

# CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, AND REUNION

**HIS 338 (SI)**  
**T-Th 11:00-12:30**  
**SOEB 219**

Dr. Mark Elliott  
**Office:** 2125 MHRA  
**Office Hours:** TH 2:00-4:00  
Or by appointment  
**E-mail:** [me Elliot@uncg.edu](mailto:me Elliot@uncg.edu)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the history of American Civil War and the process of Reconstruction and reunion that followed it. The political collapse of the Union marked a watershed in the social, intellectual and political history of the nation whose consequences continue to be felt today. The war was, among other things, a struggle to define nationhood and national identity. Some historians regard this period as a “Second Founding” that redefined American nationalism and the union between the states. We will examine the conflicting ideas about nationalism led to the war, and how the war itself generated new ideas about American national identity. The attempt to reconstruct Southern society after the war raised contentious issues about the meaning of labor, civil rights, democracy, and Federal authority over the states that are examined in detail. The issues that caused the war were not resolved during Reconstruction, and the class follows the continuation of the conflicts that divided the nation until the era of segregation. The course will devote particular attention to understanding the myths, legends, and ideological legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction and why they remain relevant today.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will establish a strong foundation of knowledge in the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Civil War and Reconstruction.
- Students will be able identify common myths and false beliefs about the Civil War, and recognize the ideological purposes such myths and beliefs serve.
- Students will be able to historically contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view.
- Students will be able to use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument.
- Students will improve their ability to express themselves in front of others, and to lead discussions.
- Students will be able to make formal presentations in front of the class.

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

### **Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. Each class, an attendance sheet will be circulated and you must arrive at class in time to sign your name before the sheet is collected by the professor. You are allowed three “sick days” over the course of the semester which should cover all illnesses and personal emergencies. Each absence after your third missed class will cause a 20-point deduction to your final grade. Two late arrivals to class will be counted as one absence. If you must leave class early contact the professor **in advance** by e-mail in order to be excused.

### **Participation:**

You are expected to complete each week’s reading before Thursday’s class so that you can participate constructively in a class discussion. Please make your contributions informed, intelligent, and constructive. Your participation grade will be based on the overall quality of your contributions to the class—not the quantity of contributions you make. It is important for all students to respect each other’s opinions, and maintain civility and collegiality when exchanging viewpoints. No personal attacks, insults or other rude behaviors will be tolerated.

You must take notes and be attentive during class lectures. Sleeping in class will cause you to be marked “absent.” Cell phones should be muted or turned off and stored away. No talking, texting, tweeting, e-mailing or internet surfing during class. No laptop computers may be used for note-taking without the instructors permission.

### **Roundtable Presentations:**

For each roundtable presentation, four students will be assigned to give an informal presentation. During presentation times, the class will be broken up into groups for roundtable discussions. The presentations will be based on assigned readings, and will be designed to facilitate a substantive discussion of the readings. Each presenter will prepare a handout that identifies the main issues addressed in the readings in a one-page outline that includes questions for class discussion. The roundtables will last for 20 minutes, which includes an 8-10 minute presentation followed by a 10-12 minute discussion. Participants in each roundtable will be required to complete an assessment rubric of the presentation.

### **Film Presentation:**

For this presentation, there will be a team of three presenters assigned by the professor. The team will be assigned an historical film to watch. Each team member will give a 5-7 minute presentation to the class on three topics related to their film: 1) The direct **Historical Context** of the film, 2) The film’s **Reception by Historians** along with the broader public reception of the film and 3) the group’s **Historical Analysis** of the film.

For the first two categories, research must be conducted using library databases and other outside sources. For the **Historical Analysis**, the group must meet and discuss the film's strengths and weaknesses as a presentation of history. The **Historical Analysis** presenter must draw upon the ideas of the group in a short discussion of how the team judged the success of the film.

Each presenter must turn in a one-page synopsis of their presentation with a bibliography of sources consulted.

### **Quizzes and Short Papers:**

There will be weekly in-class quizzes or short papers submitted through Canvas on the readings to encourage you to keep up with the reading. Short paper questions will be posted on Tuesdays.

### **Resources for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with recognized disabilities should register with the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS). OARS is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215 and maintains a webpage at <http://ods.uncg.edu/>. The mission of OARS is to provide, coordinate, and advocate for services which enable undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities to receive equal access to a college education and to all aspects of university life.

### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. You will receive no assistance from others on quizzes or exams. All papers will be turned in through Canvas so that the "Turnitin" function will scan your paper for plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense of academic dishonesty. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details:

<https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

<http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/>

### **Grading Breakdown:**

- 82 Points: Roundtable Presentation
- 82 Points: Team Presentation
- 36 Points: Class Participation/Presentation Feedback
- 100 points: Midterm
- 100 Points: Quizzes/Short Papers on Readings
- 100 Points: Final Exam
  
- 20 Points Absence Penalty

+20 Extra Credit opportunities

**Final Grade Scale:** A+ 485-500; A 465-484; A- 450-464; B+ 435-449; B 415-434; B- 400-414; C+ 385-399; C 365-384; C- 350-364; D+ 335-349; D 315-334; D- 300-314; F 299 or less.

