

CIVIL WAR ERA STUDIES



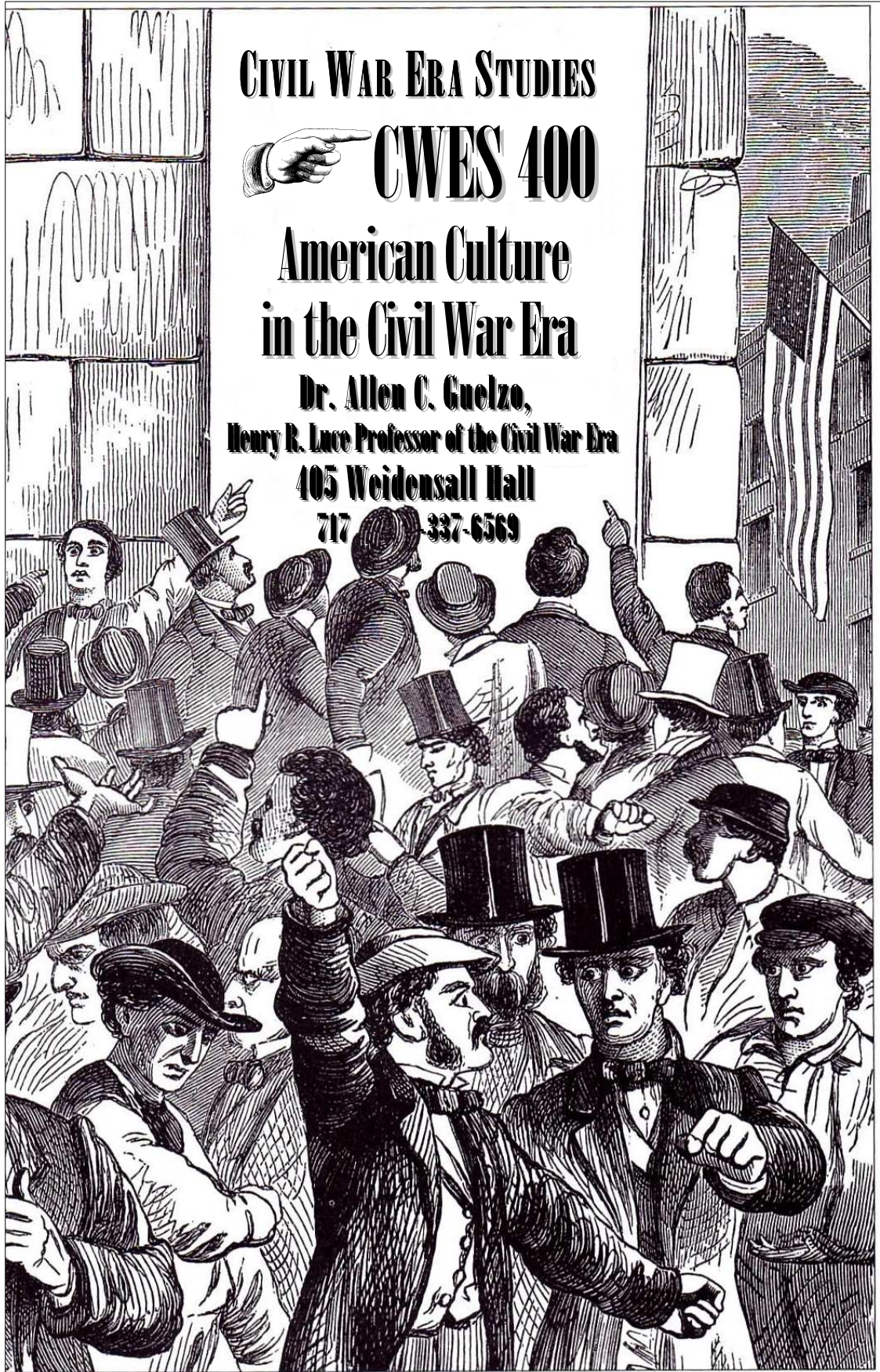
CWES 400

**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, and serves as the capstone to the Civil War Era Studies minor (or, in some cases, doubles as a history department senior seminar). 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. 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; similarly, it includes only one session on American philosophy, largely because another history department offering dwells upon 19th-century American philosophy in much greater detail.

