

St. Francis College
Department of Foreign Languages, Fine Arts,
and International Cultural Studies

Fall 2012 HON 5101 sec. 4
The Visual Culture of the Civil War
Tuesday/Thursday 2:55 – 4:20 p.m.

Dr. Jennifer Wingate
Room 7213
3 Credits

Office Hours: Tues. 11:10-12:10
 Wed. 3:30-4:30
 Thurs. 1:00 -2:00

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Course Overview: This year-long class will focus on the visual culture of the American Civil War to examine how information and attitudes about the war were recorded and disseminated, and the ways visual culture expressed and informed Americans' understanding of the conflict. Examples of visual media to be examined include not only painting, sculpture, and monuments, but also photography, political cartoons, broadsides, patriotic envelopes, and other ephemera. The class will see examples of a wide variety of images first hand during trips to the Brooklyn Historical Society and to a range of museums and monuments in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The fall semester will begin with the antebellum period by examining the visual culture of the abolitionist movement and will extend during the spring semester into the imagery of Civil War memory and the war's relevance for 20th-and 21th-century visual media and social rights movements.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) To identify and distinguish among the primary media that contributed to the growth of a thriving American visual culture by the mid-19th century. To understand the techniques and evolution of media such as early photographic formats, printmaking, and sculpture. To be able to conduct visual analyses of these media.
- 2) To explain in writing and in class presentations the role that different visual media played in informing attitudes toward key issues of the era such as slavery, abolitionism, secession, and reconstruction. To explain how imagery of the era reflected opinions and social mores.
- 3) To illustrate the changing roles of images and to demonstrate how meanings and interpretations of images have changed over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries and continue to change in the 21st century. To conduct secondary research to assist in the analysis of imagery and its function in 19th-century American life. To be able to identify what an image *cannot* tell us about the period in which it was created.
- 4) To learn to examine and analyze primary archival materials at the Brooklyn Historical Society as part of the **Student and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA)** program.
- 5) To analyze and critique exhibits of Civil War imagery in museums and historical societies today and to propose suggestions for new modes of display.
- 6) To write well-organized and coherently argued papers on pre-approved topics relevant to the focus of the class. To consult and accurately cite secondary sources to support the analysis of images and their social roles. To present both impromptu and polished oral presentations on topics related to individual research, class trips, and class readings and discussions.

Core mission statement: The core curriculum is the academic cornerstone of St. Francis College and affirms its mission to graduate educated, well-rounded students to enter and participate in a changing and culturally diverse world. As an integrated program of studies, it focuses on developing the skills expected of a liberally educated person. It provides students with a broadly based foundation outside their areas of specialization, an understanding of how various disciplines intersect and differ, and assistance in cultivating a disposition for lifelong learning.

Required Text:

Maurie D. McNinnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011)

Complimentary Text:

Peter H. Wood, *Near Andersonville: Winslow Homer's Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010)

Course Requirements:

1. Attend the Michael Pierson lecture on Monday, Sept. 17 during Activity Hour and Walt Whitman Project dramatic reading on Monday, Dec. 3.
2. Regular class attendance and class participation including trips to the Brooklyn Historical Society, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The trip to the Met on Nov. 29th will extend beyond the end of class. Students returning to campus afterwards should be back by 5:30. A maximum of three hours of absence is allowed per semester for reasons of illness or other necessity.
3. Assigned readings in McNinnis, Wood, and articles posted on Angel. Written responses to readings and course material in the form of homework assignments, blog posts (<http://safa.brooklynhistory.org/>), and response papers (see below). Demonstrated familiarity with key points of reading assignments during class discussion.
4. 4-5 papers (approximately 25 pages total) over the course of the 2012/2013 academic year, three of which will be submitted in a portfolio at the end of the year in May 2013.
5. 3 oral presentations over the course of the 2012/2013 academic year.
6. Regular consultation of class information on Angel: slide presentations from class (to be posted as the semester progresses), readings, reading questions, announcements, and other course materials as they become available. Occasional reminder e-mails and announcements will be sent to your Angel accounts.

Basis for the Grade and Grading Standards:

Writing Portfolio	25%	100 – 93	A
Class Participation	25%	92 – 90	A-
Oral Presentations	25%	89 – 88	B+
Other Assignments	25%	87 – 83	B
(blog posts, reading questions, BHS assignments)		82 – 80	B-
		79 – 78	C+
		77 – 73	C
		72– 70	C-
		69 – 60	D
		59 or lower	F

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Assignments (Topics and assignments are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Angel)

Thurs. Sept. 6 Introduction: Why study the Civil War today? What is the “visual culture” of war? What are some examples of Civil War visual culture? What can we learn from it and how can we analyze it?

