

Slavery, Abolition, & Politics: The Coming of the American Civil War

History 317
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Course description

In the period from 1820 to 1860 the political system of the United States experienced its greatest political crisis. This crisis arose as a growing antislavery movement challenged the entrenched power of slave-holding class, which was determined to protect at all cost slavery and the political power that the institution afforded. This course examines the slave system of the nineteenth century, challenges to slavery from African Americans and their allies, the rise of abolitionism and antislavery, the South's defense of slavery, and the resulting political contest that led to southern secession and civil war. In examining slavery, antislavery, and politics of the period, we will also discuss issues of continuing relevance such as race, class, freedom, nationalism, citizenship, and civil rights. The structure of the course will be lecture, class discussion, and analysis of readings and films.

Course objectives

By the end of the course students will be familiar with the mature, antebellum slave system, the rise of abolitionism and anti-slavery, and the major political and social events that helped bring about the American Civil War. In studying these particular issues students will also gain insight into how we define what is normal and what is dissent, how dissent manifests itself in protest in a democratic society, and how Americans understand identity, race, and citizenship. Students will also gain an understanding of the various interpretations of the causes of the Civil War.

Required Texts

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 1st ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2007).
Paul Finkelman, *Dred Scott V. Sanford* (Bedford/St. Martins).
William Cain, *William Lloyd Garrison & the Fight Against Slavery* (Bedford/St. Martins).
Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877, 10th Anniversary Edition* (Hill and Wang).
Michael Perman, *The Coming of the American Civil War* (DC Heath, 1993).

Course Website

This course has a web component. You will find a copy of this syllabus, **reading assignments**, and other information posted there. The website address is: <http://academic.csuohio.edu/sheltonr>. This course may also have a Blackboard site that will contain additional reading material.

Class assignments

The requirements for passing this course include successful completion of two exams, a research paper, a primary sources analysis paper, and class presentations. The proportional value of these assignments for determining the final grade are listed below. Students must complete all of the assignments to pass the course.

Writing Across the Curriculum Credit

This course provides Writing Across the Curriculum course credit. WAC course requirements:

1. Students must write between 3,000 and 5,000 words (10-20 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in writing assignments (which may include drafts).
2. Final versions of at least one assignment should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).
3. Assignments must employ writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences. Whenever possible, planning assignments (e.g. reading logs, pre-writing strategies) and peer reviews should be included.

4. Writing assignments should be complex enough to require substantive revision for most students. The instructor should give feedback to assist students in preparing subsequent papers or drafts of papers. This feedback should not consist entirely of mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar.

5. The class should provide instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation.

6. Writing should be assigned throughout the semester.

7. Where appropriate, the instructor should address the needs of students regarding library competency.

8. Assigned writing should be in English unless the course is specifically geared to improving writing at the 300-level in another language.

9. In order to receive a C or better in the course, students must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.

10. The maximum enrollment for this course is 35 or 45 with a graduate assistant.

Class assignments

You must turn in all assignments to pass the course. Failure to turn in any single assignment will result in a grade of F even if the grades on all submitted assignments average out to a passing grade.

Exams (60% of final grade)

Students will write three examinations of approximately three-to five-pages each (600-1,000 words each). The topic of the exam will be announced in class and, in the case of the second and third exams, will probably require you to analyze the primary documents that accompany the texts on William Lloyd Garrison and on the Dred Scott case. If assigned as take-home tests, these papers must be typed. Footnotes are not necessary unless you quote from the readings, in which case you should follow the style found in the *A Manual for Writers*.¹ I will provide a fuller description of what I expect on these exams later in the semester.

Research Paper (30% of final grade)

Each student will write a ten- to twelve-page paper (2,000 words) on a subject to be discussed in class. Students must base their papers on research from at least one primary source and in-class readings, lectures, and discussion. (A primary source, as will be discussed in class more fully, is material from nineteenth century.) This can be a diary, a collection of letters, business records, newspapers, association minutes, union records, government documents, speeches, census records, tax rolls, or other such documents.) Each student must formulate a thesis and will write a clearly written, well-organized, well-argued paper based upon this thesis. The production of the paper will be a multi-step process:

1. Students must submit a one-paragraph prospectus of the paper, including a tentative thesis statement. **5% of final paper grade.**
2. Students must submit an outline of the paper, which will include a revised summary and thesis statement. **10% of final paper grade.**
3. Students must submit the completed paper by week twelve of the semester. This submission must be as close to a final product as possible. If this submission is excessively sloppy, I will return it without suggestions and you must resubmit it to fulfill this step of the process. I will then return the paper, with suggestions and corrections the next week. **25% of final paper grade.**
4. Students will edit their classmate's paper for content, clarity, grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, facts, etc., and write a two-page, double-spaced critique of the paper based on questions and guidelines that I will provide. **5% of final paper grade.**
5. Students may be asked to make a short presentation summarizing the conclusions of their paper to the class sometime during the last month of class.
6. Students will then submit the final, revised paper on the last day of the class. The final paper will incorporate suggestions and corrections made by me and by your classmates. **50% of final paper grade.**

If you miss one of these five steps, you will receive a zero for the entire paper assignment regardless of the quality of the final product. These papers are formal submissions that require you to follow proper style guidelines as found in *The Chicago Manual of Style* or in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Writing quality will factor in your grade; excessive

¹ John Smith, *An Example of a Footnote, First Usage In a Paper* (Cleveland: The Imaginary Publishing Company, 1977), 32. Also see, *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*, 14th ed. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 529-635.

spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar errors will detract from it. These papers will require you to take a side, make an argument, and adduce evidence from lectures, readings, and your independent research.

