

HISTORY 328: THE CIVIL WAR ERA
SPRING 2018
(MWF 12:20-1:10)

Prof. Nina Silber
Room 408, 226 Bay State Road
353-8307; nsilber@bu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 10-12 and Wednesdays 11-12; and by appointment
(Email is best for contacting me.)

Course website (copy and paste the link below):

https://learn.bu.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/announcement?method=search&context=course&course_id=45435_1&handle=cp_announcements&mode=cpview

Fought over 150 years ago, the U.S. Civil War suddenly jolted into prominence in 2017. Throughout the US, communities debated the placement and presence of monuments to the Confederacy; protestors clashed over a monument to Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia, with deadly consequences; White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly, offered a novel interpretation of the coming of the Civil War; and a recent candidate for the US Senate praised family life in the pre-Civil War slave-era South. One objective of this course, then, is to go beyond current myths and controversies to better understand the Civil War in its historical context, while also understanding some of the roots of many widespread and misleading legends about the conflict. Over the course of this semester, we will examine the coming of the US Civil War, the war itself, and the period of Reconstruction that followed. Our goal is to examine the Civil War experience in a broad social, cultural, and political context, looking at both Northern and Southern society (men and women, black and white) in the antebellum, wartime and post-war years. Although we will pay attention to military events, this is not primarily a course on military history.

The first (and longest) part of this course will consider the roots of the war by examining key events and issues in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American society (slavery, the market revolution, westward expansion, etc.), including the crisis that immediately preceded the Civil War. The second part of the course will focus on the war itself, looking at battles, as well as homefront experiences and political developments. The third, and final, part of the course will consider the aftermath and legacy of the Civil War, specifically the Reconstruction experiment, the retreat from Reconstruction, and the legacy of the “Lost Cause”.

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- *Explain various factors that led to the Civil War and especially how the conflict over slavery emerged as the most important source of division;
- *Explain various factors – military, political, social - that shaped how the war was waged and resolved;
- *Explain how the pre-war, war-time, and post-war experiences and attitudes differed for Americans depending on race, region, and gender;
- *Use primary source material to consider how a variety of Americans understood and participated in the events of the Civil War era.

READINGS: All books can be purchased at the BU Bookstore.

Drew Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of F. Douglass*
David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln*
Michael Shaara, *Killer Angels*
William Freehling, *The South vs. The South*
Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*

There is no required textbook, but students who would like a guide to the key developments of the period can consult any number of Civil War texts that can be found at Mugar including: Fellman, Gordon, and Sutherland, *This Terrible War: The Civil War and its Aftermath*; Robert Cook, *Civil War America: Making a Nation*; and James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

Readings should be completed by Friday's class, although exceptions will be made in the case of documents and other material that will be discussed prior to the Friday meeting.

FORMAT: The class will meet for three lecture hours each week. The format will consist mainly of lectures, although with discussions interspersed throughout. Certain blocs of time will also be set aside, and have been indicated on the syllabus, to discuss the assigned readings. At other times, our class discussion will call on you to speak as the historical character you have constructed for the "Civil War People & Stories" project (see below). Students should regularly check (their BU) email and the course website for updated information on readings, discussions, paper instructions, exam study guides, and news items regarding the continued relevance of the Civil War in American life.

ASSIGNMENTS: Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following assignments:

1) "*The Civil War People & Stories*" Project. Each student in the class will, a few weeks after the semester begins, create a historical character of the Civil War era. You will compose an initial sketch about the character and three pieces of written testimony (600-700 words), composed in the first person, and occasionally take the part of this character in class discussions. (See separate instruction sheet on this project.) This project is worth 30% of your final grade.

2) One in-class midterm exam worth 25% of your final grade.

3) Class participation

This consists of contributions to general discussions, discussions about the assigned readings, as well as discussions drawing on the work you do with your historical character. Students are also invited to make contributions to the Discussion Board on the Blackboard site if you would like to boost your participation grade. This is worth 15% of your final grade.

4) A final exam given during the final exam period worth 30% of your final grade.

Please note that ANY ASSIGNMENT TURNED IN AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL BE DOWNGRADED ACCORDINGLY.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT: Cheating – plagiarism included – is absolutely forbidden. Plagiarism means presenting somebody else's work as if it is your own, *even if you do so unintentionally*. It is the responsibility of all students to know and understand the BU Academic Conduct Code that deals with plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. This code is posted at: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

POLICY ON TECHNOLOGY: Studies show that students do not benefit from multi-tasking

and that some students' tendency to shop or face-book during class time can be a distraction for everyone. Evidence also suggests that students really don't learn better by taking notes on electronic devices. So, unless there is a demonstrated need, laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices are NOT PERMITTED in class. The only exception to this rule will be when students must access a reading assignment from the web or from Blackboard that is being discussed in class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students are allowed a TOTAL OF THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. If you are absent more than three times, you must discuss this with me and there may be additional work. Excessive absence may result in a reduction in your final grade.

