

OLLI at DU West/Broomfield Syllabus – Fall 2024

The Biggest Political Division in US History: The Road to Secession in 1860 Subject Area HSEC

Monday Afternoons In -Person Broomfield Community Center 4 weeks

Facilitator: Tom Kleinschmidt

1. SUMMARIZE YOUR COURSE

The course will cover the division in the United States, brought on by slavery, from 1619 to the point that the southern states seceded in 1860-1861.

This will be primarily a lecture presentation of material showing how the division in the US changed and increased during the period covered

The overall theme of this class is that slavery was the primary reason that the first 7 states that seceded from the United States in 1860-1861. The later four states that seceded had additional reasons, but slavery was a strong reason for those four states also.

In presenting the class, comments, questions and discussion are encouraged as the class goes along

2. BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE ORGANIZED BY CLASS SESSION:

Session 1

- The importance of slavery in the early southern economy.
- How slavery was addressed in the constitution and the compromises that were involved.
- The issue of slavery changed in 1793. How did the southern economy change with the invention of the cotton gin.
- The first crisis over slavery was caused by proposing statehood for Missouri and how did the Missouri Compromise come about.

Session 2

- The early abolition and anti abolition efforts
- How the view of slavery changed by the 1840s both north and south
- Texas and the Mexican War changed the politics of slavery
- How the religious denominations divided over slavery

Session 3

- The Compromise of 1850 and how it came about
- The impact of the novel “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act began as a railroad bill and quickly became a hugely divisive slavery issue
- The Whig Party disintegrated after the 1852 election and ultimately this was a leading cause of the creation of the Republican Party

Session 4

- The impact on the nation of “Bleeding Kansas”
- The Lincoln-Douglas debates were over slavery and how this became nationally known
- The US Supreme Court Decision on Dred Scott
- The John Brown raid. How it affected people differently in the north and the south
- The 1860 election and how secession quickly followed it