**REQUIRED READING (available at UNCG Bookstore):**

Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie*

**FILMS (available as streaming media via Canvas):**

Birth of a Nation (2016): Dr. Elliott  
Lincoln (2012)  
Gods and Generals (2012)  
Free State of Jones (2016)  
Glory (1989)  
Gettysburg (1993)  
Red Badge of Courage (1951)  
Gangs of New York (2002)  
Gone with the Wind (1939)  
Cold Mountain (2003)  
Andersonville (1996)  
Birth of a Nation (1915)

**Week 1. INTRODUCTION: CONTEMPORARY CONTROVERSIES**

Reading: Collins, “Confederate Identity and Myth Since the Civil War,”  
McPherson, “The Civil War and the Transformation of America,”  
Blight, “America’s Deadly Divide and Why it Has Returned,”

**Jan. 9** The Civil War Today

**Jan. 11.** Discussion: the meaning of the Civil War

**Week 2. ABOLITIONISM AND BLACK RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY**

Reading: Walker, Excerpts from *An Appeal to the Colored People*  
Introduction from Weld, *American Slavery As It Is*  
Douglass, “What to the Slave is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?”

Film: Birth of a Nation (2016)

**Jan. 16** Abolitionism and Resistance

**Jan. 18** Discussion: Why Was Slavery Wrong?

**Week 3. THE TUMULTUOUS 1850s**

Reading: From James Oakes, *The Scorpion's Sting*, 51-103.  
Documents: Dred Scott Decision, Douglas-Stephens Debates.

Film: *Lincoln* (2012)

**Jan. 23** The Collapse of the Union in the 1850s

**Jan. 24** **Roundtable Discussion:** What did the Republican Party represent?

**Week 4. THE CRISIS OF SECESSION**

Reading: *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 1-59.  
Documents: Stephen's "Cornerstone Speech." Secession Documents, The Confederate Flag.

Film: *Gods and Generals* (2012)

**Jan. 30** Proslavery Politics and the Rise of Secessionism

**Feb. 1** **Roundtable Discussion:** Why Did the Confederate States Secede?

**Week 5. THE EARLY WAR**

Reading: *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 60-140.  
Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice." Attie, "Tapping Female Patriotism." Excerpt from *Hospital Sketches*.

Film: *Cold Mountain*

**Feb. 6** The Expanding Scope of the War

**Feb. 8** **Roundtable Discussion:** How did women respond to the war?

**Week 6. MILITARY AND POLITICAL BATTLES**

Reading: *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 141-217.  
Manning, "Wartime Nationalism and Race."  
Glatthaar, "A Dynamic for Success or Failure."

Film: *Gettysburg* or *Red Badge of Courage* (1951)

**Feb. 13** Emancipation and the Confederacy

**Feb. 15** **Roundtable Discussion:** Confederate Strengths and Weaknesses

**Week 7. THE FALTERING CONFEDERACY**

Reading: *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 218-268.  
Victoria Bynum, “Guerrilla Forces” and “Occupied at Home.”

Film: *Free State of Jones* (2016)

**Feb 20** The Southern Homefront

**Feb. 22** **Roundtable Discussion:** What is the Significance of Southern Dissent?

**Week 8. THE IMPACT OF EMANCIPATION**

Film: *Gangs of New York* (2002)

**Feb 27** The Northern Homefront

**Mar. 1** **Midterm Exam**

**Week 9. Spring BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**Week 10. UNION VICTORY**

Reading: *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 269-299.  
Documents: Neely, “Was the Civil War a Total War?”  
From *Sherman’s March in Myth and Memory*

Film: *Andersonville*

**Mar. 13** Sherman’s March to the Sea; the Confederate Collapse

**Mar. 15** **Roundtable Discussion:** Was the Civil War a Total War?”

**Week 11. WARTIME RECONSTRUCTION AND BLACK CITIZENSHIP**

Reading: Williams, “Symbols of Freedom and Defeat.” David Frisby, “Remember Fort Pillow!” Castel, “Fort Pillow: An Examination of the Evidence.”

Film: *Glory*

**Mar. 20** The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the postwar South

**Mar. 22** **Roundtable Discussion:** How did black Union soldiers transform the meaning of the war?

**Week 12. RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION**

Reading: From Foner, *Forever Free*. Documents from Prince, ed. *Radical Reconstruction*

**Mar. 27** Andrew Johnson and the Problem of Reconstruction  
**Mar. 29** The Radicals Take Charge

**Week 13. SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION**

Reading: Documents on the Impeachment of W.W. Holden: Brisson, “Kirk-  
Holden War,” Holden’s *Memoirs*, Tourgée letter, 2011  
Controversy.

Film: *Gone with the Wind*

**April 3** Northernizing the South; Reconstructing the North  
**April 5** **Roundtable Discussion: Should Governor Holden have been  
impeached?**

**Week 14. THE COLLAPSE OF RECONSTRUCTION**

Reading: Ida B. Wells, “A Red Record, Emberton, “Axes of Empire,”  
Elliott, “Lessons of Reconstruction.”

**April 10** The Collapse of Reconstruction  
**April 12** **Roundtable Discussion:** What were the legacies of  
Reconstruction?

**Week 15. SEGREGATION AND RECONCILIATION**

Reading: Silber, “Emancipation without Slavery.” Wood, from *Lynching  
and Spectacle*

Film: *Birth of A Nation* (1915)

**April 17** Reconstruction and the “New South”  
**April 19** **Roundtable Discussion:** What did the success of *Birth a Nation*  
mean?

**Week 16. MYTHS AND MONUMENTS**

Reading: Monument dedication speeches. Jefferson Davis statement.

**April 24** The Battle for Memory  
**April 26** No Class (Reading Day)

**Week 17. FINAL EXAM**

**May 3** **Final Exam, 12-3 pm.**