

Syllabus
HIST 338-01 – Civil War, Reconstruction, and Reunion
Spring 2008

Dr. Justin Nystrom
Office: 2110 MHRA
Email: janystrom@gmail.com
AIM: drnystromvt

Objectives:

This course will broadly consider the causes, outcomes, and long-term legacies of the American Civil War. While we will examine the traditional political and military themes that one commonly expects with this topic, we will pay special attention to what I call the “human scale” history of nineteenth century America. As a result, our readings, research assignment, discussions, and lectures will consider not just the momentous events of the Civil War Era, but how those events affected the daily lives of that generation of Americans who witnessed them firsthand.

Workload and Day-to-Day Patterns:

This course involves a great deal of reading, and it is my expectation will be that you complete all of it. To that end, a significant portion of your grade will come from weekly reading quizzes. You should come prepared to not only discuss the readings assigned for that day, but be able to tie them to material already covered.

Out-of-Class Films

I have assigned four films in this course that I will show on selected evenings during the semester. If you cannot make the evenings on which these films screen, I expect you to either Netflix, purchase, or otherwise find a copy on your own. They should all be available at the TLC in McIver.

Quizzes: (Best 8 of 12) 40%

Each quiz will cover all reading assignments since the previous quiz. Your reading quiz grade for the semester will be based upon your eight best quiz scores. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes. We will generally (but not necessarily always) take quizzes and have lectures on Monday and have greater variety in our course content on Wednesdays. The quizzes will not resemble a trivia contest. I will ask a handful of questions that speak to the main points in the readings and films.

Exams: (Mid-Term and Final) 20% each.

There will be two exams in this course. To wit: a midterm and final. Both will be take-home and be comprised of a series of short essay questions that have been designed to test the depth of your knowledge. I expect you to work on these exams individually, and that you will submit them neatly typed.

Newspaper Research Assignment: 20%

Over the course of the semester, you will use period newspapers to document the effects of Civil War, Reconstruction, and Reunion on a North Carolina community. At the end of the semester, you will turn in a narrative based upon the research you have done. See attached page for further details.

Attendance:

You can miss this class five times over the course of the semester for any reason. “Official” reasons like sicknesses and deaths in the family count the same as sitting home to catch “Baywatch” reruns. Miss a sixth class, and I’ll compute your grade starting at a 75. This means a B (85) student would fall to a D- (60) student. Don’t say I didn’t warn you. Don’t waste these absences in January and February when the weather stinks. Plan ahead for both flu season and spring fever. Also, remember that a missed quiz, for any reason, is a missed quiz, and will count as one of your four dropped quiz grades.

Readings:

Books you need to purchase:

Stephen Berry, *House of Abraham: Lincoln, the Todds, A Family Divided by War*.
Michael Holt, *The Fate of their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War*.
Holt, Baker, and Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*.
Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia*.

Readings placed on Blackboard:

Justin Nystrom, *The Reincarnation of New Orleans: Race, Politics, and the Quest for Postbellum Stability, 1861-1898*.
Frederick Law Olmsted, "The Lower Mississippi," from *The Cotton Kingdom*
Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Modernizing Slaveholding Rhetoric," from *The Shaping of Southern Culture*
E. John Ellis, "Johnson's Island Prison Diary"
Kathleen Clark, "Celebrating Freedom: Emancipation Day Celebrations and African American Identity in the Early Reconstruction South," from *Where These Memories Grow*

Films:

The Red Badge of Courage
Glory
Cold Harbor
The Birth of a Nation

Schedule of Assignments:

Note: You should have completed each reading by the date listed here.

Week 1: Antebellum America, Part 1

M / 1/14: Course introduction.

W / 1/16: *The C.W. & R*, Chapter 1

Week 2: Antebellum America, Part 2

M / 1/21: *The C.W. & R.*, Chapters 2 & 3

W / 1/23: Frederick Law Olmsted, "The Lower Mississippi," and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Modernizing of Slaveholding Rhetoric." (both on Blackboard)

Week 3: Mexico and The Turbulent 1850s

M / 1/28: *The C.W. & R*, Chapter 4 and *The Fate of their Country*, Chapters 1-2.

W / 1/30: *The C.W. & R.*, Chapter 5 and *The Fate of their Country*, Chapters 3-4

Week 4: The Secession Crisis

M / 2/4: *House of Abraham*, Chapters 1 & 2

W / 2/6: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 6, 7, & 8.

Week 5: Amateurs at War

M / 2/11: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 9, 10, & 11

Tuesday night, 2/12, Film: *The Red Badge of Courage*

W / 2/13: *House of Abraham*, Chapters 3 & 4

Week 6: In for the Long Haul

M / 2/18: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 12 & 13

W / 2/20: *The C. W. & R*, Chapters 14 & 15

Week 7: The Western Theater and New Questions about Race

M / 2/25: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 16 & 17

Tuesday night, 2/26, Film: *Glory*

W / 2/27: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapters 1 & 2; Ellis, "Johnson's Island Prison Diary." (both on Blackboard)

Week 8: Death Struggle in the East

M / 3/3: *The C.W. & R*, Chapter 18

W / 3/5: *House of Abraham*, Chapters 5 & 6

Mid-term exams due F 3/7.

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: The Wheels Come Off the Wagon

M / 3/17: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 22 & 23 (skipping 19 & 20)

Tuesday night, 3/18, Film: *Cold Mountain*

W / 3/19: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 24 & 25

Week 11: New Postbellum Realities

M / 3/24: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 26 & 27

W / 3/26: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapter 3.

Week 12: The Rise of Congressional Reconstruction Policy

M / 3/31: *The C.W. & R*, Chapters 28 & 29

W / 4/2: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapters 4 & 5

Week 13: Race and Reconstruction

M / 4/7: *The C.W. & R*, Chapter 30; Clark, "Celebrating Freedom." (on Blackboard)

W / 4/9: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapter 6

Week 14: Retreat from Congressional Reconstruction Policy

M / 4/14: *The C.W. & R*, Chapter 31; *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapter 7

W / 4/16: *Before Jim Crow*, Chapter 1

Week 15: The Redeemers' Pyrrhic Victory

M / 4/21: *Before Jim Crow*, Chapters 2 & 3

W / 4/23: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapter 8

Week 16: The Closing Act of the Civil War Era: Disfranchisement and Segregation

M / 4/28: *Before Jim Crow*, Chapters 4 & 5

Tuesday Night, 4/29, Film: *Birth of A Nation*

W / 4/30: *The Reincarnation of New Orleans*, Chapter 9

Final Exam Day: Final Exams and Newspaper Research Assignments Due.