**Abraham Lincoln and His Era – History 75200**

**Spring 2018, W 2-4 Rm. 5382**

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**Office: Rm. 4406.6 Office hours: Wed. 12:45 – 1:45 and by appointment**

**Jan 31** **Introduction**

**Feb 7** **Lincoln and the American Antislavery Tradition**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 3-16, 28-38

--in *Against Slavery,* antislavery writings by Samuel Sewall (11-14), John Saffin (15-17), Cotton Mather (19-20), Theodore Dwight Weld (53-58), Alexander Crummell (59-62), James Freeman Clarke (63-69), and William Lloyd Garrison, (92-125)

--in *Against Slavery*: Preamble to the Declaration of Independence (28), The Ordinance of 1787 (332), Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 (322-23), Missouri Compromise (324)

--CUNY Commons: Reynolds reviews a novel and two history books on slavery; Reynolds reviews a book criticizing Lincoln in *The American Scholar*; Second volume of Sidney Blumenthal’s 4-volume biography of Lincoln reviewed by Reynolds in the journal *Democracy*

**Feb 14** **Lincoln as Lawyer and Congressman**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 39-66

--Robert A. Ferguson, Lincoln and the Lawyer’s Eloquence,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 502-14

*--*in *Against Slavery*: The Wilmot Proviso of 1847 (333)

-- CUNY Commons: Reynolds reviews books by James McPherson, a leading Civil War historian – *New York Review of Books*; Reynolds reviews a number of books on the Civil War era; Reynolds reviews 2 books on Lincoln *in Wall Street Journal.*

**Feb 21** **The Slavery Crisis of the 1850s**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 66-135

-- in *Against Slavery*: writings by William Lloyd Garrison (125-30), David Walker (133-43), John G. Whittier, (144-53), Lydia Maria Child (154-175), Wendell Phillips (241-251), Theodore Parker (273-289)

-- in *Against Slavery*: The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 (325-31)

--James Oakes,from “Natural Rights, Citizenship Rights, States’ Rights, and Black Rights: Another Look at Lincoln and Race,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 465-67; Eric Foner, “The Emancipation of Abe Lincoln,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 485-95; Manisha Sinha,“Allies for Emancipation? Lincoln and Black Abolitionists,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 495-502

**Feb 28** **The Southern Perspective** **(1)**

--George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All*

*--*in *The Confederate Experience Reader* (CUNY Commons): selected Southern editorials on the Charles Sumner caning, the Dred Scott Decision, and John Brown’s Raid, 48-53; Secession Documents, 102-119; The Constitution of the Confederate States, 144-146.

**Mar 7** **The Southern Perspective (2)**

Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South: A Brief History with Documents*

-in *The Confederate Experience Reader* (CUNY Commons): Jefferson Davis’s Inaugural Address and Message to Congress, Alexander Stephens’s Cornerstone Speech, 146-155 Enrollment of Slaves in the Army and Jefferson Davis’s Farewell Address, 372-374 Barney, “Lincoln’s Republic,” 440-453

**Mar 14 The Lincoln Douglas Debates and Antislavery Contexts**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 143-178.

--Contemporary commentary on the Lincoln-Douglas debates, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 376-78

-- in *Against Slavery*: writings by Sarah and Angelina Grimke (197-206), Catharine Beecher, (207-220), Angelina Grimke (220- 23); Theodore Dwight Weld (224-28), Charles Sumner (314-20)

---Allen C. Guelzo, from *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America*, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 463-65; Gillian Silverman,“’The Best Circus in Town’: Embodied Theatrics in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 467-75

**Mar 21 Lincoln and the Presidency**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 181- 209, 212-50

--Contemporary documents about Lincoln and his presidency, by Nathaniel Hawthorne and others, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 378-90

--Richard N. Current,from “The Master Politician,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 475-77; Harold Holzer, from *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech That Made Lincoln President* , in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 477-80; Sean Wilentz, from “This Great Tribunal, the American Presidency,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 480-85

-- in *Against Slavery*: Lysander Spooner, “The Unconstitutionality of Slavery” (252-255)

**Mar 28** **Lincoln and the Civil War (1)**

*--Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 250-98

--Contemporary documents about Lincoln by Karl Marx, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, and others, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 391-403

**Apr 4 NO CLASS SCHEDULED – SPRING RECESS**

**Apr 11** **NO CLASS SCHEDULED – CLASSES FOLLOW A FRIDAY SCHEDULE**

**April 18 Lincoln and the Civil War (2)**

--*Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 301-34

--Contemporary documents about Lincoln by Harriet Beecher Stowe, David Ross Locke, and others, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 403-17

