The University of Texas at Tyler
Department of History
HIST 5386: Readings on the American Civil War Era

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course introduces graduate students to major historiographical themes associated with the American Civil War era. The goal is to acquaint students with a wide variety of approaches and interpretations in Civil War history. Graduate students should leave this seminar at the end of the semester with both a deeper understanding of the issues and events of the Civil War and Reconstruction era, and a firm grounding in the period’s voluminous historical literature.

PROFESSOR’S EXPECTATIONS:
Graduate courses are not meant to be professorial lectures. The class will follow an inquisitorial style which will place the burden of learning and discussion on the student. How much you learn depends largely on how much you and your classmates read and discuss. It is not easy; the reading load is heavy. Few transgressions will be worse in this class than not having an answer; and you will be put to the test weekly. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. I recognize that life often presents unexpected challenges and time constraints. Yet, if you are serious about a graduate education, you must make sacrifices. Once absence will directly affect the participation grade; two absences will disqualify any student from receiving an overall “A” grade; three absences will disqualify a “B” grade.

It is assumed that participants in the readings course have, at the very least, a very good grasp of the major events and the larger historical developments related to the Civil War and Reconstruction. If you do not, teach yourself. There are excellent studies of the Civil War, including James McPherson’s *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988) and Michael Fellman’s *This Terrible War* (2002). Please take advantage of them.

GRADING:
The course grade will depend on an historiographical paper, seven book reviews, a class participation component, and weekly response essays based on your assigned reading—beyond the seven monographs—for a particular week. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- **Historiographical Paper** 40%
- **Book Reviews** 40%
- **Class Participation** 10%
- **Article Response Essays** 10%

Generally speaking, a grade of 90.00% corresponds to a borderline A- and 89.99% to a B+; 80.00% is the line between a B- and a C+ and so on.
TEXTS:

It is extremely important to keep up with the reading. The reading load for this class is heavy, but it reflects the fact that so many wonderful books have been written on this topic. We will discuss seven monographs during the semester. It would be helpful to look ahead to those discussion dates and begin reading those books ahead of time.

Required:

- Dan Carter, *When the War was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South* (1985), E668.C28

Recommended:


BOOK REVIEWS:

Students will be assigned seven books to read for the semester, in addition to a number of scholarly articles. Students will write book reviews on the seven assigned studies and the average of which will count for 40% of your grade. All work must be typed in Times New Roman font, double-spaced with standard one-inch margins, and be at least three-full pages in length (meaning a three-page review must take up at least three pages, not two and a half or two and three-quarters). All technicalities of the papers, from citations to margins to proper usage of capitalization and numbers should be in accordance with Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*. Poor spelling, grammar, and typographical errors will deduct from your grade. And, of course, it is always your responsibility to do your own work. Plagiarism will result in “F” grade for the course and recommendation of immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

A review is not a book report. In preparing the review the student should read the assigned book and determine the place of the study in the literature of the field. Do not simply summarize. The review should not only indicate the book’s subject, but its place in the historiography of the Civil War era. And it should be critically analytical of the book, seeing out the positive and negative aspects of the book in regards to scholarship.

Students will turn in book reviews the following dates:

- Book Review 1 (due September 7)
- Book Review 2 (due September 21)
- Book Review 3 (due October 5)
- Book Review 4 (due October 19)
- Book Review 5 (due November 2)
- Book Review 6 (due November 16)
- Book Review 7 (due December 7)
ARTICLE RESPONSE ESSAYS:

Ten percent of your grade will be based on a short article/essay response papers based on the student’s individual assigned reading for that particular class meeting outside of the common readings (i.e. the seven monographs). Students are responsible for providing copies of these essays, which will be no longer than 1-page, to the professor and the rest of the class. In addition, students will present their findings on the assigned reading in a brief 5-10-minute presentation each week.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PAPER:

As a graduate seminar, you will need to write a formal historiographical paper of no less than 12 pages that demonstrates your ability to conduct historical study and marshal your research to produce a thoughtful and cogent essay on a subject relevant to the historiography of the Civil War and Reconstruction era. I will provide a list of potential topics, but I welcome additional ideas. This is your opportunity to reflect on the course material, marshal additional sources, analyze what you have learned, and develop a reasoned argument based on your findings.

An historiographical paper is a focused study on a particular theme, problem or issue from a specific era and field of history. In essence, you will identify a particular topic and assess the secondary literature examining this area and analyzing the state of scholarship, or simply reflecting on recent literature in that field. The historiographical paper will help students see the relationship between the books and articles you have been finding and other scholarship on your topic. It will help you find other books and articles on your topic.