PART I: ROOTS OF THE SECTIONAL CONFLICT

WEEK I

January 19 Introduction: the Meaning of the Civil War

WEEK II

January 22 Constitution and Conflict

January 24 Southern Dominance in the Early Republic

January 26 Jacksonian Politics

READING: Faust, *James Henry Hammond*, 1-111; 131-134

WEEK III

January 29 Nullification & Southern Distinctiveness

January 31 Southerners and Slavery

February 2 Northern Distinctiveness & Abolition

READING: Douglass, *Narrative*, all

WEEK IV

February 5 Abolitionists

February 7 Abolitionists and their Influence/Discuss Douglass' *Narrative*

February 9 Slavery and American Politics

READING: Faust, *James Henry Hammond*, 137-185, 204-254

*INITIAL STATEMENT FOR CIVIL WAR PEOPLE PROJECT DUE VIA EMAIL ON FEB. 9 BY
10 PM*

WEEK V

February 12 Pro-Slavery Response & Sectional Politics/Discuss *James Henry Hammond*

February 14 Westward Expansion & Free Soil Politics

February 16 NO CLASS (Instructor out of town)

READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 19-195

WEEK VI

February 19 NO CLASS (Presidents' Day Holiday)

February 20 Compromise and Conflict
(Tuesday)

February 21 Republicans and the Crime Against Kansas

February 23 Slave Power Conspiracy

READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 196-256; Freehling, *The South vs. the South*, 3-43

WEEK VII

February 26 Road to War

February 28 Election & Secession

*FIRST ASSIGNMENT FOR CIVIL WAR PEOPLE PROJECT DUE VIA EMAIL ON MARCH 1
BY 10 PM*

March 2 War Begins/Midterm Review

READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 257-294; and:

Mississippi's Secession Declaration:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_missec.asp

South Carolina's Secession Declaration:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_scaresec.asp

Alexander Stephens, "Corner Stone" Speech, March 21 1861:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/cornerstone-speech/>

WEEK OF MARCH 3-11: SPRING RECESS

WEEK VIII

- March 12 MIDTERM EXAM
- March 14 What Caused the War: Interpretations
- March 16 Manassas Syndrome/Civil War Strategies
- READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 295-353

PART II: CIVIL WAR

WEEK IX

- March 19 Strategies of War
- March 21 Soldier Experiences
- March 23 Union Stalemate/Emancipation
- READING: Shaara, *Killer Angels*, xv-150; Freehling, *The South vs the South*, 47-82; and
Emancipation Proclamation:
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=34&page=transcript>

WEEK X

- March 26 Emancipation
- March 28 DISCUSSION: Historical Characters Reflect on the War
- March 30 Confederate Homefront
- READING: Shaara, *Killer Angels*, 155-270; Donald, *Lincoln*, 354-406

WEEK XI

- April 2 Summer of '63
- April 4 Northern Homefront/Discuss *Killer Angels*
- April 6 Turning Tide of War

READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 437-466; Shaara, *Killer Angels*, 275-345; Freehling, *The South vs. the South*, 85-173

WEEK XII

April 9 Union Victory & Confederate Defeat

*SECOND ASSIGNMENT FOR CIVIL WAR PEOPLE PROJECT DUE VIA EMAIL ON APRIL 9
BY 10 PM*

April 11 Aftermath of War/Discuss *South vs South*

April 13 Postwar Problems/Presidential Responses

READING: Donald, *Lincoln*, 517-599; Freehling, *The South vs the South*, 177-206

PART III: RECONSTRUCTION AND THE LEGACY OF WAR

WEEK XII

April 16 NO CLASS (Patriot's Day Holiday)

April 18 Discuss *Lincoln*/Black and White in the Postwar South

April 20 Congressional Reconstruction

READING: Lemann, *Redemption*, 3-62

WEEK XIV

April 23 Reconstruction in the South

April 25 Reconstruction and Backlash

April 27 Legacy of the Civil War

READING: Lemann, *Redemption*, 63-169

WEEK XV

April 30 The Civil War in Memory

May 2 Discuss Lemann, *Redemption*/Final Review

*THIRD ASSIGNMENT FOR CIVIL WAR PEOPLE PROJECT DUE VIA EMAIL ON MAY 2 BY
10 PM*

READING: Lemann, *Redemption*, 170-209

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY MAY 10, 12:30-2:30