

TREASON AND REBELLION OR THE

CIVIL WAR ERA STUDIES CWES 400: American Culture in the Civil War Era

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INTRODUCTION:

CWES 400 is an upper-level reading seminar which surveys various aspects of the American Civil War era on a revolving basis. This year's CWES 400 focuses on American culture, with the term culture used very broadly to embrace studies of American "artifacts and modes of expression that serve as tangible evidence of understandings and sensibilities of individuals and groups active in public discourse" (*Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History*, 2001). This includes, among many other things, the host of images, ideologies, concepts, visions of behavior, institutions – and the means for promoting and disseminating of all of these – which abounded in American life between 1848 and 1877. It does not exclude politics, but it concentrates on the internal aspects of political life – how politics mirrored the aspirations of those who participated in political life. It includes the arts – but it also pays attention to the emergence of markets for the arts and the restraints which those markets and 19th-century technology placed on them. It does not include literature – for the perfectly sane reason that the CWES curriculum has, for reasons of simple manageability, hived-off 19th-century American literature to two other CWES courses. Similarly, it includes only one session on American philosophy – largely because another History department course offering dwells upon 19th-century American philosophy in much greater detail.

Cultural history is a comparatively recent arrival among historical disciplines, although it has long antecedents in American intellectual history and American studies. In many respects, it is still not entirely divorced from the study of American intellectual history. Although the structure of the seminar is roughly chronological, each topic really stands on its own. The purpose is to guide you through these major topics and through the most important books to have been written about them, and, by the end of the seminar, have you at a place we can call with reasonable confidence, "the cutting edge" of Civil War cultural history scholarship.

MANY CITIZENS.

DOYLESTOWN, August 28, 1861.

TEXTS

1. Anne C. Rose, *Voices of the Marketplace: American Thought and Culture, 1830-1860*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995 ISBN 0-805790756
2. Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990 ISBN 0-520074858
3. Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. ISBN 0-226354792
4. Robert Abzug. *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994 ISBN 0-195045688
5. Robert V. Bruce. *Lincoln and the Tools of War*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. ISBN 0-252060903
6. Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans*. New York: Vintage. ISBN 0-679738789
7. William A. Frassanito. *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day*. Gettysburg: Thomas Publications ISBN 1-577470052
8. Bruce A. McConachie. *Melodramatic Formations: American Theater and Society, 1820-1870*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992 ISBN 0-877453608
9. Louis Menand. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2002 ISBN 0-374528497

CLASS RESPONSIBILITIES:

The seminar will involve three major responsibilities. FIRST, you will prepare, as your *meisterstück* in Civil War culture studies, a 15-20 page research paper on a selected Civil War era topic. This assignment will function in the place, and have a standing equivalent to, a final examination. Accordingly, it should demonstrate your acquisition of the methodological skills illustrated by the texts. I prefer to allow a great deal of discretion in selecting topics, but you should keep three things in mind:

- do not make it too broad ("Why the South Lost the Civil War" will not work in 15-20 pages)
- do not make it subjective; this is not about your personal responses, feelings, &c., &c.

I am not adamant about a particular style (Turabian, *Chicago Manual*) but I will insist that the essay include the following:

- a title page, listing in centered sequential lines (1) your title, (2) your name, (3) CWES 400 American Culture in the Civil War Era, (4) Gettysburg College
- text in twelve-point type, with footnotes at the bottom of the page
- not less than 1.5 spacing, or more than 2.0 (double) spacing

SECOND, the reading assignments are crucial to acquiring an overall command of the literature about American Civil War era culture. To that end, I will ask you to prepare a working outline of approximately three-to-five pages of the book assigned for that session. This outline will be turned in to me at the end of the class session,

but it will form the basis for class discussion during the session.

This brings me to THIRD responsibility, which is class participation, based upon the reading. Not everyone is a born classroom orator, but being able to speak to a particular question in an informed and balanced fashion is part of what makes for any liberally-educated person; so it will be here. I encourage people to volunteer questions, comments, evaluations, &c., but I have no reluctance in calling upon individuals. Everyone has the right to speak, disagree, object, and debate, because there will be few cases in which any single book you're reading has answered all the questions, or answered them satisfactorily. And what you bring from your own wealth of Civil War reading should certainly be applied to the books you are reading here. Since we meet only once a week, in a single mammoth seminar session, attendance is a matter of the highest priority. Each un-excused absence drops your final grade by one letter.