--Gabor Boritt, from *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows*, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 514-22; Stephen Cushman, from “Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 524-31

**Apr 25 The War’s Conclusion, the Second Inaugural Address, and the Assassination**

**--***Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 334-72

--Contemporary commentary by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Ward Becher, and others, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 417-29

--James McPherson, from “Lincoln and the Strategy of Unconditional Surrender,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 522-24

**May 2 Lincoln’s Impact**

**--**Contemporary documents by Herman Melville, Frederick Douglass, Victor Hugo, and others, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 430-39

--Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton,“The Global Lincoln,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 544-53

**May 9** **Lincoln and Culture (1)**

--Lincoln as seen by Walt Whitman, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 441-58

--David S. Reynolds, “My Captain,” from *Walt Whitman’s America*, in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 536-44

--Faith Barrett, from “Lincoln and Poetry,” in *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*, 531-36

-- CUNY Commons: Poems Lincoln Loved: Robert Burns, “Holy Willie’s Prayer”; William Knox, “Mortality”; William Cullen Bryant, “Thanatopsis”; Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The Last Leaf”; Lord Byron, “Darkness”; Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”; Lincoln and Shakespeare

**May 16 Lincoln and Culture (2)**

-- CUNY Commons: Songs Lincoln Loved: “Barbara Allen”; “John Anderson’s [or Adkins’] Lamentation”; “The Silk Merchant’s Daughter”; “Twenty Years Ago”; “Jim Crack Corn”; “Dixie” (including variations); “Zip Coon”; “Your Mission”; “Hail Columbia!”

**May 23** **Lincoln in Film**

--watch John Ford’s *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) – available on Vexmovies at http://vexmovies.org/young-mr-lincoln

--watch Stephen Spielberg’s film *Lincoln* (2012) – at – available on Vexmovies at <http://vexmovies.org/lincoln>

-CUNY Commons: read Tony Kushner’s screenplay of *Lincoln*

Required Books:

*Lincoln’s Selected Writings. A Norton Critical Edition*. Edited by David S. Reynolds. W. W. Norton & Co. ISBN-10: 0393921794; ISBN-13: 978-0393921793

*Against Slavery.* Edited by Mason Lowance. Penguin Classics. ISBN-10: 0140437584 ISBN-13: 978-0140437584

Paul Finkelman. *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South: A Brief History with Documents.*  Bedford/ St. Martin’s. ISBN-10: 0312133278; ISBN-13: 978-0312133276.

# George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! Or, Slaves without Masters.* Harvard University Press. ISBN-10: 0674094514 ISBN-13: 978-0674094512

**Course requirements**

**1. Do all the reading on time. For each class period, read (a) the works listed on the syllabus; (b) the student book review for that day. When reading the student book review, write comments, queries, and or suggested edits.**

**2. Try not to miss a class, or, if you have to, contact me about it.**

**3. Remain attentive and participate in class discussion.**

**4. Write a book review (2,500 – 3,000 words):**

Select **two books** of history, biography, cultural studies, or fiction (or any mixture of them) on a topic related to this course. Write a review of the books, and, **by 6:p.m. on the Monday before our Wednesday class**, post the review in the Files folder on the class’s CUNY Commons site. One book that you review must have a publication date from 2010 onward; the other book can also be from that period or, alternatively, could date from before 2010, as far back as you wish.   The review should be c. 2,500-3,000 words in length. When you upload your review to our Commons group, name the file, as in the following examples: “Smith’s review of two biogs of Lincoln” or “Jones’s review of a bk on Lincoln and a bk on slavery – etc.].” The rest of the class will read the review, write comments on it, and develop questions about the books you’ve reviewed. At the beginning of the class period, you will lead a discussion of the books and the techniques you used in writing the review (e. g., your method of note-taking, any efforts you made to confirm yours authors’ claims by checking other sources, your overall assessment of the strengths or weaknesses of the books, etc.) The other class members will discuss the review and the books you’ve chosen.

If you wish to write an academically-oriented review, you may want to sample the book reviews in journals like *American Quarterly*, *Reviews in American History*, *New England Quarterly*, or *American Literature*.  If you’d like to write a more general-oriented review-essay, you could sample reviews in *The* *New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, *The* *New York Review of Books*, *The Kenyon Review*, or *The Wall Street* *Journal*.

5. **Term Paper: 4,000-5,000 words**

**Due last day of class, May 23. Citation format: either MLA or Chicago Style**

Come up with a topic related to Lincoln or his era (or both) that interests you and write an essay of 4,000-5,000 words. You may take this project in any direction you wish, but clear it with Prof. Reynolds well beforehand.