

Reconstruction and Reunion

Bowdoin College, Spring 2015

Instructors:

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Meets:

Tues./Thrs. 1:00pm – 2:25pm
 Pickering Room, 213 Hubbard Hall

If the Civil War served as America's Iliad, Reconstruction was its Odyssey. A host of challenges confronted the nation following its bloodiest war. On what terms would the union be reconstructed? What would be the fate of former Confederates, and four million freed slaves? How would peace resolve critical questions of citizenship and state power? From 1865 to 1877, such questions dominated national politics, and worked their way into the arts and letters of American life. Even when the questions of Reconstruction gave way to Redemption, Americans continued to contest the narrative of Reconstruction, constructing a public memory of the period that reflected their own concerns with racial and gender order.

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the post-Civil War period from the perspectives of art history, literary history, and history. It concerns the political, economic, and social questions arising from American Reconstruction (1865-1877) and Reunion (1878-1900) following the American Civil War. Readings will delve into a wide array of primary and secondary sources, including photographs, novels, poetry, and government documents as we seek to understand fierce debates that continue to refract conceptions of America today.

Level: This course is taught at the 2000 level. It is intended for students of all levels, though it presumes a basic familiarity with American history and literature. As an interdisciplinary course, it does not require students to have expertise in any particular discipline. Students may earn credit toward a major or minor in Art History, English, or History. The instructors expect students to spend an average of 6-8 hours outside of class each week preparing for this course and reviewing materials.

Course website: In addition to the assigned books, course materials may be found online through the Blackboard system. You will find a copy of this syllabus, as well as all the reading and paper assignments. You may easily refer to the website for the most recent course assignments and requirements.

Books and readings: Please purchase these required books at the campus bookstore or online. When possible, extra copies will be placed on reserve. Note that many readings will be made available via the Blackboard course website.

- Alexander Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* (Dover)
- Albion W. Tourgee, *A Fool's Errand: A Novel of the South During Reconstruction*, with an Introduction by John Hope Franklin (Harvard UP)
- Sutton E. Griggs *Imperium in Imperio* (Modern Library)
- Anna E. Dickinson, *What Answer?* (Classics in Black Studies, Humanity Books)

Assignments

Attendance and participation (10%): Your thoughtful participation in both lecture and discussion is a significant part of your course work. Please make sure that you have read the assigned readings before each class and are prepared to discuss them.

Paper assignments (4 @ 15% = 60%): Each paper assignment will challenge students to develop a set of academic skills.

- Close reading of a visual source
- Archive exercise
- Close reading of a text
- Developing a historical problem

Group presentation (10%): You will work in three-person groups to present an academic problem arising from the course material. The assignment will challenge your group to explore a problem using skills and techniques we have learned, and which incorporates source data in multiple formats (e.g., literature, primary historical texts, visual sources, etc.).

Final paper(20%): Each student will individually submit a final paper, due at the end of the regularly scheduled final for the course. At approximately 7-9 pages in length, this paper will refine ideas developed in your group presentation.

Academic honesty: Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit, generally in the form of quotations with proper citation, when using the work of another scholar. You are expected to be familiar with Bowdoin's honor code and the guidelines for proper citation and attribution of sources provided for this course (click here for the library's [webpage of style and citation guides](#)). If you have any questions, ask rather than take risks. Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code, which will be enforced by bringing action before the Judicial Board.

Schedule of class meetings: This syllabus is likely to change to suit class needs. You should always check the online version of the syllabus for most up-to-date information on assignments.