Cultural history is a comparatively recent newcomer 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.

TEXTS

1. Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America*. University of California Press. ISBN 0-520074858
N.B. This book is 'out of print' but new and used copies are still available through Amazon.com and through other on-line second-hand book dealers (e.g. Advanced Book Exchange)
2. Robert Abzug. *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-195045688
3. Robert V. Bruce. *Lincoln and the Tools of War*. University of Illinois Press ISBN 0-252060903
4. Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans*. Vintage. ISBN 0-679738789

5. Jean Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* Fordham University Press ISBN 978-0823218653
6. Ken Emerson. *Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture*. Da Capo Press ISBN 0-306-80852-8
7. William A. Frassanito. *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day*. Thomas Publications ISBN 1-577470052 *N.B. This book is also 'out of print' but new and used copies are available through Amazon.com and through other on-line second-hand book dealers (e.g. Advanced Book Exchange). Also, since Thomas Publications is a local publisher (their office is on the Fairfield Road) it seems incredible to me that they would not have sufficient copies on hand there to satisfy your needs.*
8. Bruce A. McConachie. *Melodramatic Formations: American Theater and Society, 1820-1870*. University of Iowa Press ISBN 0-877453608
9. Louis Menand. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux ISBN 0-374528497
10. CWES 400 Art and Music CDs (*to be distributed in class*)

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:

FIRST, do not make it too broad ("Why the South Lost the Civil War" will not work in 15-20 pages) and 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:

1. 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*
2. text in twelve-point type, with footnotes at the *bottom* of the page
3. 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.

THIRD, there will be three in-class presentations. The *first*, on February 18th, will be an introduction to the topic about which you are writing your research paper. I have pitched this session early in the semester with a deliberate and

sneaky end in mind, which is to get things moving on the paper early-on, rather than waiting and scrambling at the very end. You will not need to submit anything in written form, but you may wish to use multi-media formats for the presentation (PowerPoint and so forth). This presentation will introduce your topic, how you plan to structure the paper, and what your principal sources are. The overall point is to engage your peers in the seminar and let them suggest angles, resources, and new directions that they have encountered in their own research. The *second* in-class presentation, on April 1st, will be a follow-up to the material I present in the preceding week on Civil War-era music, in which you will provide a brief introduction to one or more of the pieces on the music CD accompanying the texts. Once again, you will not need to submit anything in written form, but you may wish to use multi-media formats. These introductions, which should not last more than 10 minutes, should be broken down as follows:

Military music (tracks 1, 23-27) – Hadley

Early American sacred music (tracks 2 & 3) – Tercha, Rakoff

Serious music in the Early Republic (tracks 4-8) – Montgomery, Bilodeau

Minstrelsy (track 9) – Causey, Roland

Brass band music (tracks 10-11) – Ryckbost, Penta

American composers during the Civil War (tracks 12-14, 22, 29) – Towle, Leamy

Southern popular music of the Civil War (tracks 15 & 16) - Cannella

Northern popular music of the Civil War (tracks 17-21, 28) – Conserette, Thomas

Post-war American composers (track 30) – Mills

The *third* in-class presentation will follow on April 15th, on American art, and will be based on the other CD distributed to this class. Once again, there will be no written submission; you are simply preparing an introduction of not more than ten minutes length. In this case, you should definitely use some form of multi-media format to display items from the CD. The introductions should be grouped as follows:

Birch, Cole, Martin, LeClear, the Peale family - Ryckbost

Frederic Church - Montgomery

George Caleb Bingham - Mills

Winslow Homer - Hadley

Albert Bierstadt - Rakoff

Xanthus R. Smith and Naval Paintings (Chambers, Hays, Joffray, Overend) - Conserette

