

HTS 3009 -- THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Lawrence Foster
121 Old CE Building
Phone: 404-894-6845
email: larry.foster@hsoc.gatech.edu

Summer 2018
MWF 2:00-3:15 p.m.
Office Hours:
MWF 3:15-3:15 p.m.

This course will focus one of the most critical periods in the history of the United States, a period that culminated in a devastating Civil War from 1861 through 1865. The Civil War cost more lives than in all other wars in American history *combined* through the present, according to the latest scholarly estimates. The Civil War also has contributed to profound and continuing transformations in American life during the century-and-a-half afterward.

The first third of this course will focus on the sectional conflicts that led to the Civil War. Then the core of the course will deal with the four years of the Civil War itself, evaluating the war within the narrative and analytical perspectives of recent scholarship. At course's end, we will briefly consider the crucial aftermath of the Civil War known as Reconstruction, as well as the many broader issues the Civil War continues to raise for us today.

Evaluation in this course will be based on three mid-term essay exams (indicated below in the "Reading Assignments and Exam Schedule"), on a review of a book approved in advance in consultation with the instructor, and on a final comprehensive essay exam. The four equally weighted exams will draw on both the readings and the lecture/discussions.

Please note that the first exam in the class will come very early--on Wednesday, May 30--the middle of the third week of the course!

The first exam will be based primarily on reading Jeanette Keith's lively overview of the history of the American South from 1607 to 1877. This two-week "crash course" in Southern history will help all students begin the class with a basic overview of the most important aspects of the history of the American South, within which the events and issues of the Civil War period can best be understood.

The three required books for the course are:

Jeanette Keith, The South: A Concise History, Vol. 1 ISBN: 0-13-022056-6
James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction, 3rd edition
(order used copies of cheaper 3rd edition, which is identical to the 4th edition for the pages we'll be reading) ISBN: 0-07-231736-1
Stephen B. Oates, Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myths ISBN: 0-06-092472-1
(order used copies of this book too)

The class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the truly staggering range of books about the Civil War period, each student also will be required to write a 6-10 page review of a book--chosen in consultation with the professor--on a topic of special interest to them relating to the coming of the Civil War, the Civil War itself, or Reconstruction after the Civil War.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *This is an accelerated summer course. In 10 weeks of class, we will cover the material that would normally take 15 weeks during a regular semester. Since each 75-minute class period deals with the equivalent of nearly a lecture and a half, keeping up with the class reading and coming to class regularly and on time is essential.*

Class roll will be taken after the first week. Missing four (4) or more unexcused class sessions (the equivalent of two full weeks of the course) may be grounds for a reduction in the student's overall course grade by as much as one full grade level (10 points).

Throughout the course, all students will be expected to follow the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL NOTE: *The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.*

Area E Approved Learning Outcome:

Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence behavior.

Explain how the course satisfies the learning outcome:

To demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome, students will be able to *describe* the political, social, and economic issues that led to the outbreak of the American Civil War, *explain* the impact of political, military, economic, and social factors on the way the Civil War developed, and *analyze* the impact of the Civil War on the later development of the United States.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will *describe* the complex forces that transformed the young United States during the half-century before the Civil War, emphasizing how political, economic, and social factors contributed to the outbreak of the war.

2. Students will *analyze* the strengths and weaknesses of both the Union and Confederate sides at the start of the Civil War and throughout the war, focusing on how those strengths and weaknesses--including the military and political leadership on both sides--contributed to the war's outcome.
3. Students will *recognize* the pivotal military, political, and diplomatic events that shaped the course of the Civil War in both its eastern and western theaters.
4. Students will *evaluate* the role that slavery and race relations played in the coming of the Civil War, the Civil War itself, and Reconstruction after the war.
5. Students will *explain* the social, economic, and political impact that the Civil War had on the subsequent development of the United States.

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM SCHEDULE:

NOTE: Students are expected, as a minimum, to begin reading the assignments by the start of the date indicated and to finish reading those assignments before the beginning of the next assignment. Students hoping to earn an "A" in the class should try to finish their reading in advance of the schedule below in order to allow sufficient time for proper review before the exams.

May 14--begin Jeanette Keith, The South, introduction and chapter 1 (pp. 1-52)
 May 16--begin Keith, chapter 2 (pp. 53-98)
 May 18--begin Keith, chapter 3 (pp. 99-141)
 May 21--begin Keith, chapter 4 (pp. 142-183)
 May 23--begin Keith, chapter 5 (pp. 184-215)
 May 25--Review for Exam #1

NO CLASS--Monday, May 28--Memorial Day Holiday celebrated--Review for EXAM #1!

EXAM #1--Wednesday, May 30

*May 30--begin James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, chapter 1 (pp. 1-26)
 June 1--begin McPherson, chapters 2-4 (pp. 25-77)
 June 4--begin Stephen Oates, Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myths, section 1 (pp. 1-30)
 June 6--begin McPherson, chapter 5-6 (pp. 79-108) & Oates, section 2 (pp. 33-54)
 June 8--begin Oates, section 3 (pp. 57-86) & McPherson, chapter 7 (pp. 109-125)
 June 11--begin McPherson, chapters 8-10 (pp. 125-177)
 June 13--begin McPherson, chapters 11-12 (pp. 180-226)
 June 15--begin McPherson, chapters 13-15 (pp. 227-282)

June 18--begin McPherson, chapters 16-17 (pp. 283-326)
June 20--Review for Exam #2

EXAM #2--Friday, June 22

*June 22--begin Oates, section 4a (pp. 89-119)
June 24--begin Oates, section 4b (pp. 120-147)
June 27--begin McPherson, chapters 18-19 (pp. 327-372)
June 29--begin McPherson, chapters 20-21 (pp. 373-424)
July 2--begin McPherson, chapter 22-23 (pp. 425-470)

NO CLASS--Wednesday, July 4--Independence Day!

July 6--Review for Exam #3

EXAM #3--Monday, July 9

July 11, 13-- work on Book Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS due--Monday, July 16

*July 16--begin McPherson, chapter 24 (pp. 471-494)
July 18--begin McPherson, chapter 25 (pp. 495-526)
July 20--begin Oates, section 5 (pp. 151-187) & review Keith, chapter 5 (pp. 184-215)
July 23--Review for the Final Exam

FINAL EXAM--Thursday, August 2, 2:40-5:30 p.m.