



Yeshiva University  
THE ZAHAVA AND MOSHAEL STRAUS  
CENTER FOR TORAH AND WESTERN THOUGHT

## Lincoln and Leadership

Stern College POLI 2499H

Instructors: Prof. Harold Holzer and Prof. Meir Soloveichik

More books have been published about Lincoln than any other president, and he remains today perhaps the most studied statesman in the history of the world. In this seminar, Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer, in conversation with Meir Soloveichik, will examine the lessons of Lincoln's life in all of its multifaceted magnificence. Throughout the course we will study Lincoln as statesman, politician, political theorist, husband, father, orator, and theologian. Questions to be considered will include: How did Lincoln's early life help form him into the leader that he became? What role did religion play in Lincoln's life, and how did this evolve, and change, during the civil war? How did the foundational documents of American public life impact Lincoln's worldview? What personal challenges did Lincoln face, in his own life and that of his family? What is the role of rhetoric in Lincoln's achievements and legacy? How can Lincoln, as a role model, inspire us today, and how can we apply the lessons of his story to the challenges that America faces in our age?

**Expectations:** Class will meet on Tuesday and Thursday; prior to every Tuesday's class, students will be expected to have read and reflected upon the readings of that week, and to participate in class discussions about them. At the end of every Thursday's class, students will be given a question to facilitate reflection on the readings for the week ahead, and will be asked to respond before Tuesday with several paragraphs of reflection in response to the question.

**Paper:** Prior to the conclusion of the semester, students will be asked to draw on both their prior knowledge, as well as what they have learned from the course, in writing an interdisciplinary essay that will either a) analyze the use of biblical passages in one of Lincoln's speeches b) compare and contrast the Lincoln's model of leadership with that of a biblical figure.

**Grading:**

- 25%: Class Attendance and Participation**
- 25%: Readings Essay Questions**
- 20%: Paper**
- 30%: Final**

Principal texts for readings:

Mario M. Cuomo and Harold Holzer, eds., *Lincoln on Democracy: His own words, with essays by America's foremost Civil War Historians*, orig. pub. 1990 (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004). Paperback (ISBN 0-8232-2345-0); hereinafter cited as **LOD**.

Also Harold Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), Paperback (ISBN 978-1-4391-0272-6.)

### **1. The Self-education of Abraham Lincoln**

- a. The Bible, Shakespeare, early primers ("Scott's Elocution"), the book he borrowed (Weems' "Washington") "Common Sense," Burns' poetry, "Why Must the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud" (a/k/a "Immortality") by William Knox. Plus Lincoln's own poetry ("My Childhood Home").

[Texts: Pages from *Scott's Elocution*—especially Shakespearean soliloquies and illustrations suggesting how an orator should declaim (Google Books); for Weems, need Lincoln's Address to NJ State Senate, Trenton, February 21, 1861—online? Or Roy P. Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953-55; hereinafter **CWL**), 4:235-6. For poem "My Childhood Home I See Again," take Ms. version and transcript off Shapell Foundation website...or *CWL*, 1:367-370; Michael Anderegg, *Lincoln and Shakespeare* Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2015], Chapter 2, "Lincoln Reads Shakespeare," 22-51.]

### **2. Lincoln and Religion** (tolerance—Nativism—immigration—Jews)

### **3. "Apple of Gold:" Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence**

[Texts: Lincoln's speech on the Dred Scott decision, Springfield, June 26, 1857; Lincoln's speeches in reply to Sen. Stephen A. Douglas, Chicago, July 10, 1858, Springfield, July 17, 1858, and at Lewiston, IL, August 17, 1858 (excerpts in *LOD*, 88-92; 118-120, 121-22. Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (chapter on "The Transcendent Declaration," 90-120). *Lincoln*

*President-Elect*, re correspondence with Alexander Hamilton Stephens (177-179)]

#### 4. “Frame of Silver:” Lincoln and the Constitution

[Texts: Fragment on the Constitution, ca. 1861, *LOD*, 188; Lincoln’s comments to Peace Conference delegates, February 23, 1861, *LOD*, 198-199, Philip Shaw Paludan, *A Covenant with Death: The Constitution, Law, and Equality in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1975, chapter on :”War for the Constitution and the Union,” pp. 27-61). The proper role of government (Fragment, 1854, *LOD*, 62-63)]

#### 5. Lincoln and the Press

[Text: Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*]

- a. Binge reading (as child, as postmaster)
- b. Anonymous writing
- c. Collaboration, building a political machine with the press
- d. Owning a newspaper (in German and in secret)
- e. Dealing with the mercurial but influential Horace Greeley

#### 6. Lincoln the Politician

[Texts: First political announcements and legislative initiatives, *LOD*, 9-14; on temperance (28-30); Congressional speech on Mexican War (34-36); infrastructure (38-39), presidential politics (40-41); see also *Lincoln and the Power of the Press—1858 Lincoln-Douglas campaign, 1860 election*]

- a. First campaign for state legislature—a war intervenes
- b. Legislative record—moving state capital—infrastructure—antislavery
- c. Congressional career and “turnabout is fair play” rotation—Spot Resolution—“I am a War Hero” (*Lincoln on War*, 27-29, 40-45)
- d. The little-known U. S. Senate campaign of 1854-55
- e. The Lincoln-Douglas debates
- f. The silent candidate for President

#### 7. “A Very Indifferent Judge: A Very Willing Subject:” The Lincoln Image (photography, paintings, sculpture, popular prints)

The evolution of Lincoln’s image—log-cabin-to-White House self-made man to avuncular statesman to Great Emancipator—as recorded, and influenced, by photographs and prints. Lincoln and these pictorial media virtually came of age together, each helping the other to prosper. For the last five years of

his life—and the only five of his national fame—Lincoln, who tried making a virtue of his homeliness, nonetheless sat so often for painters and sculptors that her practically had the benefit of court artists in the White House.

