

AFRS2142/ENGL2900/HIST2142/ARTH1660

# 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 continues for students through fall 2010 though it presumes

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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

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**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*

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**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. ( <a href="#">Jstor</a> ) Donald E. Reynolds, "The New Orleans Riot of 1866, Reconsidered," <i>Louisiana History</i> 5, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 5-27. ( <a href="#">Jstor</a> )
2/17	<u>The Reconstruction amendments</u> READINGS: Text of <a href="#">13<sup>th</sup></a> , <a href="#">14<sup>th</sup></a> , and <a href="#">15<sup>th</sup></a> 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>

