

History 4072/6072 U.S. Civil War
University of Georgia
Fall 2007

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Berry
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Themes of the Course

The following four themes will dominate the course. Even when we are not discussing them explicitly, we will be discussing them implicitly (and they are certain to structure the exam questions).

1) *Two societies, not two armies, went to war in 1861.* The American Civil War was unlike any war that had come before. For the first time in history, two modernized, industrializing societies made war on each other, and the results were catastrophic. By April 1865, 625,000 men had died, roughly the losses of all other American wars combined. What made such mass slaughter possible was not the brutality of the conflict but the modernity. Mechanized agriculture allowed an unprecedented percentage of men to spend their time fighting not farming. Railroads made it possible to transport massive armies; the telegraph made it possible to coordinate them. New technologies put rifled muskets in the hands of infantrymen, and a revolution in manufacturing put them in uniforms and shoes. Because it was a modern war, then, the fighting depended to an unprecedented degree on activities away from the battlefield. Agricultural laborers, telegraph operators, munitions manufacturers, nurses, politicians, and bankers contributed as much as soldiers and generals. As William Tecumseh Sherman understood when he marched to the sea, his enemy was not the Confederate army but the civilians and resources that made that army possible. In this class, the homefront will not be seen as a sidebar to the activities of soldiers. Rather, the soldiers will be seen as an extension of their homefront societies.

2) This said, *battles mattered.* In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln noted that "all else" depended upon the progress of Union arms, and he was right. Strategic decisions made in Washington and Richmond, tactical decisions made by generals, heroism and cowardice within individual commands, always could and sometimes did have a critical impact on the war's outcome. A loss to one side depleted its troops, devastated its resources and infrastructure, weakened its diplomatic position, and sapped the will of its people to keep fighting. Just as the Civil War cannot be understood outside its social context, it cannot be understood outside its military context.

3) *The Civil War evolved over time.* A war to preserve the Union became a war to destroy slavery. A limited "soft" war became a decidedly "hard" one. No one saw this more clearly or articulated it more fully than Abraham Lincoln. But everyone who participated in the war -- black and white, slave and free, man and woman, soldier and civilian -- struggled to adapt to a war that remade them as they remade it.

4) Which brings us to our fourth theme. *All history, the Civil War included, is a mosaic of human action.* People, not forces, move the world, and a million daily choices make up any trend. The Civil War, then, cannot be understood apart from the people who lived it through. The slaves' war was not same as the soldiers'; the nurses' war was not the same as the politicians' -- but all were related and together comprise the history of the whole. By focusing on biography and collective biography, on what the war *felt* like to various sectors of society, we will come to see the war as a concurrent (and contingent) set of human experiences and human choices.

Required Books

- *This Terrible War* by Michael Fellman, Daniel E. Sutherland, Lesley Gordon (2e)
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe (any edition)
- *All That Makes a Man* by Stephen Berry
- *What This Cruel War is Over* by Chandra Manning
- *Confederates in the Attic* by Tony Horwitz

General Overview of Course Assignments

Exams: There will be two in-class exams. Dates are given in the [class schedule](#). Exams will consist of "objective" questions (i.e. multiple choice, fill in the blank, identification) and short essay questions. Ample instruction will be given on what to expect on the exams.

Book Reviews: Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to write two out of the three book reviews (4-5 double-spaced, typed pages). See [below](#) for dates and descriptions of the book review assignments.

In-Class Reaction Papers: To encourage good reading habits, I will occasionally ask you to write a short paragraph reacting to that day's assignment. Your papers will be graded for clarity, succinctness, and penetration of thought, on a check-plus, check, check-minus basis.

Research Project: At the end of the semester, you will be expected to turn in a short project based on primary-source research.

Grading Breakdown

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|-------------------|-----|
| Discussion | 10% |
| Book Reviews | 30% |
| In-class Writings | 10% |
| Midterm | 15% |
| Term Project | 15% |
| Final | 20% |

Contacting Me

Students who have questions or problems are strongly encouraged to drop by my office (235 LeConte) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00. To schedule a meeting at another time, please feel free to call (542-2500) or [email me](mailto:berry@uga.edu) at berry@uga.edu.

Schedule

PART I - ANTEBELLUM AMERICA (1800-1860)

How did American progress -- territorial expansion, revolutions in communication, transportation, and commerce -- actually contribute to sectional division? How was the issue of slavery politicized in each section? How did the nation become acclimated to the idea of violence in pursuit of sectional goals? How have historians explained the causes of the Civil War?

Aug. 16 (R) **Introductions**

Aug. 21 (T) **The "New" North**
Reading: TTW, 11-22

Aug. 23 (R) **The "Old" South**
Reading: TTW, 22-39; ATMAM, 3-44

Aug. 28 (T) **The Antislavery Narrative**
Reading: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; spend a while browsing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *American Culture*
Discussion: UTC and the Coming of the War

***** **STOWE PAPER DUE AUGUST 28** *****

Aug. 30 (R) **Acclimating a Nation to Violence**
Reading: TTW, 1-10, 40-75 | ATMAM, 118-36 | On the caning of Charles Sumner: *Sumner's Speech* | *Bocock's Defense* | Harpweek Image

Sept. 4 (T) **Secession and Sumter**
Reading: TTW, 76-85 | ATMAM, 163-73 | Abraham Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address*
Discussion: What "Caused" the Civil War?

