*Edmondston, "Journal of a Secesh Lady," 315-319"; \*Welsh, Irish Green and Union Blue, 41-44; \*McClure, Hoosier Farm Boy, 42-43; Shaw, Blue Eyed Child of Fortune, 252

**Week Ten** October 16 and 18  
*The Black Military Experience*

**Discussion: October 16** Glatthaar, "Black Glory," in Why the Confederacy Lost; \*Fisk, Anti-Rebel, 229-32

**Week Eleven** October 23 and 25  
*Confederate Tide Rising 1863*

**Discussion: October 23** \*McClure, Hoosier Farm Boy, 44-45; \*Welsh, Irish Green and Union Blue, 62-63; \*Pegram, "The Boy Artillerist," 238-241; **October 25** \*Blair, "'A Source of Amusement': Pennsylvania versus Lee, 1863"; \*Brady, Hurrah for the Artillery, 253-255; \*Wagner, Letters of Wagner, 64-65; \*Barclay, Letters from the Stonewall Brigade, 91-93; \*Morgan, Civil War Diary of Morgan, 514-515; \*Edmondston, Diary of Secesh Lady, 426-31; Paper Due (October 25) on **Killer Angles**

**Week Twelve** October 30 and November 1 Final Newspaper Projects due on November 1  
*Problems on the Home Front: North and South*

**Discussion: November 1** Grimsley, "Remorseless, revolutionary struggle" in Struggle for a Vast Future

**Week Thirteen** November 6 and 8  
*The Hard Hand of War 1864 and Union Drive to Victory*

**Discussion: November 6** Gallagher "Upon their Success Hang Momentous Interests," in Why the Confederacy Lost."  
**November 8** Prokopowicz, "Our Hearts were touched with fire," in Struggle for a Vast Future

**Week Fourteen** November 13 and 15  
*Union Drive to Victory*

**Discussion: November 13** \*Beringer, et. al., "Why the South Lost," 424-442;  
**November 15** \*Escott, "The Failure of Confederate Nationalism," 15-27 \*Pegram,

"The Boy Artillerist," 242-245, 256-58; \*Hammond, Secret and Sacred, July 31, 1864, diary entry; \*Pettit, Civil War Letters, 70-72; \*Edmondston, Diary of a Secesh Lady, 694-96; Lee, Wartime Papers, 910.

**Week Fifteen** November 20

*Presidential Reconstruction*

**Discussion: November 20** Sheehan-Dean, "A Fearful Lesson" in Struggle for a Vast future; **and Discussion: When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte ( Paper due on November 20)**

**Week Sixteen** November 27 and 29

*Radical Reconstruction and The Lost Cause*

**Discussion: November 29** \*Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History"

**Week Seventeen** December 4 Examination

**NOTE:** While attempting to adhere to the outlines within this syllabus, the instructor reserves the right to adjust components with due notice to the class.