

HIUS 132
The Civil War and Reconstruction in Popular Culture
Spring 2007

Welcome to HIUS 132. In this class we will explore themes involving not only the American Civil War and Reconstruction but also the relationship between popular culture and history. Both students and scholars often ask, "What is history?" We will keep this question in mind as we examine and discuss how different groups from 1861 right up to today have interpreted the history of the Civil War and presented it in various forms of popular culture. In our investigation, we will discover a wide variety of "histories," each with very important social and political implications. I expect that you will connect with this course because it is based on the premise that an intimate relationship links history and popular culture.

Contact Information:

David Miller
HSS 4072
x46317
d1miller@ucsd.edu

Office Hours:

Mon, 10:00-12:00
Wed, by appointment

Class Hours:

M/W/F, 9:00-9:50
Peterson 102
Final: June 12, 8:00 AM

I. Course Guidelines

A. Class

1. Class will consist of lectures, discussions, group activities, and occasional multi-media presentations. I expect that you will be engaged participants, not passive recipients. I encourage discussion and questions.
2. Come prepared to participate and engage in discussions. All reading assignments should be completed as they appear on the schedule.
3. All assignments must be completed on time. If you foresee a problem, *discuss it with me early* to avoid penalties. I will deduct 1/3 a letter grade for every day an assignment is late. So, for example, if you turn a paper in one day late and would have received an "A," your grade would drop to "A-." After two days, it becomes a "B+." In addition; you must complete all assignments in order to pass this course.

B. Grading

1. 10% Participation

Participation includes both attendance and meaningful involvement in discussions. Debate, questions, and occasional disagreement will be a regular occurrence in class. Please come prepared to listen, to think, and to discuss.

2. 25% Paper One

You will receive the prompt for Paper One on Wednesday April 18th. It is DUE Wednesday April 25th and will consist of four to five pages.

3. 25% Paper Two

You will receive the prompt for Paper Two on Wednesday May 16th. It is DUE Wednesday May 23rd and will consist of four to five pages.

4. 40% Final

The final will consist of take home essays covering material from lecture, readings, and films. The final is due Friday June 8th.

C. Course Reading

1. Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War*
2. Eric Foner, *Forever Free*
3. Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*
4. Robert Bonner, *Colors and Blood*
5. Course Reader

II. Course Themes and Objectives

This course examines how popular culture has shaped histories of the Civil War and Reconstruction from 1861 to the present day. Together, we will analyze the relationship between popular culture and the “History” of the Civil War through the use of literature, texts, political cartoons, film, television, computer games, and print images.

We will focus on four major themes. First, the Civil War and Reconstruction represented a formative moment in US history. It defined the nation’s industrial/economic future, ultimately ending slavery. The War was an opportunity for many Americans to challenge and redefine their “normal” race and gender roles and thus redefined the meaning of citizenship, equality, liberty, and freedom. Finally, the War also produced an expanded federal government, affecting citizens’ lives in new and profound ways.

Second, the course will challenge you to examine and to think about the history of the Civil War not as a single narrative of fact, but as a *multiplicity* of experiences. These histories (or “narratives”) of the Civil War have each become a unique “memory” for various groups. Race, class, gender, age, geography, and time have all influenced interpretations of the War. In other words, different people interpret, display, and remember the War in different ways.

Third, we will analyze how “History” is made and re-made over time. We will consider historical subjectivity, interpretation, myth, and most importantly, the social and political implications of History. What role does “History” play in your life? What role did it play for someone in 1965? 1900? 1865?

Finally, we will consider what role culture played and continues to play in shaping “History.” Culture influences what “History” is recorded and how everyday people think about, understand, and remember it. At the same time, we can approach popular culture as an historical tool. It offers a window into the meaning of historical events for diverse groups.

III. Lecture and Reading Schedule

- Week 1: **April 2 to April 6:** Course Introduction and the Road to War, Pt. 1
*Reading: Foner Chapter 1 and visual essay, * Reader TBA***
- Week 2: **April 9 to April 13:** The Road to War, Pt 2 and Civil War
Reading: Bonner Introduction and Chapters 1-2
- Week 3: **April 16 to April 20:** The Revolutionary Civil War
Reading: Foner Chapter 2, Bonner Chapters 3-5
- Week 4: **April 23 to April 27:** War and Culture in the North, 1861-1865
Reading: Fahs, First half
- Week 5: **April 30 to May 4:** War and Culture in the South, 1861-1865
Reading: Fahs, Second half
- Week 6: **May 7 to May 11:** Reconstruction, 1865-1877
Reading: Foner Chapters 3-7
- Week 7: **May 14 to May 18:** Progressives and the Reunion Memory, 1877-1914
Reading: Bonner Chapters 6-7
- Week 8: **May 21 to May 25:** Hollywood and the World Wars, 1915-1945
Reading: TBA
- Week 9: **May 28 to June 1:** The Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement
Reading: Foner Epilogue, Horwitz TBA
- Week 10: **June 4 to June 8:** Ken Burns, the New Popular History, and the War Today
Reading: Horwitz TBA

* Read the accompanying “Visual Essay” after each assigned chapter.

** I will announce all further assignments from the Course Reader at the beginning of each week.