GRADING:	
Weekly book outlines.....	25%
Class participation.....	25%
Research paper.....	50%

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK	TOPIC	READING
1- January 19	Intro to CW Culture	
2- January 26	Intro to CW Culture, cont'd	Rose, <i>Voices of the Marketplace</i>, chapters 2,3, and 6
3-February 2	Words, Words, Words	Cmiel, <i>Democratic Eloquence</i>
4-February 9	Politics & Culture	Howe, <i>Political Culture of the American Whigs</i>
5-February 16	Paper Topic Presentations	SEE NOTE BELOW
6-February 23	The Rage of Abolition	Abzug, <i>Cosmos Crumbling</i>
7- March 2	The Fire of Invention	Bruce, <i>Lincoln and the Tools of War</i>
8-March 9	Drums and Bugles	SEE NOTE BELOW
9-March 16	War to the Knife	Royster, <i>The Destructive War</i>
March 18-28 Spring Break		
10-March 30	The Contest of Ideas	Rose, <i>Voices of the Marketplace</i>, chapters 1, 4 and 5

11-April 6	Capturing Images	Frassanito, <i>Antietam</i>
12-April 13	A World on Stage	McConachie, <i>Melodramatic Formations</i>
13-April 20	FREE DAY – This week, I will be speaking at a symposium opening the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, and in Richmond for the annual Lincoln Prize ceremonies	
14-April 27	The Afterwash of War	Menand, <i>The Metaphysical Club</i>

NOTE for February 16: Please come prepared to make a 15-20 minute presentation of your paper topic and the work you have done thus far in developing it. Bring hand-outs for the other members of the seminar with a thesis statement, rough outline, and a bibliography of source materials, including both the ones you have consulted to date and those which you are planning to consult. Members of the seminar will be evaluated both on their presentation and by what they contribute to the presentations of others by way of comment, suggestion, and recommendations for new sources.

NOTE for March 9: I will ask each of you to bring a ‘favorite’ CD of Civil War era music to class, from which you will play selections and explain the music and its performance. I am defining “Civil War era music” very strictly. I do *not* mean the vile assortment of crooners and guitar strummers who cheerfully crank out CDs of themselves and their jug-band friends, performing folk-idiot versions of tunes they associate with the Civil War. (These are the musical equivalent of what Civil War re-enactors call *farb*). Similarly, I do not mean film scores from Civil War related movies (*Glory, Gone With the Wind, Gettysburg, Gods & Generals*) or television productions. I *do* mean the following:

- (a) performances on period instruments or reproductions of period instruments and/or
- (b) vocalizations from period sheet music or arrangements.

Some samples of what I am looking for include:

- A Storm In the Land: Music of the 26th N.C. Regimental Band/* American Brass Quintet Brass Band - New World Records 80608-2
- Grafulla’s Favorites/*Dodworth Saxhorn Band - New World Records 80556-2
- Grand Concert! Vocal and Instrumental Music Heard in 19th Century America/* D.C. Hall’s New Concert & Quadrille Band - Dorian DIS-80108
- Homespun America /*Donald Hunsberger, The Eastman Wind Ensemble - Vox CDX 5088
- Honor To Our Soldiers/*Classical Brass - MusicMasters 01612-67075-2
- Music of the Civil War /*Frederick Fennell, The Eastman Wind Ensemble - Mercury 432 591-2
- Pride of the Regiment/*Federal City Brass Band - JVMusic

- ❑ *Songs of Stephen Foster/* Jan de Gaetani (mez-sop), Leslie Guinn (bar), Gilbert Kalish (fp) - Nonesuch 79158-2
- ❑ *Stephen Foster for Brass/* Chestnut Brass Company - NAXOS 8.559124
- ❑ *The Original 1854 Brass Band Journal/* Providence Brigade Band - Rhode Island Brassworks
- ❑ *Tippecanoe and Tyler Too: A Collection of American Political Marches, Songs, and Dirges/* Chestnut Brass Company - Newport Classics NPD 85548
- ❑ *Union and Liberty! Music Heard on the Northern Homefront During the American Civil War/* D.C. Hall's New Concert & Quadrille Band - Dorian DOR-90197
- ❑ *Who Shall Rule This American Nation? Songs of the Civil War by Henry Clay Work /*Joan Morris (sop), Clifford Jackson (bar), Camerata Chorus of Washington - Nonesuch

To ease the logistics of playing these CDs, please club together amongst yourselves and have one seminar member with a portable player (with speakers) bring their unit to class. If you have the slightest question about the acceptability of a certain CD, please do not hesitate to ask me beforehand.

HONOR CODE:

The Gettysburg College Honor Code specifies that the student “has neither given nor received unauthorized aid and that he or she has witnessed no such violation.” This is understood to include incidents of plagiarism in written work; consequently, it is assumed that all written work turned in for this course is the product of your own labor, that materials it cites from other sources are competently identified as such.