Grading scheme

A+	100%
A	95%
A-	90%
B+	88%
B	85%
B-	80%
C+	78%
C	75%
C-	70%
D	65%
F	0%

Readings and class participation (10% of final grade)

Each student is expected to read the assignments and to participate in class. Students should read the assigned material before class and **prepare questions and be prepared to answer questions from fellow students about the readings** and to participate in collaborative exercises with fellow students. Your questions should about the readings, discussion points, exercises, or whatever should get your classmates to sit up and talk about things. I will occasionally collect the written questions without notice to make sure everyone is participating. If you don't turn one in when I ask, you will have points deducted.

Graduate Students

Assignments for graduate students will be somewhat different from those required of undergraduates. See supplementary syllabus for HIS 517 for more information.

Late Papers

I will subtract one letter grade for each class period that a take-home essay or research paper is late. After an assignment is three days late, I will not accept it. For example, a paper due on Monday but submitted on Wednesday would lose one a letter grade. A B+ paper, in such an example, would be given a B-. You cannot submit late papers to the department secretaries, they have been instructed NOT to accept papers. Papers can be placed under my door or put in my mailbox in the history department. HOWEVER, if you submit a paper without placing it in my hand, I will not be responsible for it getting lost, thrown out by housekeeping, etc. In other words, if you put it under my door, you better contact me as soon as possible to make sure I got it. If I did not, the late-paper clock continues to tick. **I will not accept papers or assignments via email except in an emergency or unless stated otherwise in class.**

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Using someone else's ideas or phrasing and representing those ideas or phrasing as our own, either on purpose or through carelessness, is a serious offense known as plagiarism. "Ideas or phrasing" includes written or spoken material, of course — from whole papers and paragraphs to sentences, and, indeed, phrases — but it also includes statistics, lab results, art work, etc. "Someone else" can mean a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal; an electronic resource such as material we discover on the World Wide Web; another student at our school or anywhere else; a paper-writing "service" (on-line or otherwise) which offers to sell written papers for a fee. You should be aware that the university possesses software to detect plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in an "F" on the assignment and, depending on the severity of the case, an "F" in the course and disciplinary action by the university.

Policy on Incompletes

A grade of "I" for the course will be given only to students who have performed satisfactorily in class but because of some emergency have been unable to complete the class requirements.

Special Needs

If you have a disability and need a special accommodation, consult first with office of Services for Students with Disabilities and then discuss the accommodation with me.

Absences

Class attendance is necessary to complete the course successfully. You should make every effort to attend class. Should you have a problem with attendance, please call or see me during office hours. If you miss more than 1/3 of the course—15 meetings—you will automatically receive an F in the course.

Schedule

I will also make readings on-line: Links to on-line material can be found at <http://academic.csuohio.edu>

Part 1—Slavery, America, & the South

Week 1 – Aug 24, 26, 28

Kolchin, Chapters, 1-2

Discussion: Althusser, Gramsci, Weedon, on-line

Week 2 – Aug 31, Sept 2, 4

Kolchin, Chapters, 3-4

Discussion: Fields, on-line

Week 3 – Sept 9, 11

Kolchin, Chapters 5-6

NO CLASS, Monday Sept 7

Friday: Paper Prospectus Due

Week 4 – Sept 14, 16, 18

Intro – 16 in Perman

Discussion: Genoveses, Barrington, & Wright,
pp. 131-168, in Perman

Week 5 – Sept 21, 23, 25

Discussion: McPherson, Greenberg, Frederickson,
pp. 188-236, in Perman

Part 2—The North Transformed

Week 6 – Sept 28, 30, Oct 2

Monday, 28 September: First Examination

Donald, et al., pp. 23-56 in Perman

Discussion: The Market Revolution on line

Week 7 – Oct 5, 7, 9

Discussion: Hunter, Newman on-line

Friday: Paper Outline Due

Week 8 – Oct 14, 16

NO CLASS, Monday, Oct. 12 & possibly Oct. 16

Discussion: Cain, *Garrison*, Preface- p. 57

Week 9 – Oct 19, 21, 23

Discussion: Rael, Young on-line

Week 10 – Oct 26, 28, 30

Discussion: Foner, pp. 169-187 in Perman
King on-line

Part 3—Political Disunion

Week 11 – Nov 2, 4, 6

Wednesday, November 2, Second Examination

Friday: Paper Workshop

Week 12 – Nov 9, 13

NO CLASS, Wed, Nov 11

Friday: Paper Draft Due

Discussion: Gnieapp on-line

Week 13 – Nov 16, 18, 20

Discussion: Donald, Bestor, Holt, Stamp, pp. 57-131 in
Perman

Week 14 – Nov 23, 25

NO CLASS, Fri, Nov 27

Wednesday: Paper Critique Due

Discussion: Finkelman, *Dred Scott*: Preface-p. 52
Channing, Wyatt-Brown,
pp. 237-259 in Perman

Week 15 – Nov 30, Dec 2, 4

Friday: Paper Revisions Due

Discussion: Potter, Stamp, Paludan,

pp. 276-315 in Perman

Douglass, pp. 17-22 in Perman

Final Exam Period:

Mon., Dec 7, 1 to 3 pm