

HISTORY 117
FINAL EXAM HANDOUT
Thursday, December 15, 2016 (2-5pm)

FOUR of the following SIX questions will appear on the final exam.

1. What was the most significant turning point in the political crisis of the 1850s? When framing your answer, discuss at least two or three other possibilities in addition to whichever development you consider to be the most pivotal.
2. Slavery was abolished in the North by peaceful means. Most white southerners did not own slaves. So, why did slavery prove to be such a divisive and often violent sectional issue in the years before the American Civil War?
3. Does Abraham Lincoln deserve the label, “Great Emancipator”? When offering your assessment, make sure to explain who else contributed to the abolition of slavery and where Lincoln’s role properly fits into that complicated story.
4. Why did the Confederacy lose the Civil War? Make sure to approach your answer from multiple angles: military, political, social and economic.
5. Was Reconstruction a failure? Make sure to explain which Reconstruction policies you are evaluating as you provide your verdict (or verdicts).
6. How did westward expansion affect American culture in the nineteenth century? What hopes did it raise? What fears did it provoke?

GENERAL ADVICE

Good essay exam answers begin by providing a clear thesis or interpretation and by defining any key terms in the question. You don’t need to restate the question, but should address its terms directly in the opening paragraph. The best answers will support their interpretation by providing specific historical examples arranged in a logical and compelling fashion. **Essays should offer a high level of detail, including the use of brief quotations and memorable dates or statistics.** Citations are not required. Students should also take care to anticipate potential objections or alternatives to their interpretations.

REMINDERS

- Students may study together but must produce their own answers
- Each essay should occupy several blue book pages and take about 30-35 minutes
- Missing an exam is only an option in an emergency or for documented sickness
- Exam week office hours: Mon / Tue / Wed from 10am to noon (61 N. West St)