The American Civil War: History, Myth and Memory

This seminar will explore the multiple roles and shifting meanings of the Civil War in American society and culture between 1865 and 1965. We will consider a range of literary, historiographical and cinematic texts, in an attempt to understand how this most formative of events was interpreted and misinterpreted by four generations of Americans and how different ideas about the Civil War shaped major arguments about race, gender, politics, and the very nature of the United States.

1. Introduction: Why the Civil War?

Eileen Johnson, “Moments of Rupture: Confederate Monuments and a Southern Town’s Search for its Identity,” thepolitic.org, April 12, 2017.


2. Concepts


3. Civil War Memory: Beginnings
Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865.
Robert E. Lee, General Order no. 9, April 10, 1865.
Gary W. Gallagher, Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know about the Civil War (Chapel Hill, 2008), 15-40.

5. The "Lost Cause" And the Postbellum South
Thomas Nelson Page, "Marse Chan: A Tale of Ole Virginia " In Ole Virginia or Marse Chan and Other Stories (New York, 1887)

6. Remembering Abolition

7. The Road to Sectional Reconciliation

8. Black America Remembers
Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln” April 14, 1876.
W.E.B Du Bois, "A Mild Suggestion" (1913)
9. Constructing Lincoln


10. The Birth of a Nation


Movie: *The Birth of A Nation*, W.D. Griffith, (1915)

11. Gone with the Wind

Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York, 1936), ch. 12.


Movie: *Gone with the Wind*, David O. Selznick, (1939)

12. William Faulkner's Civil War

William Faulkner, "Wash" (1934)


13. The Civil War in the Age of Civil Rights

Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have A Dream," August 28, 1963.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

* Attendance, preparation, and participation are mandatory. Students who will abstain from more than four meetings without a satisfactory explanation will be subject to a reduction in their final grade. Class participation will factor in the final grade.

* Over the course of the semester, each student will write FIVE one-page papers with thoughts, questions, and comments on the reading of a single topic. The format is flexible and informal, and you need not worry about the language and structure of your précis. The goal is to help you
think in a systematic way about the reading and to encourage you to form your own ideas. Don't summarize the texts; present your most interesting thoughts about them. Deadline: Tuesday, 08:00 PM. Please note in the subject heading of each email the number of the report.

* Papers: Students can write either a seminar or a term paper, on either a historical or literary topic. The deadline for submitting a paper topic is January 18, 2018, by email. Students who will not receive approval for their paper topics will not be allowed to hand in a paper and will not receive a passing grade. Please send your topic descriptions by email, even if we agree on a topic in a face-to-face meeting.

* Office Hours: Sunday, 13:00, Webb Building, Room 508. Office phone: 03-6405042. yaelst@post.tau.ac.il