One important thing to remember: This is not a bibliographic essay—you are not expected to assess all the literature on a given topic. Rather, you need to extrapolate arguments from the various authors which prove relevant to the theme of your essay. The historiographical paper project is due on

Topics:

- Abolitionists and the Anti-Slavery Movement
- Politics
- The Battle over the Territories
- Secession
- Causes of the War
- Lincoln and/or Emancipation
- The African American Experience
- Civil War Soldiers
- Civil War Battles
- Civil War Women
- Civil War Military
- Confederate Defeat
- Reconstruction
- Violence During Reconstruction
- Reconstruction Politics
- The Memory of the Civil War
CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Ten percent of your grade will be based on class participation. Two of the main components used in determining that grade are attendance and presentation. In regard to the former, graduate students are expected to exhibit a professional attitude toward this and all courses by attending every meeting. There are no excused “cuts” at this level and absences will dramatically reduce the participation portion of the grade.

As for presentation, each student will be expected to have read the week’s assignment and be prepared to identify the main thesis, summarize the argument, and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their reading for their classmates in discussion. Questions and discussion related to the recommended readings are also expected.

Although students will of course vary in their conversational styles, learning to participate in seminar discussions involves social and intellectual skills that are an essential part of graduate education. These include: listening to others and learning to absorb and synthesize their remarks; learning to respond constructively and analytically to others’ ideas; learning to develop and articulate positions of one’s own; responding to criticism and learning to modify or discard an argument as one comes to see another, more satisfactory one. Weekly discussions, then, should serve as course workshops, where we all come together to exchange ideas about the various topics under study, to sharpen our analytical tools, and to work toward new understandings and hypotheses, more satisfying and penetrating than those you might have had before.

As the professor, I will provide contexts for the topics under study and often offer interpretations of my own for you to consider (though not to swallow whole) and I will keep track of who shares in discussion, who attempts to dominate discussion, and who says next to nothing. There is no reward for getting by doing as little as possible, or in letting others do your work for you.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. I will make every reasonable accommodation to assist students with disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student to let me know of the disability for accommodation to his/her needs. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with Federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation for his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Student Services Center located in the University Center, Room 111. The telephone number is 566-7079 (TDD 565-5579).

INCOMPLETES:

It is the policy of the professor not to grant incompletes for the semester. Students who are unable to meet this requirement should withdraw before the last drop date. Students who discontinue attendance without formally withdrawing will receive a failing grade.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Finally, if you find yourself having difficulty during the semester, do not wait until the last minute to discuss a problem with me. I can usually assist you with any problem, but only if given adequate time.
Week 1 Introduction: Why the Civil War?

- Trends, ideas, and the focus of the course

Week 2: Slaves and Abolitionists

Assigned Reading(s):


Supplementary Readings:

John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (1972)
Frederick Blue, No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics (2005)
Douglas Egerton, Gabriel’s Rebellion (1993)
William King, Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in the 19th Century (1995)
Peter Kolchin, American Slavery (1998)
Lawrence Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness (1977)
William S. McFeely, Frederick Douglass (1991)
Week 3: The Political Crisis and the Coming of the Civil War

Assigned Reading(s):

- Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*

Supplementary Readings:

- Frederick Blue, *Free Soilers: Third Party Politics, 1848-1854* (1973)
- Eric Foner, “The Causes of the American Civil War: Recent Interpretations and New Directions,” *Civil War History* 20, no. 3 (September 1974): 197-214
- William Freehling, *The Road to Disunion* (1990)
- Allen Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln* (1950)
- David Potter, *Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (1976)
- Charles Sydnor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848* (1948)
- Elizabeth Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (1998)
Week 4: The Coming of the Civil War

Assigned Readings:


Supplementary Readings:

- William Freehling, *The Road to Disunion* (1990)
- David Potter, *Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (1976)
Week 5: Secession

Assigned Reading(s):

- Daniel Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis*

Supplementary Readings:

Manisha Sinha, “Revolution or Counterrevolution?: The Political Ideology of Secession in Antebellum South Carolina,” *Civil War History* 46, no. 3 (September 2000): 205-226
Kenneth M. Stampp, *And the War Came: The North and the Secession Crisis, 1860-1861* (1950)
Ralph A. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South* (1962)
Week 6: Politics, Diplomacy, and War

Assigned Reading(s):

- Charles M. Hubbard, “James Mason, the ‘Confederate Lobby,’ and the Blockade Debate of March 1861,” *Civil War History* 45, no. 3 (September 1999): 223-237.

