

HIST 5386: Civil War and Reconstruction

University of Texas at Tyler
Fall 2026; T, 6:00-8:45; CAS 208

Instructor: Prof. [Matt Stith](#)
Email: mstith@uttyler.edu (this is preferable to Canvas messages)
Office: CAS 127
Office Hours: T/R, 12:30-1:30; Tuesday, 3:30-4:30; Or by appointment.

Course Description: A little over half of the course will center on how historians—and those who lived through it—have interpreted the Civil War. The remainder of the semester will be devoted to researching, writing, and talking about a Civil War era (1848-1877) topic of your choice.¹

Important Note: I encourage you to meet with me regularly to discuss or clarify discussion or reading—or to talk about the historical profession in general. My job (and satisfaction) is as much to work with students on an individual basis as it is to lecture and lead discussion. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.

Readings:

Elizabeth R. Varon, *Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the American Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2019)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/dd353f6a-bb39-39f2-bcda-be496f32c3f5>

Matthew Pinsker, *Boss Lincoln: The Partisan Life of Abraham Lincoln* (W.W. Norton, 2026)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/6bcfe8bf-7435-319e-9af0-56d53838982b>

Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (UNC Press, 2009)

- <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=475208>

W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *A Fate Worse Than Hell: American Prisoners of the Civil War* (W.W. Norton, 2026)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/e8042257-a157-32c0-9488-6ab05d68fb18>

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2023; Penguin, 2009)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/028ef898-5191-370b-b698-7b9de1d7fe64>

John Q. Anderson, ed., *Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868* (LSU Press, 1995)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/70c8da37-d11c-3205-957c-220b7b18f468>

M. Jane Johansson, ed., *Albert C. Ellithorpe, the First Indian Home Guards, and the Civil War on the Trans-Mississippi Frontier* (LSU Press, 2016)

- <https://research.ebsco.com/plink/9857d4c4-f144-3467-ac48-b8d60aaf78e5>

Research Paper (100pts): Please prepare a 3,500-4,500-word (exclusive of footnotes) research paper based on primary sources and contextualized by relevant secondary sources about a topic within the years 1848-1877. It is worth 100 points and due at 11:59pm on Tuesday, December 8. Please research and write this paper with an eye toward presenting it at a conference and perhaps expanding it into an article-length publication.

Presentation (50pts): Please prepare a ~20-minute presentation for the class in a conference-style format on Tuesday, December 1.

Book Reviews (7x10 = 70pts): Please write a single-spaced, analytical review of the following: Varon (700 words); Faust (700 words); Pinsker (700 words); Brundage (700 words); Sutherland (700 words). Write a detailed summary of Anderson/Stone (700+ words) and Johansson/Ellithorpe (700+ words). Reviews/summaries are due on Canvas by 5:00pm on Tuesdays.

Attendance and Participation (30pts): Active and informed participation is mandatory. Poor, hostile, or no discussion outside of the formal presentations—or more than two unexcused absences—will result in the loss of the participation points.

¹ Topic must be approved by instructor.

Point Breakdown:

Reviews:	7x10 = 70
Presentation:	50
Research Paper:	100
<u>Attendance/Participation:</u>	<u>30</u>
Total:	250

Grade Scale:

250-225:	A
224-200:	B
199-175:	C
174-150:	D
149-000:	F

Academic Honesty [*IMPORTANT***]** Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism, will result in immediate failure of the class and possibly further sanctions from the University of Texas at Tyler. Plagiarism, put simply, is using another's work as your own without proper citation or usage. This includes everything from copying and pasting from the Internet to failing to cite an idea from another source that you put in your own words. Please carefully read the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8-student-conduct-discipline.pdf> **AI is not permitted in this course.** All work students submit for this course should be their own. This is college. Do your *own* work without artificial intelligence. The use of ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values and will be treated as cheating (see above).

Course Schedule

- **Week 1 (8/25)**
 - o State of the Field; Researching and Writing Civil War History; Crafting Proposals, Structuring Papers; Being a Professional Historian; PhDs and Careers in History
 - o Start: Varon, *Armies of Deliverance*
- **Week 2 (9/1)**
 - o Continue conversation about CW history; Discuss: Varon, *Armies of Deliverance*, Intro + Part 1
- **Week 3 (9/8)**
 - o Discuss: Varon, *Armies of Deliverance*, remainder; Start: Pinsker, *Boss Lincoln*
- **Week 4 (9/15)**
 - o Discuss: Pinsker, *Boss Lincoln*; Start: Sutherland, *Savage Conflict*
- **Week 5 (9/22)**
 - o Discuss: Sutherland, *Savage Conflict*; Start: Brundage, *Fate Worse than Hell*
- **Week 6 (9/29)**
 - o Discuss: Brundage, *Fate Worse than Hell*; Start: Faust, *Republic of Suffering*
- **Week 7 (10/6)**
 - o Discuss: Faust, *Republic of Suffering*; Start: *Brokenburn*
- **Week 8 (10/13)**
 - o Discuss: *Brokenburn* and research paper; Start: *Albert C. Ellithorpe...*
- **Week 9 (10/20)**
 - o Discuss: *Ellithorpe* and research paper
- **Week 10 (10/27)**
 - o No Class Meeting/Work on Research Paper
- **Week 11 (11/3)**
 - o Research Updates and Discussion
- **Week 12 (11/10)**
 - o Optional Individual Meetings
- **Week 13 (11/17)**
 - o Research Updates and Discussion
- **Week 14 (11/24)**
 - o Thanksgiving Break
- **Week 15 (12/1)**
 - o Presentations
- Final Research Paper Due by 11:59pm on **Tuesday, December 8.**

