

Second Writing Assignment
History 119b, The Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1848-1877
Professor Blight
Yale University, Spring 2008

This writing assignment covers the period of the course in which we have studied the war years, 1861-65, weeks 6-10. Choose one of the following questions and write a 1250-1500-word critical analysis (please include a word count with your paper). In each case below you are expected to draw upon *more than one* of the books or readings we have used. The film series may also be useful on any of the questions. Please *focus your argument* and support it with both primary and secondary source *evidence*.

- A. Who or what freed the slaves? Was emancipation something given or seized? How can we best know? Draw upon documents from Berlin, ed., *Free At Last*, the PBS film series, and the many relevant sections and documents in the Johnson (Lincoln) and Gienapp collections. Doctorow's novel *The March* may also be useful.
- B. In the American Civil War how and why did a war of limited aims on both sides in 1861 become what Abraham Lincoln ultimately called "a remorseless revolutionary struggle" by late 1862 and early 1863? By seeing the question from both the Union and Confederate sides, explain how and why the conflict transformed in scale and results beyond what almost anyone anticipated in 1861. Use any or all of the readings in this section of the course. Be sure to consider military, political, and/or social perspectives in your answer.
- C. "The Civil War was both won and lost on the homefront as much as on the battlefield," wrote one social historian of this conflict. How does this claim hold up under scrutiny? From your reading of Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, Alcott's *Hospital Sketches*, Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, and documents in Gienapp and Berlin, critically examine the relative importance of the homefront and the battlefield in the story of how the North won and the South lost the Civil War.
- D. In consultation with your Teaching Assistant, construct your own paper topic rooted in the assigned readings for this section of the course.

Due to your TA before lecture on Tuesday, April 8, 2008.

Late policy: Paper grades will be reduced by 1/3 (A to A-; A- to B+ etc.) for each 24-hour deadline missed. Your first deadline is Tuesday, April 8, 10:30 AM, with a drop-off at the entrance to lecture. If you miss this deadline, please contact your TF immediately to arrange a drop-off location for your paper. A Dean's Excuse will allow you to reset this clock.