Tues. Sept. 11: Prelude to the Civil War: Representing African Americans and Slavery
Read McInnis, Introduction, “Waiting,” and Chapter 1, “With Thackeray in America”
Answer reading questions on Angel

Thurs. Sept. 13: The Visual Culture of the Slave Trade and the Abolitionist Movement
Read McInnis Chapter 2, “Representing the Slave Trade”
Answer reading questions on Angel

Monday Sept. 17: Michael Pierson Lecture, Activity Hour, 7th Floor Auditorium

Tues. Sept. 18: The Visual Culture of the Slave Trade and Abolitionism continued (discussion of the Fugitive Slave laws, Anthony Burns, and begin discussion of John Brown)
Read McInnis Chapter 3, “Mapping Richmond’s Slave Trade” and Chapter 4, “The Red Flag”

Thurs. Sept. 20: Abolitionism continued (discussion of sculptor, John Rogers)
Read McInnis Chapter 5, “Dressed for Sale,” and Chapter 6, “Going South”

Tues. Sept. 25: Abolitionism continued (discussion of sculptor Hiram Powers’ *The Greek Slave*)
Read McInnis Chapter 7, “Exhibiting the Slave Trade,” Start reading Davis (see below)

Thurs. Sept. 27: Discussion of Eastman Johnson’s *Negro Life in the South*
Read McInnis, “Epilogue” and read (from Angel) John Davis, “Eastman Johnson’s *Negro Life at the South* and Urban Slavery in Washington, D.C.,” *The Art Bulletin* 80, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 67-92
First response paper due (subject: McInnis and Davis)

**Tues. Oct. 2: First Visit to the Brooklyn Historical Society:
The Visual Culture of Abolitionism** (meet in SFC lobby, we will walk to the BHS together)
Archival materials: Henry Ward Beecher scrapbook; *The Liberator*; *The Long Island Star*

Thurs. Oct. 4: Photography and the War
Blog post on SAFA website about first BHS visit (Prof. Wingate to provide prompt)
Read Chapter 2 from Mary Panzer, *Mathew Brady and the Image of History* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1997) plus excerpts from Miles Orvell, *American Photography* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003)

Tues. Oct. 9: Photography continued
Read Laura Wexler “‘A More Perfect Likeness’: Frederick Douglass and the Image of the Nation” in Maurice Wallace and Shawn Michele Smith, eds., *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham, N.C., Duke Univ. Press, 2012)

Thurs. Oct. 11: No Class (Prof. Wingate at a conference)

Read assigned sections of Steven Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War Era* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2010) in preparation for BHS visit

Answer reading assignment on Angel

Tues. Oct. 16: Second Visit to the Brooklyn Historical Society (meet in SFC lobby)

Read assigned sections of Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War Era*

Archival materials: envelopes scrapbooks

Thurs. Oct. 18: Presentations (subject: patriotic envelopes assignment)

Blog posts on SAFA website (subject: patriotic envelopes)

Tues. Oct. 23: Emancipation and the Meaning of Freedom (J. Q. A. Ward's *The Freedman*, Edmonia Lewis's *Forever Free*)

Read assigned excerpts from Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race War and Monument in 19th-Century America* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1997)

Thurs. Oct. 25: The Homefront, Women and War, the Brooklyn Sanitary Fair of 1864

Read excerpts from Catherin Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992)

Tues. Oct. 30: Third Visit to the Brooklyn Historical Society

Archival materials pertaining to the 1864 Sanitary Fair: *The Drumbeat*; lithographs; certificate of contribution, stereoscopic views

Blog post on BHS visit (Prof. Wingate to provide prompt)

Reading TBA

Thurs. Nov. 1: Picturing Lincoln

Read Melissa Dabakis "Sculpting Lincoln: Vinnie Ream, Sarah Fisher Ames, and the Equal Rights Movement," *American Art* vol. 22, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 78-101

Post questions about this article on the SAFA website

Tues. Nov. 6: Constructing Civil War Narratives: Winslow Homer and Eastman Johnson

Final paper and presentation assignment distributed

Reading TBA

Thurs. Nov. 8: Visit to the Brooklyn Museum; discuss final paper assignment
meet in SFC lobby at 2:55

Tues. Nov. 13: Civil War Commemorative Sculpture; Common Soldier Memorials

Blog post on SAFA site on Brooklyn Museum visit (Prof. Wingate will provide prompt)

Read assigned sections of Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*

Thurs. Nov. 15: The Robert Gould Shaw and 54th Massachusetts Regiment Memorial

Read Katie Mullis Kresser, "Power and Glory: Brahmin Identity and the Shaw Memorial," *American Art*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 32-57.

Tues. Nov. 20: Workshop final presentations

Thurs. Nov. 22: No Class Thanksgiving

Tues. Nov. 27: Recap of Themes

Thurs. Nov. 29: Visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (students returning to campus after this trip should be back by 5:30)

Mon. Dec. 3: Activity Hour Honors Event, Greg Trupiano of the Walt Whitman Project will be directing a series of dramatic readings by SFC students focused on the Civil War.

Tues. Dec. 4 Presentations

Thurs. Dec. 6 Presentations; final papers are due