[Text: Harold Holzer, Mark E. Neely, Gabor S. Boritt, *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (orig. pub. 1984; 20012 University of Illinois Press paperback: ISBN 0-252-06984-6

## 8. Lincoln the Orator, Part 1

[Text: *LOD*, pages below]

- a. Lyceum Address, January 27, 1838 (15-25)
- b. Peoria Address, October 16, 1854 (65-78)
- c. House Divided Speech, June 16, 1858 (105-113)
- d. Cooper Union address, February 27, 1860 (Full text and analysis from Harold Holzer, *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech that Made Abraham Lincoln President*, 119-148, 249-284)
- e. Farewell address to Springfield, February 11, 1861 (190)
- f. On the road to Washington: Indianapolis, Ohio, Westfield, NYC, Trenton, Philadelphia, February 11-22, 1861 (191-199)
- g. First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861(201-209)

## 9. Lincoln and the “War Power:”

Lincoln and civil liberties: Merryman, the Baltimore riots, calling out the militia, the blockade, the July 4 message to Congress, the 1861, 1862, 1863, and 1864 annual messages to Congress; the military draft (and draft riots); freedom of the press, suspension of habeas corpus, military arrests and “justice.”

[Texts: Lincoln’s special message to Congress, July 4, 1861 (excerpts, 217-225); other annual messages 231-233 (1861); 264-69 (1862); 309-311 (1863); 336-337 (1864); selected readings from *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*; order calling out the militia (211); habeas corpus suspension orders, April 27, 1861 (214, with informal comments, 215); September 24, 1862 (262). For Draft Riots, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 441-448

## 10. Lincoln as Commander-in-chief

This session will be devoted to Lincoln as general- and admiral-in-chief; how he learned strategy and tactics; how he maintained morale despite brutal losses; comparisons to Confederate counterpart Jefferson Davies; his interest in scientific technology; toughness and his compassion (Great Pardoner or no?), genius for hiring politically correct as well as militarily able generals.

[Texts: excerpts from Mark E. Neely, *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, 63-66; Craig L. Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U. S. Navy, and the Civil War*, ix-xiv; James M. McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief*, 1-8. Lincoln’s revealing letters and telegrams to Generals McClellan (161, 165), Hooker (182-184, 187-188); Meade (199-200); and Grant (198, 254-255, Harold Holzer, ed., *Lincoln on War: Our Greatest Commander-in-Chief Speaks to America*. Also Lincoln as consoler-in-chief: letters of mourning (from *Lincoln on War*) to the parents of Col. Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth, May 25, 1861 (96-97); the daughter of Col. William McCullough, December 23, 1862 (*CWL*, 6:16-17—also available on Shapell Foundation website—add Harold Holzer “Masterpiece” column in the *Wall Street Journal*; and to the widow Lydia Bixby (269). Also Lincoln’s White House speech after victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, July 7, 1863 (196-197)

## 11. Lincoln the Orator, Part 2

[Text: *LOD*]

- a. Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863 (307-308)
- b. Speech at Baltimore , April 18, 1864 (320-321)
- c. “Public Letters” that were almost speeches: Lincoln’s letters to Erastus Corning, June 12, 1863 (277-281) and James Conkling, August 26, 1863 (288-292) –plus readings on both in *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 428-32; 472-474)
- d. Second Inaugural, March 4, 1865 (340-342)
- e. Last speech—on reconstruction—April 11, 1865 (344-349)

## 12. Lincoln and Emancipation

[Texts from *LOD*: Appeal to Border State members of Congress, July 12, 1862 (247-49); comments to black delegation, August 14, 1862 (251-252); Greeley letter, August 22, 1862 (253-254);, remarks at Cabinet meeting, September 22, 1862 (255-60; Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, September 22, 1862 (257-260); Final Proclamation, January 1, 1863 (270-72; also *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 376-415)

## 13. Lincoln and the Election of 1864

[Texts: *LOD* plus Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 500-554]

- a. “Anyone but Lincoln”
- b. *The New York World*: shutdown, and “miscegenation” campaign

- c. *The New York Tribune*: and the Niagara Falls Conference
- d. Henry Raymond—campaign manager who predicted defeat
- e. Frederick Douglass and the last, best hope for emancipation
- f. The “Blind Memorandum” on transition (*LOD*, 329)
- g. Lincoln and the Electoral Map (Text from *Civil War in 50 Objects*, 292-298)
- h. McClellan as opponent—and the impact of Atlanta, Sheridan, and the *USS Kearsarge* sinking of the *CSS Alabama* at Cherbourg
- i. Non-speeches (*LOD*, 328, 331-2, 333-4)

#### **14. Lincoln and the Thirteenth Amendment: Public Relations and Party Politics**

[Texts: *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 498-499, 541-545; Michael Vorenberg, “The Thirteenth Amendment Enacted,” in Harold Holzer and Sarah Vaughn Gabbard, eds., *Lincoln and Freedom: Slavery, Emancipation and the Thirteenth Amendment* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2007), 180-194;]

- a. The “first” 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment?—The Washington Peace Conference
- b. The resolution (*LOD*, 338-339)
- c. Why a “king’s cure” (*LOD*, 339-340)
- d. 1864 party platform politics
- e. Lobbying or bribery? (Spielberg’s *Lincoln*; Vorenberg)
- f. The Hampton Roads peace conference (*Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, 504-505)
- g. Signing on (King’s Cure remarks, again: *LOD*, 339-40)

#### **15. Assassination and “Resurrection”**

Easter and Passover, Lincoln’s funeral, the power of sermons, the power of images (Plus Lincoln in American memory)