

University of Indianapolis
School for Adult Learning

History 299--AU2: Abe Lincoln—Myths and Realities

3 Credit Hours

Summer Session II, Mondays, 6:00-9:45 p.m., (June 9, 16, 23, 30 July 7, 2008)

Dr. James Fuller

Office: Good Hall 203 C

Phone/Voice Mail: 788-2190 E-Mail: afuller@uindy.edu

Office Hours: T,W,R, 5:30-6:00; or by appointment

Welcome to the study of history!!

Tips for Success in This Class:

- Attend all classes.
- Complete the reading and writing assignments on time.
- Maintain a positive attitude.

Course Description:

A historical and cultural study of the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln emphasizing the tensions between the myths and realities surrounding one of America's most important political figures.

Course Rationale:

The study of history not only makes us better citizens, it also empowers us as individuals. Learning about how people in the past lived, how they made choices, in the context of the past, helps us to better understand our world—and ourselves. History also encourages us to think analytically and provides the opportunity for developing reading and writing skills as we examine the ways in which historians construct narratives and interpretations people and events. The history of Abraham Lincoln allows us to examine cultural myths and realities and to explore the reason why Americans have developed certain images of the past.

Goals and Objectives:

The course will focus on the image and idea of Abraham Lincoln in history and culture by examining his life and legacy. The student will be introduced to the kinds of questions historians ask about the past and the ways in which they construct arguments about and interpretations of this particular leader and his role in our history. While you will learn something about specific people, places and events, the primary goal is to get you to think about how and why things happened the way they did, in the context in which they did. Other goals such as encouraging critical thinking, understanding historical contexts, engaging other learners and reflecting upon the past are also part of our objectives.

The course will encourage students to directly engage several of the university-wide learning goals, including: critical thinking, historical consciousness, and social inquiry.

Upon completion of the course, students will be familiar with some of the major interpretations of the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln. The course also provides the opportunity for students to hone their critical thinking and writing skills. It is the instructor's goal to share his passion and excitement about the past with the students.

Themes and Arguments of the Course:

Throughout the course, four main themes will be emphasized: Lincoln's biography; Lincoln's political career; Lincoln as a tyrant; and Lincoln as a myth. The central events of the sixteenth president's life and career will be dealt with, but from a variety of perspectives. In other words, while some of the themes and structure of the course will be very traditional, the content will not always be. I will make many arguments throughout the course, but will emphasize two broad, philosophical arguments: 1) Abraham Lincoln was/is an idea and image in American culture that changes over time and is often contested; and 2) history is made up of individual historical actors, each making choices within the contingency of time and place (i.e. history is people, making choices, in context). This class will be taught as an open narrative, designed to raise more questions than it "answers," allowing for a wide variety of perspectives, interpretations and criticisms. Other historiographical points of view will be considered in the various readings and discussions, but the main goal is to allow you, the student, to be the historian, to think about a number of significant questions and issues in a variety of ways and to come to your own conclusions about Abraham Lincoln.

Books:

The following books are required for the course and should be read according to the schedule below:

Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*

DiLorenzo, *Lincoln Unmasked*

Boritt, *The Lincoln Enigma*

Assignments, Attendance, Grades:

1. Attend class, take effective lecture notes and participate in class discussions. Attendance almost always will be taken and is required. More than one (1) unexcused absences will result in the loss of all attendance/participation points. Excessive absence will result in an "F" for the course. 100 points (50 points attendance, 50 points participation).
2. Complete reading assignments on schedule. The readings should be read **BEFORE** the class meeting in which they are listed.
3. Write a final exam. This will consist of a take-home essay that must be typed, double-spaced. 100 points.
4. Write a review of each of the three assigned books. These will be formal reviews that address the author's thesis/argument; the methodology used; a summary of content; positive and negative criticisms; and engagement with the interpretation presented. 100 points each. 300 points.

Grading Scale:

Grades will be on a 100 point scale.

There are 500 total points for the class.

Assignment Scale:

At the end of the course:

94-100	A	465-500	A
90-93	A-	450-464	A-
87-89	B+	435-449	B+
84-86	B	420-434	B
80-83	B-	400-419	B-
77-79	C+	385-399	C+
74-76	C	370-384	C
70-73	C-	350-369	C-
67-69	D+	335-349	D+
64-66	D	320-334	D
60-63	D-	300-319	D-
below 60	F	Below 300	F

NOTE: If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the appropriate office at the university if you have not already done so. The BUILD Program may be reached at 788-3536 or contact your academic advisor.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as turning in someone else's work as your own. This means that you cannot copy verbatim from a source without using quotation marks and providing a citation. It means that you cannot copy and paste information from on-line, that you cannot copy someone else's paper or turn in a "group paper" instead of writing your own. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero for that assignment and a report of the incident will be sent to the School for Adult Learning to be placed in your permanent file.

Schedule:

This is a tentative schedule--there will be overlap.

Week One:

Introduction to the Course

The Lincoln Myth

Before reading the books or starting the course, take a few moments to write down a response to the following (it can be a list or a paragraph, but don't exceed one page):

What comes to mind when someone says, "Abraham Lincoln?" Or, what image of Abraham Lincoln do you have in your mind as you enter the course?

Week Two:

Context: American History, 1809-1865

Week Three:

Lincoln's Life and Career: Biography

Read: Gienapp, all. Review Due. 100 points.

Week Four:

Lincoln as Tyrant

Read: DiLorenzo, all. Review Due. 100 points.

Week Five:

The Lincoln Enigma: Constructing History and Mythology

Read: Borett, all. Review Due. 100 points.

Final Exam due: Due by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Monday after the class is over. Must be submitted as a Word file via e-mail to: afuller@uindy.edu.

About Your Instructor:

A. James Fuller, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Indianapolis. He earned three degrees, including his Ph.D. in American History and World History, at Miami University, Ohio, in 1995. He has taught full-time at the University of Indianapolis since 1999 and was awarded tenure in 2005. Before coming to UIndy, he taught at the Community College of Southern Nevada, in Las Vegas, where adult learners made up the vast majority of the students in the seven large classes (50 students) he taught every semester. Fuller specializes in early American History, especially the Early Republic and the Civil War. He has published four books, including *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South*; *Contending Voices: Biographical Explorations of the American Past*; and *America, War and Power: Defining the State, 1775-2005*. His current project is a biography of Oliver Morton, Indiana's Civil War governor. In addition to traditional scholarship, his work includes map editing; writing teacher's guides to using historical maps and atlases; and conference paper presentations on the Civil War in Film and the Old West in Film. Presently, Fuller is President of the Indiana Association of Historians and he serves on a number of different university committees and state organizations. A country boy at heart, Fuller loves the outdoors and likes to spend a lot of time in the woods or in the garden. One of his hobbies is amateur forestry. He and his wife are planning to build a house on land they own near Mooresville. His wife, Brenda, works for Smith Barney, a division of Citigroup, in their downtown office. They have a son, Carson, who will soon be two years old. In April, Brenda was diagnosed with stage three ovarian cancer. Her surgery is scheduled for June 27th and her treatment may interfere with this class. If so, a substitute will lead the class.