

Bergen Community College  
Division of Humanities  
Department of History

Course Syllabus  
**HIS201- American Civil War & Reconstruction Era, 1845-1877**

**Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester and year:  
Course and Section Number:  
Meeting Times and Locations:  
  
Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Departmental Secretary: [optional]  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the causes, course, and consequence of the Civil War Era. Broad political, social, military, and economics aspects of this period will be covered. Substantial attention will also be paid to the challenges and failures of Reconstruction. Students will learn historical facts and interpretation while building on their understanding of the broad scope of history as a discipline.

Prerequisite: English Composition (WRT-101)

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of the narrative framework and factual basis of the era of Civil War and Reconstruction.
- 2) Explain the main currents of U.S. history during the Civil War and Reconstruction era and their lasting impact on the nation's culture and ramifications on modern America.
- 3) Identify, synthesize, analyze the important political, military, economic, social, cultural, intellectual, and diplomatic forces that shaped this period.
- 4) Describe the important issues, trends, and controversies in recent scholarship on the Civil War and Reconstruction.
- 5) Identify and evaluate the multiethnic and racial fabric of Antebellum American society, North and South.
- 6) Understand how the experience of a modern, total war impacted the experience of a diverse group of people individually and collectively.
- 7) Develop a thesis and support it with historical evidence both in writing and orally.
- 8) Demonstrate basic research skills by locating and using source materials.
- 9) Summarize, paraphrase, and quote historical information in properly cited written analysis.
- 10) Explain different interpretation of historical issues concisely, coherently, and logically.

**MEANS OF ASSESSMENT:** Mastery of the learning objectives will be assessed through exams, quizzes, papers, class participation. This class will help students develop a thorough empirical grasp along with the kind of analytical skills that come with a genuine historical sensibility.

In pursuit of the foregoing goals, the course is based on the reading and discussion of historical writings for both primary and secondary sources; the techniques of historical research and writing are reviewed, and students are expected to use subject specific resources in their preparation for active participation in class and for writing assignments. Students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course and by conducting outside research.

This class will require students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

**COURSE CONTENT:** This course explores all aspects of the defining event in American history. The Civil War and Reconstruction Era touched every American in some way. It redefined the very political, social, and economic fabric of the country in ways that still reverberate today. Topics covered in the readings include the war's underlying causes, its immediate causes, the course of the fighting, the crucial role played by Abraham Lincoln, the ethics of war, the experiences of both soldiers and civilians during the war, and the aftermath of our bloodiest conflict. We will discuss both primary and secondary readings. Although the course includes many aspects of military history, the focus will also be on the cultural, social, and political dimensions of the Civil War era. As such, the recurring themes of the course include competing definitions of freedom, differing economic and cultural systems and values, the workings of government at all levels, and social relationships defined by race, class, and gender during a pivotal period in American history. It is a subject that provides ample opportunity for studying African Americans as agents of historical change, and not as mere victims. It is a subject in which immigrants, Irish, German, and others, proved themselves as Americans through their participation on the battlefield. Scholarship on the war has been vastly enriched by the diaries and letters of American women both North and South, providing us with a first-hand understanding of what the war meant for families on both sides of the Dixie line. Their work on both the home-front and the battle-front was indispensable. This class intends to eradicate the stereotypical view of American history as simply the stories of Anglo-Americans. In meeting the expectations of a "200" level course, the lectures, readings, and class discussions will allow students to build upon and expand their knowledge of United States history.

**REQUIRED COURSE READINGS:**

David Herbert Donald, Jean Harvey Baker, Michael F. Holt, ***THE CIVIL WAR & RECONSTRUCTION***  
(W.W. Norton publishers).

William E. Gienapp, ***THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION: A Documentary Collection***  
(W.W. Norton publishers).

A textbook and a primary source anthology of documents will be assigned. Readings are assigned by chapter number at the rate of about two chapters per week. Associated illustrative material in the books (photos, maps, figures, tables) are to be perused in connection with the reading assignments. It is best to do assigned readings before or very soon after attending the lecture. Specific instructions on how to approach the readings will be given during lecture time.

**GRADING:**

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the final grade. Examinations can consist of objective questions such as multiple choice and short answers, but an essay of some form should also be evaluated as part of the test.

A sample grade distribution is as follows:

Mid-Term Exam	30%
---------------	-----

Final-Exam (non-comprehensive)	30%
Writing/Research Assignments	30%
Participation/Collegiality	10%
Total	100%

Grade Scales: A=90-100%, B+=85-89%, B=80-84%, C+=75-79%, C=70-74%, D=60-69%, F=below 60

**BCC Attendance Policy:**

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

**History and Geography Departmental Attendance Policy:**

It is imperative that students attend class on a daily basis in order to secure the knowledge necessary to succeed in the course. Coming to class on time and staying for the entire class period is expected. Excessive absences will have a detrimental effect on your performance in this course. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified on the student guide.

**Academic Dishonesty (From BCC Handbook):**

Bergen Community College is committed to academic integrity—the honest, fair, and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud and deception. Students are responsible for their own work. Faculty and academic support services staff will take appropriate measures to discourage academic dishonesty. The college recognizes the following general categories of violations of academic integrity whenever a student does one of more of the following: uses unauthorized assistance in any academic work, copies from another student’s exam, gives unauthorized assistance to other students, fabricates data in support of an academic assignment, inappropriately or unethically uses technical means to gain academic advantage, and commits plagiarism.

**Statement on Accommodation for Disabilities**

Bergen Community College aims to create inclusive learning environment where all students have maximum opportunities for success. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Specialized Services at 201-612-5269 or via email at [ossinfo@bergen.edu](mailto:ossinfo@bergen.edu) for assistance.