1/20	Introductions
1/22	<u>Emancipation and “peace”</u> READINGS: James M. McPherson, "Who Freed the Slaves?" <i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i> 139, no. 1 (March 1995), 1-10. (Blackboard) Ira Berlin, "Who Freed the Slaves? Emancipation and Its Meaning," in <i>Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction</i> , Michael Perman, ed., 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 288-97. (Blackboard)
1/27	<u>Melville and Dunbar</u> READINGS: Selections from <i>Battle-Pieces and Aspects of War</i> by Herman Melville and Selections from <i>Lyrics of Lowly Life</i> by Paul Laurence Dunbar. (Blackboard)
1/29	<u>Alexander Gardner / Visual analysis</u> READINGS: <i>Read</i> in Gardner’s Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War, Dover Reprint Edition: preface, nos. 1, 2, 23, 27, 34-44, 88-94, and 100; <i>skim</i> the remainder of the text.
2/3	<u>Alexander Gardner / Visual analysis</u> READINGS: <i>Read</i> in Gardner’s Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War, Dover Reprint Edition: preface, nos. 1, 2, 23, 27, 34-44, 88-94, and 100; <i>skim</i> the remainder of the text.
2/5	<u>The Freedmen’s Bureau / Documents on emancipation</u> READINGS: Assigned documents on emancipation and African American families. (Blackboard)
2/10	<u>The Freedmen’s Bureau / Documents on emancipation</u> READINGS: Assigned documents on emancipation and African American families. (Blackboard)
2/12	<u>Presidential reconstruction</u> READINGS: Kevin R. Hardwick, "'Your Old Father Abe Lincoln Is Dead and Damned': Black Soldiers and the Memphis Race Riot of 1866," <i>Journal of Social History</i> 27, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 109-28. (Jstor) Donald E. Reynolds, "The New Orleans Riot of 1866, Reconsidered," <i>Louisiana History</i> 5, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 5-27. (Jstor)
2/17	<u>The Reconstruction amendments</u> READINGS: Text of 13th , 14th , and 15th amendments
2/19	<u>A Fool’s Errand</u> READINGS: Albion Tourgée, <i>A Fool’s Errand</i> (1879)
2/24	<u>A Fool’s Errand</u> READINGS: Albion Tourgée, <i>A Fool’s Errand</i> (1879)
2/26	<u>A Fool’s Errand</u> READINGS: Albion Tourgée, <i>A Fool’s Errand</i> (1879)
3/3	<u>The struggle to vote</u> READINGS: Robert J. Kaczorowski, "To Begin the Nation Anew: Congress, Citizenship, and Civil Rights after the Civil War," <i>American Historical Review</i> 92, no. 1 (February 1987), 45-68. (Jstor) Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," <i>Public Culture</i> 7 (Fall 1994): 107-46. (Online)

3/5	<u>Anna Dickinson</u> READINGS: Anna E. Dickinson, <i>What Answer?</i> (1868)
3/24	<u>Anna Dickinson</u> READINGS: Anna E. Dickinson, <i>What Answer?</i> (1868)
3/26	<u>Winslow Homer and Eastman Johnson</u> READINGS: “Winslow Homer’s Civil War” in "The Human Face of the War" in Eleanor Jones Harvey, <i>Civil War and American Art</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012): 148-56. (Blackboard)
3/31	<u>The West I</u> READINGS: Nancy Anderson, "The Kiss of Enterprise: The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource" in <i>The West As America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier</i> (Abrams, 1991): 237-83. (Blackboard)
4/2	<u>The West II</u> : guest speaker Connie Chiang, Department of History READINGS: To be determined.
4/7	<u>Sharecropping</u> READINGS: Jacqueline Jones, "The Political Economy of the Black Family and Community Life in the Postwar Period," from <i>Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present</i> (New York: Vintage, 1985), 58-68. (Blackboard)
4/9	<u>The failure of Reconstruction</u> READINGS: Warren A. Ellem, "The Overthrow of Reconstruction in Mississippi." <i>Journal of Mississippi History</i> 54, no. 2 (1992): 175-201. (Blackboard) James M. McPherson, "War and Peace in the Post-Civil War South," in <i>The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War</i> , eds. Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 160-75.
4/14	<u>The first histories of Reconstruction</u> READINGS: Readings from James Shepherd Pike, <i>The Prostrate State</i> (1875) and Thomas Dixon, <i>The Clansman</i> (1906). (Blackboard)
4/16	Guest speaker: Anne Sarah Rubin, author of Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman’s March and American Memory (UMBC) READINGS: To be determined.
4/21	<u>“The Birth of a Nation”</u> READINGS: Richard Dyer, “Into the Light: The Whiteness of the South in The Birth of a Nation,” in Richard H. King and Helen Taylor, eds., <i>Dixie Debates: Perspectives on Southern Cultures</i> (New York: New York University Press, 1996): 165-76. (Blackboard)
4/23	<u>Sutton Griggs</u> READINGS: Sutton E. Griggs, <i>Imperium in Imperio</i> (1899)
4/28	<u>Sutton Griggs</u> READINGS: Sutton E. Griggs, <i>Imperium in Imperio</i> (1899)
4/30	Class presentations
5/5	Concluding session
	Final paper due