G.P.A. Healy - Bilodeau

Prang chromolithographs - Roland

Political cartoons – Causey, Penta

Images of the Confederates (Washington, Chapman, Gaul, Brooks) – Thomas, Tercha

Images of the Union Soldier - Cannella

Cycloramas - Leamy

Portraits (Sara Peale, Neagle, Hovenden, Curry, Marchant) - Towle

This brings me to one last responsibility, which is class participation, based upon the readings. 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%
In-class presentations	25%
Research paper	50%

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK	TOPIC	READING
1- January 21	<i>Introduction to the History of Civil War Era Culture</i>	
2- January 28	Words, Words, Words	Cmiel, <i>Democratic Eloquence</i>
3-February 4	The Rage of Abolition	Abzug, <i>Cosmos Crumbling</i>
4-February 11 - <i>Free Day</i>		
5-February 18	IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON PAPER TOPICS	
6-February		Bruce, <i>Lincoln and the Tools of War</i>

25	The Fire of Invention	
7- March 4	War to the Knife	Royster, <i>The Destructive War</i>
<i>Spring Recess March 6-16</i>		
8-March 18	Politics & Culture	Baker, <i>Affairs of Party</i>
9-March 25	Drums and Bugles	Emerson, <i>Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture</i>
10-April 1	IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS <i>on</i> AMERICAN MUSIC	
11-April 8	A World on Stage	McConachie, <i>Melodramatic Formations</i>
<i>Easter Recess April 9-14</i>		
12-April 15	IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS <i>on</i> AMERICAN ART	
13-April 22	Capturing Images	Frassanito, <i>Antietam</i>
14-April 29	The Afterwash of War	Menand, <i>The Metaphysical Club</i>

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS: Every year, there is a terrible scramble for topics on which to write the capstone research paper. In the past, I have left this pretty much to individual inclinations; but increasingly I have come to see this as less than helpful. So, I want to list here topics which are well-situated within cultural studies of the Civil War era, and which you may adopt as yours.

- XANTHUS R. SMITH'S CIVIL WAR – Smith's most famous paintings are in the

Collection of the Union League of Philadelphia; you should begin with the UL's archivist, Jim Mundy, who will put you on the track of exhibition catalogs, papers and other materials about Smith.

● **PROVINCIAL ARTS: GETTYSBURG AND ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN CULTURE:** Your most important sources will be the Adams County Historical Society and Wayne Motts; and from there, you will want to bridge out into the Adams County newspapers to pick up the trail of these organizations – lyceums, debating societies, musical organizations -- who belonged to them, and what they did. William Frassanito will be a major resource on the photographers of Gettysburg.

● **VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES IN ADAMS COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR ERA:** As with the above, Wayne Motts and the ACHS is the starting point, followed by the Gettysburg newspapers. Debra Sandoe McCauslin will also be a resource for anti-slavery groups and African-American societies.

● **THE DAGUERRETYPE IN AMERICA:** The rise and fall of the first popular photographic technology, from 1839 up through the Civil War. The basic text will be Beaumont Newhall's *The Daguerreotype in America* (1961) but should include subsequent surveys, exhibitions, identifying major collections, and interviewing contemporary 'historic photograph' artists (in Gettysburg, Gibson and Frassanito).

● **FRANCIS SCALA AND THE "PRESIDENT'S OWN":** The U.S. Marine Band had been designated as "the President's Own" as early as the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, but it only came into its own as a musical organization under the leadership of Francis Scala, who led the band during the Civil War. The U.S. Marine Band archives (at the band's rehearsal headquarters at 8th & I Streets in Washington) teem with material on the band's activities during the Civil War.