PART II - BATTLEFIELDS, pt. 1 (1861-1862)

Under what advantages and disadvantages did each side labor at the outset of the conflict? How did the Confederacy fare in the west in 1862? In the east? What were the terms and circumstances of the Emancipation Proclamation?

Sept. 6 (R) **Bull Run and the Border States**
Reading: TTW, 86-93, 110-15

Sept. 11 (T) **Naval Warfare and International Strategy**
Reading: TTW, 97-107

Sept. 13 (R) **The River War in the West**
Reading: TTW, 109-24

Sept. 18 (T) **From the Peninsula to Antietam**
Reading: TTW, 124-67
Discussion: Exam Review

Sept. 20 (R) **MIDTERM EXAM**

PART III - WAR AS A HUMAN EXPERIENCE

How was a Civil War army organized? What was a Civil War battle really like? How did soldiers process the gruesome acts they witnessed and caused? What sustained them? What roles did African Americans play in the Civil War? What roles did women play in the Civil War? What was it like for non-combatants living through the Civil War? What were arguably the lowest points of Union morale? How were societies North and South transformed by the war? To what degree and in what ways did the Civil War become a total war?

- Sept. 25 (T) **The Face of Battle**
Reading: Brent Nosworthy, "The Reality of the Battlefield" | Stephen Berry, "When Metal Meets Mettle"
Discussion: What Was Battle Really Like?
- Sept. 27 (R) **Soldier Motivation**
Reading: Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*
Discussion: Why Did They Fight?

***** **SOLDIER PAPER DUE SEPTEMBER 27** *****

- Oct. 2 (T) **The African Americans' War**
Reading:
- Oct. 4 (R) **War's Irregularities**
Reading: TTW, 195-203
- Oct. 9 (T) **Civilian Experience**
Reading: TTW, 204-15
- Oct. 11 (R) **The Women's War**
Reading: TTW, 217-23

PART IV - BATTLEFIELDS, pt. 2 (1863-1865)

To what degree and in what ways were Gettysburg and Vicksburg turning points in the war? How and why did Sherman and Grant ascend to power? How might Abraham Lincoln fairly be called the Great Interpreter of the Civil War? Did the Confederacy lose, or did the Union win?

- Oct. 16 (T) **Gettysburg**
Reading: TTW, 225-32
- Oct. 18 (R) **Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Tullahoma**
Reading: TTW, 233-58
- Oct. 23 (T) **Grant and the Overland Campaign**
Reading: TTW, 259-69
- Oct. 25 (R) **NO CLASS / FALL BREAK**
- Oct. 30 (T) **Sherman vs. Johnston in Georgia**
Reading: TTW, 270-85

- Nov. 1 (R) **TBA**
Reading: TBA
- Nov. 6 (T) **Endgame**
Reading: TTW, 286-91
- Nov. 8 (R) **TBA**
Reading: TBA
- Nov. 13 (T) **A Miserable End (the Math of After)**
Reading: TTW, 292-96
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PART V - RECONSTRUCTION (1865-1877)

What questions did the war answer? What questions did it leave unanswered? What was the condition of the country that would have to answer those questions? How did Reconstruction play out in Washington? How did it play out on the ground in the South? What role did African Americans play in Reconstruction? What role did the Klan play? Did Reconstruction fail, and if so, why?

- Nov. 15 (R) **Reconstruction in the North**
Reading: TTW, 296-316
- Nov. 20 (T) **Reconstruction in the South**
Reading: TTW, 317-345
- Nov. 22 (R) NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING
- Nov. 27 (T) **Reconstruction Rolling Back**
Reading: TTW, 346-73
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PART VI - THE CIVIL WAR IN REMEMBRANCE (1877-present)

Why (and how) should the Civil War be remembered? How have authors remembered the Civil War? What motivates reenactors? Why is it ironic that we remember the Civil War as our Iliad?

- Nov. 29 (R) **Cinematic Memory**
Reading: TTW, 374-82; David Thelen, interviewer, "The Movie Maker as Historian: Conversations with Ken Burns"
Ken Burns's *The Civil War: Historians Repond*
- Dec. 4 (T) **Fictional Memory**
Reading: Ambrose Bierce, "Chickamauga"; Mark Twain, "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed"; Margaret Mitchell, selection one and selection two from *Gone With the Wind*; William Faulkner, sentence from *Intruder in the Dust*; Frederick Goldin, selection from the introduction to his translation of *The Song of Roland*.
- Dec. 6 (R) **Living Memory**
Reading: Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*

***** **HORWITZ PAPER DUE DECEMBER 6** *****

- Dec. 10-14 **FINAL EXAM**