Spring 2020

HIST 633 001 Reconstruction

Instructor: C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa
Office: B338 Robinson Hall
Email: joseph.genetin@mail.ic.edu
Office Hours: 12:00-1:00 T&R, and by appointment

Description

Reconstruction Era scholars have recently moved away from Eric Foner's notion that postwar US policy in the South was an unfinished revolution. Newer interpretations are more pessimistic, and illustrate less faith in the idea that change can happen quickly or that entrenched power can be un-entrenched effectively in a generation or less. In the introduction to the *The World the Civil War Made*, editors Kate Masur and Greg Downs lay out many of the ways that current scholarship has illustrated the complexities and contradictions inherent in the study of the Reconstruction Era. It was an era in which the federal government became increasingly powerful, but also one in which people on the ground, including former slave and rebels, western settlers, and Natives were able to resist or overthrow its actions. The rise of liberal individualism and the freedom of contract were hallmarks of the period, but recent scholarship has shown how events on the ground resulted in more regionally focused, pragmatic understandings of rights.

We will take these complexities and inconsistencies as our starting point and trace them through the late nineteenth century as we survey some of the best new works, as well as classic texts in the time period.

Goals

In this course, students will:
• Enhance their knowledge of Reconstruction and the later-nineteenth century in the United States
• Explore the foundational and current historiography
• Practice critical reading and analysis of recent scholarship.
• Consider how the key themes, questions, and shapes this subfield of United States history

Required Texts

Foner, *The Second Founding* (2019)
Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction* (2014)
White, *The Republic for Which it Stands* (2017)
Jones, *Goddess of Anarchy* (2017)
Downs, *After Appomattox* (2015)
Edwards, *A Legal History of the Civil War and Reconstruction* (2015)
Prince, *Stories of the South* (2014)
Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment* (2012)

Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go* (2018)
Richardson, *West from Appomattox* (2008)
Postel, *The Populist Vision* (2009)
Hahn, *A Nation without Borders* (2017)
Jacoby, *The Strange Career of William Ellis* (2017)
Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism* (2017)
Carter, *Union Made* (2017)
Johnson, *Escaping the Cold, Dark City* (2017)

Grading Scale:

500-470 = A	**384-365 = C**
469-450 = A-	**364-350 = C-**
449-435 = B+	**349-335 = D+**
434-415 = B	**334-315 = D**
414-400 = B-	**314-300 = D-**
399-385 = C+	**299-000 = F**

Assignments

50 points - Class Discussion Leader
60 points - Weekly Responses
60 points - Critical Essay #1
60 points - Critical Essay #2
60 points - Critical Essay #3
60 points - Critical Essay #4
150 points - Final Paper
500 points - TOTAL

**** - You must complete all graded work in the class.**

Attendance and Participation
Because this is a discussion-based course, attendance and active participation are crucial to its success. I expect you to attend class regularly and promptly. Please let me know in advance if you will not be able to attend a session. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions, posing questions to your classmates and asking for their thoughts on challenging portions of the reading. Since I expect these things of every student, I will not grade participation separately. Only if your contributions are deficient will I factor that into your final course grade.

Class Discussion Leader
Each student will lead a portion of class discussion during one class meeting this semester. The discussion leader should prepare 5-10 specific and/or open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and should be ready to provide follow-up questions as the discussion evolves. Prior to the class session, the discussion leader should meet with Dr. GP to help prepare. After the class session, the student should write a one-page reflection, summarizing his/her thoughts on the discussion. The grade for this assignment is based upon the questions, the written summary/reflection, and the discussion leader's preparedness/professionalism.

Weekly Responses
Each week, students are required to write a brief response to the weekly reading and submit them to the Discussion section of Blackboard by 2pm on Thursdays when our class meets. The responses are designed to help you prepare for the class discussions, read actively, think critically about the readings, and write critically, but respectfully about scholarly work.

- The responses should:
    1) Summarize the thesis of the book or of a particular chapter in the book.
    2) What kinds of primary sources does the author engage?