**Student and Faculty Support Services**

The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center	Room L-125 of Pitkin Building	Includes the Tutoring Center, English Language Resource Center, and Writing Center. 201-447-7489
The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses		201-612-5581 <a href="mailto:psimms@bergen.edu">psimms@bergen.edu</a>
The Tutorial Center	Room S-118	201-447-7908

	of Pitkin Building	
The English Language Resource Center	Room 126 in Ender Hall	For students whose native language is not English.
The Writing Center	Room L-125 of Pitkin Building	201-447-7136
The Online Writing Lab (OWL)		<a href="http://www.bergen.edu/owl">www.bergen.edu/owl</a> This website will help students with all aspects of the writing process in every discipline.
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	L-115 of Pitkin Building	Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can request support services from the Office of Specialized Services. <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages/5175">www.bergen.edu/pages/5175</a>
The Sidney Silverman Library	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level of Pitkin Building	

## Course Schedule

### Week 1

**Introduction:** Course expectations, why study the era of the Civil War?

#### **Northern Market Economy & Society**

Textbook ch. 1\*[see note below]

### Week 2

#### **Southern World View: Proslavery Ideology**

Textbook ch. 2

#### **Antebellum South: Slavery & America's Peculiar Region**

Textbook ch. 3

### Week 3

#### **Expansion & Slavery: Mexican War & Compromise of 1850**

Textbook ch. 4

#### **Kansas-Nebraska Act & Birth of the Republican Party**

Textbook ch. 4

### Week 4

#### **Dred Scott, Bleeding Kansas & Impending Crisis of Union**

Textbook ch. 5

#### **1860-1861: Secession, Sumter Crisis, Comparative Strategies**

Textbook ch. 6, 7, 8

### Week 5

#### **Period of Confederate Ascendancy, 1861-1862**

Textbook ch. 9, 10

**Military & Political Turning Points of 1863**

Textbook ch. 12, 15

## Week 6

**Lincoln's Leadership**

Textbook chs. 13

**Union Government at War; New Jersey Politics during the Civil War**

Textbook chs. 13, 14, 15

## Week 7

**Emancipation Proclamation & The War's Middle Phase**

Textbook chs.. 16, 17

**1864-1865: Total War**

Textbook chs. 18, 19, 20

## Week 8

**Why the Union Won & the Confederacy Lost**

Textbook ch. 21, 22, 23

**Mid-Term Examination**

## Week 9

**Appomattox and Beyond: End of War & Search for Meaning**

Textbook ch. 24

**Challenge of Reconstruction: Legacies of the War in the North**

Textbook ch. 24

## Week 10

**Challenge of Reconstruction: Legacies of the War in the South**

Textbook ch. 25

**Presidential Reconstruction: Andrew Johnson & the Radicals**

Textbook ch. 26

## Week 11

**Constitutional Crisis & Impeachment of a President**

Textbook ch. 27

**Congressional Reconstruction: The First Phase**

Textbook ch. 28

## Week 13

**Congressional Reconstruction: The Second Phase 1867-1869**

Textbook ch. 29

**Reconstruction in the South**

Textbook ch. 30 & 31

Week 14

**Retreat from Reconstruction: the Grant Era & Path to Southern Redemption;** Textbook ch. 32, 33

**End of Reconstruction: Disputed Election of 1876 and the Compromise of 1877;** Textbook ch. 34

Week 16

**Legacies of the Civil War; Documentary; Discussion**

**Final-Examination**

\*Note: Gienapp's documentary collection is one of the assigned books for the class. It provides for the student over 200 primary source documents from the period 1830 to 1877 that deal with some of the key issues of the Civil War era. Each is preceded by a scholarly introduction to provide for the reader the context for each piece of historical evidence. Most of the readings are long excerpts from a variety of documents representing both the Union and Confederate perspectives. It is expected that the instructor of the course will assign 3-4 document readings per class meeting to enhance understanding of the day's topic. Books for further study and research. The Civil War and Reconstruction has produced more scholarship than any other topic in American history by a wide margin. New books on every aspect of the conflict are published constantly. Many of the books listed here would provide background reading for the topic covered in class.

Edward Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, W.W. Norton

Steven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, Cambridge University Press

David Blight, *Why the Civil War Came*. Oxford University Press

Gabor Boritt, ed. *Why the Confederacy Lost*, Oxford University Press

Charles R. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, University of Virginia Press

Drew G. Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, University of North Carolina Press

E. L. Doctorow, *The March*. Random House.

Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877*. Harper & Row

Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, Oxford University Press

David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln*, Simon & Schuster

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, ed. by David W. Blight, Bedford Books

Gary Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Save Off Defeat*, Harvard University Press

William Gillette, *Jersey Blue: Civil War Politics in New Jersey 1854-1865*, Rutgers University Press

William Gillette, *Retreat From Reconstruction*, Louisiana State University Press

Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, Belknap Press

Michael P. Johnson, ed., *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War*. Bedford Books.

Melinda Lawson, *Patriot Fires*, University Press of Kansas

Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*. Farrar Strauss Giroux.

Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War*. Hill and Wang.

Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, Vintage

Steven McCurry, *Confederacy Reckoning*, Harvard University Press

Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, Oxford University Press

James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*. Oxford University Press

Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches*, ed. by Alice Fahs. Bedford Books

David Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, Harper Perennial

Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers*, University of Chicago Press

Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery*, University of North Carolina Press

Russll Weigley, *The American Way of War*, Indiana University Press