● **THE SCIENCES IN THE CURRICULUM OF GETTYSBURG COLLEGE:** What did they study, who did they read, who taught it, and how did it sit beside what was otherwise a standard ethics-and-classics college curriculum. A good starting point for framing this paper will be J.M. Opal's "The making of the Victorian Campus: Teacher and Student at Amherst College" *History of Education Quarterly* 42 (Fall 2002)

● **MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE CURRICULUM OF GETTYSBURG COLLEGE:** What did they study, who did they read, and who taught it? How was moral philosophy taught in the context of a Lutheran college? The starting points should be Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience* (1970) and Howe, *Making the American Self* (1997).

● **THE MYSTERY OF TELEGRAPHY:** How was the electrical telegraph invented, and how did it work? Who were its original users? And how did it affect the gathering and presentation of news and information in Civil War America? Reference point will be George Prescott's *History, Theory and Practice of the Electric Telegraph* (1860).

● **THE PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN:** The best starting point for this work is Harold

Holzer (Metropolitan Museum of Art), who knows this field better than anyone else. Add to this, Holzer, Boritt & Neely's, *The Lincoln Image* (1984), Merrill Peterson's *Lincoln and American Memory* (1994) and Barry Schwartz's *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (2002).

● **LINCOLN IN THE MOVIES:** There are two separate studies devoted to this topic, Frank Thompson, *Abraham Lincoln: Twentieth-Century Popular Portrayals* (1999) and Mark Rinehart, *Abraham Lincoln on Screen* (1999).

● **LINCOLN AND AMERICAN MUSIC:** There are at least 11 major American musical compositions based on Lincoln or his words -- Aaron Copland, *A Lincoln Portrait* (1942), Morton Gould, *A Lincoln Legend* (1942), Daniel Gregory Mason, *Symphony no 3 "Lincoln,"* op. 35 (1935), Richard Russell Bennett, *Abraham Lincoln* (1922), Charles Ives, *Lincoln, The Great Commoner* (1919-1920), Elie Seigmeister, *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* (1937), Vincent Persichetti, *A Lincoln Address* (Presser, 1973), Herbert Elwell, *Lincoln – Requiem Aeternam* (1946), and Roy Harris, *Symphony no. 10 "Abraham Lincoln"* (1965) – and all or any of these can be the basis of your paper. The Copland Papers at the Library of Congress offer the easiest and most direct access, if you wanted to concentrate solely on the making of *A Lincoln Portrait*, which is by far the most famous and most-often recorded "Lincoln music." There are also two settings of Walt Whitman's elegy on Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," by Roger Sessions and by Paul Hindemith.

● **THE RENDITION OF ANTHONY BURNS:** The seizure of a runaway slave, Anthony Burns, in Boston under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was a *cause célèbre* in the North. This should offer a detailed chronicle of Burns, his arrest, removal and return to Virginia, and the impact it made on Northern public opinion. The newspapers (especially W.L. Garrison's *Liberator*) will be your most important source; you will also want to use S.W. Campbell's *The Slave Catchers* (1970), Pease, *The Fugitive Slave Law and Anthony Burns* (1975) and von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns* (1998), but do not let this become a re-hash of the accounts in these books. Track down letters and papers in the collections of the Library of Congress and the Massachusetts Historical Society.

● **CONGRESSMAN JOHN M. BROOMALL'S CIVIL WAR:** Maddeningly little has been done on the individual lives of members of the Civil War U.S. Congresses (37th and 38th), partly because the private papers of the politicians are either non-existent or scattered in distant archives. Congressman Broomall, however, left a large *cache* of papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which should afford substantial room for interpreting the life and thinking of a Pennsylvania Congressman in the 38th Congress. (A Philadelphia suburb was later named for him).

Honor Code: The Gettysburg College Honor Code specifies that the student upheld the highest standards of integrity in their class work. The Pledge reads:

I affirm that I will uphold the highest principles of honesty and integrity in all my endeavors at Gettysburg College and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect within and beyond the classroom.

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.