Supplementary Readings:

__________, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (1993)
James Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (1991)
William B. Hesseltine, *Lincoln and the War Governors* (1948)
__________, *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* (2005)
Frank Owsley, *States Rights in the Confederacy* (1925)
Emory Thomas, *The Confederate Nation* (1972)
Week 7: Behind the Lines: The Home Front During the Civil War

Assigned Reading(s):


Supplementary Readings:

Carol Dubbs, *Defend This Old Town: Williamsburg during the Civil War* (2002)
James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (1991)
Ernest A. McKay, *The Civil War and New York City* (1990)
David Williams, Teresa Crisp Williams, and David Carlson, *Plain Folk in a Rich Man’s War: Class and Dissent in Confederate Georgia* (2002)
Week 8: Seeing the Elephant: Civil War Soldiers and Their Battles

Assigned Reading(s):

Supplementary Readings:
- __________., *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (1997)
- James I. Robertson, Jr., *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (1998)
- Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (1952)
- __________., *The Life of Johnny Reb* (1943)
Week 9: The African American Experience

- Lawanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership*

Supplementary Readings:

David Blight, *Frederick Douglass’s Civil War* (1989)
Dudley T. Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (1956)
Barry Crouch, *The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Texans* (1968)
__________, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution* (1988)
James M. McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (1965)
Week 10: The Generals and their Battles

Assigned Reading(s):


Supplementary Readings:

__________, *The Confederate War* (1997)
__________, *R. E. Lee*, 4 vols., (1934-1936)
George Rable, *Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!* (2001)
__________, *Controversies and Commanders: Dispatches from the Army of the Potomac* (1998)
Steven E. Woodworth, *Civil War Generals in Defeat* (1999)
__________, *Davis and Lee at War* (1996)
__________, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (1990)
__________, *The Art of Command in the Civil War* (1998)
Week 11: Combat and the Ideology of Warfare

Assigned Reading(s):

- Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865*

Supplementary Readings:

- Anne J. Bailey and Daniel Sutherland, eds., *Civil War Arkansas: Beyond Battles and Leaders* (2000)
- Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (1990)

- Ethan Rafuse, “‘Was the Civil War a Total War?’” *Civil War History* 37, no. 2 (March 1991): 5-28.

Assigned Reading(s):


Supplementary Readings:

Catherine Clinton, *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (1992)
Catherine Clinton, ed., *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South* (2000)
Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (2005)
Elizabeth Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (1998)
Leeann Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (1995)
Week 13: The Problem of Reconstruction

Assigned Reading(s):

- Dan Carter, *When the War Was Over: The Failure of Self Reconstruction in the South*

Supplementary Readings:

- Dan Carter, *When the War was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South, 1865-1867* (1985)
- David Donald, *The Politics of Reconstruction* (1965)
- William Dunning, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic* (1903)
- Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction* (1965)
Week 14: Retreat from Reconstruction & the New South

Assigned Reading(s):


Supplementary Readings:

Randolph B. Campbell, Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880 (1997)
William Gillette, Retreat From Reconstruction, 1869-1877 (1979)
Stanley P. Hirschson, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans and the Southern Negro (1962)
James K. Hogue, Uncivil Wars: Five New Orleans Street Battles and the Rise And Fall of Radical Reconstruction (2006)
William McFeely, Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen (1968)
Otto Olson, ed., Reconstruction and Redemption in the South (1980)
George Rable, But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (1984)
Leeann Whites, Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South (2005)
C. Vann Woodward, Reunion & Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 & the End of Reconstruction (1973)
__________, Origins of the New South (1951)
__________, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (1955)
Edward Ayers, Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction (1992)
Week 15: Causes Lost but not Forgotten: Remembering the Civil War

Assigned Readings:

- Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*

Supplementary Readings:

Andre Fleche, “‘Shoulder to Shoulder as Comrades Tried’: Black and White Union Veterans and Civil War Memory *Civil War History* 51, no. 2 (June 2005): 175-201.
Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (1987)
Gary Gallagher, ed., *Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History: A Persistent Legacy* (1995)
__________, *Lee and His Army in Confederate History* (2001)
__________, *Lee and His Generals in Memory* (1997)
Carol Reardon, *Pickett’s Charge in History and Memory* (1997)
Andrew Rolle, *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico* (1965)