3) What are the three most important secondary sources the author engages? State briefly how s/he engages these works i.e., draws on them for support, refutes existing arguments/ paradigms, borrows a theoretical model, etc.
4) What questions does the work leave unanswered or raise for future study? (Note: this is not a place to critique the author's style or tone unless it is germane to the questions raised by the book.)

Critical Response Essays
Students will write four critical essays throughout the semester. As this class is designed upon the graduate reading seminar model, this is most appropriate form of assessment. Students will be provided with a writing prompt that might ask them to compare readings, or focus on a specific reading only. You will only need to use course materials to complete the assignment. Each essay will vary in page-length.

Final Paper Historiographical Essay
Your final paper this semester will be a historiographical essay focusing on an aspect of later nineteenth history of your choosing. Each student should meet with me at least once during the semester (but preferably twice) to discuss their topic and progress. I can also provide some examples of historiographical essays to use as model.

The essay should be 15-18 pages in length and address at least 8 books (or 7 books and 2 articles). Please use Chicago style citations, standard font and margins. At our final class meeting, each student will present a summary (5-7 minutes in length) of his/her essay.

This assignment should be fun while simultaneously giving you experience with public presentation, allow you to write critically but respectfully about the work of nineteenth century historians, and help you practice placing scholarly work into a historiographic framework.

****

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

UNIT ONE: The World the Civil War Made

Week 1 (Jan. 21): Course Introduction

Class Introduction

Readings:
- Foner, *The Second Founding*

Week 2 (Jan 28): Violence and Reconstruction

Readings:
- Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction*

Week 3 (Feb. 4): Reperiodizing the Foundations of Modern America

Readings:
- White, *The Republic for Which it Stands*

Week 4 (Feb. 11): Rewriting the Narrative of Nineteenth-Century US History

Readings:
- Hahn, *Nation without Borders*

Critical Essay #1 -- DUE

UNIT TWO: Legacies of the Civil War

Week 5 (Feb. 18): Class Cancelled - Research Day

Week 6 (Feb. 25): The Death of American Legal Order, Military Occupation and a New Nation of Rights

Readings:
- Edwards, *A Legal History of the Civil War and Reconstruction;* Downs, *After Appomattox*

Week 7 (Mar. 3): Racial Passing and the Reconstruction of American Identity

Readings:
- Jacoby, *The Strange Career of William Ellis*

SPRING BREAK March 9-15

Week 8 (Mar. 17): The Life and Times of an American Radical

Readings:
- Jones, *The Goddess of Anarchy*

Critical Essay #2 -- DUE

UNIT THREE: Urban Spaces and Labor Strife

Week 9 (Mar. 24): Frontiers of Wealth after the Civil War

Readings:
- Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism*

Week 10 (Mar 31): Working People and American Social Christianity

Readings:
- Carter, *Union Made*

Week 11 (Apr 7): Conservation in an Urbanizing Nation

Readings:
- Johnson, *Escaping the Cold, Dark City*

Critical Essay #3 -- DUE

UNIT FOUR: Greater Reconstruction and the Postwar West

Week 12 (Apr. 14): The Postwar West

Readings:
- Richardson, *West from Appomattox;* Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*
- Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 3 (Spring 2003): 6–26.

Week 13 (Apr. 21): Populism and Labor

Readings:
- Postel, *Populist Vision*

Week 14 (Apr. 28): A Nation of Immigrants?

Readings:
-Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*

Critical Essay #4 -- DUE

Disability Accommodations
If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell me.

A Note about Communication
Student privacy is governed by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (**FERPA**) and is an essential aspect of any course. Email is a necessary part of life in the digital age. I will communicate with you via email throughout the semester and will use your Masonlive I do not accept "I did not check my email" as a valid excuse. I check my email frequently and will strive always to respond to your questions and concerns as soon as possible. See **http://masonlive.gmu.edu** for more information.

A Note about Academic Integrity:
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely.

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA of
rmat. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.