

**History 412**  
**Spring 2015**

**The Civil War and Reconstruction**

Professor Jennifer L. Weber

864-9457

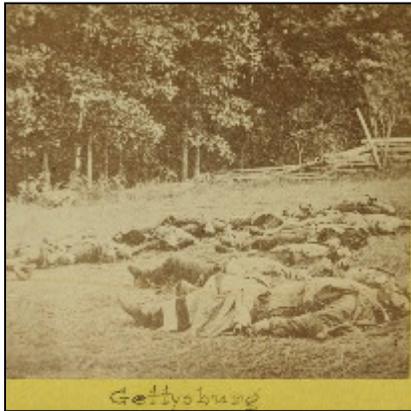
[jlweber@ku.edu](mailto:jlweber@ku.edu)

Office hours:

BY APPOINTMENT

Overview

The Civil War is the most cataclysmic event in American History. By conservative estimates, 620,000 men died of wounds and disease between 1861 and 1865 – and this figure



does not count the men who died at home after being declared unfit for duty or after the war ended. The toll was enormous. But as many observers, including President Abraham Lincoln, noted, it may have been the price the nation had to pay for slavery. “If God wills that [the war] continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,’” Lincoln said in his Second Inaugural Address, delivered a month and a half before the war ended.

The war determined whether the United States would continue as one nation or divide in two. It settled the question of whether states could secede from the Union – a question the Constitution did not provide for. The war propelled the nation into the industrial age. And most importantly, it wiped chattel slavery, and institution that had arrived in the early days of colonization, from the land.

But in a political system designed to force compromise, how did the country wind up settling its differences at the business end of a gun? What were the issues that brought the nation to that point? Was civil war inevitable? Those questions will frame the first part of the course.

In the second portion of the course we will be talking about the Civil War itself: How it was fought, why young men were willing to die by the scores of thousands, and the political issues swirling around the White Houses in Washington and Richmond. In this part of the class, you should be thinking about how the war unfolded and the sometimes complementary and sometimes competing demands of political and military necessity. Why did Lincoln, Davis, and the generals on both sides make the decisions they did? How could the war have turned out differently, and at what points? Be particularly cognizant of the role African-Americans played in the war and the pressures they put on both governments through their actions.

**Course Goals**

I'd like you to come out of this class with the following achievements:

- An understanding of what led to the Civil War; how the war unfolded; the political, social, and military consequences of the conflict; and how it resonates in our own time
- A recognition of contingency in history (i.e., nothing is “inevitable”)
- A better ability to read and understand primary texts, and connect them to other readings and lectures
- The ability to read and synthesize multiple kinds of material
- Improved writing
- Better critical thinking skills

### **Books**

*The assigned texts are available at Jayhawk Bookstore:*

Stephen Berry, *Weirding the War*  
 James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*  
 Salomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*  
 Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*

### **Expectations**

Students should arrive for class on time and conduct themselves in a manner conducive for creating an environment suitable for learning. To create the best learning environment possible, no computers, phones or other electronic devices may be used in class unless you have extenuating circumstances.

Discussion is an integral part of this course. While I encourage honest disagreements, including with me, please be courteous. Because discussions are a good way to share and advance learning, participation counts significantly toward your final grade.

### **Assignments**

You will have a **weekly writing assignment** due through SafeAssign by the beginning of class each week (Bb > Assignments). This involves reading the documents that you'll find posted on Blackboard each week, thinking about how they fit with each other and with the secondary reading, and writing a 500- to 750-word response paper.

*For more on how to read a primary document, see p. 7 of the syllabus.*

*For more information on what a response paper is, see p. 8 of the syllabus.*

You'll also find the grading rubric at the end of the syllabus.

Please note that you will be able to look on SafeAssign yourself and see if your paper is running into any trouble in terms of overlap with the work of others. You will also be able to resubmit your work on SafeAssign as many times as you like up to the deadline.

Historians use the *Chicago Manual of Style* as their formatting bible. Use this style for your footnotes. This website should have pretty much everything you need:

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

If you would like more detailed information you can find the full *CMS* online through the KU library website:

<http://lib.ku.edu/databases/chicago-manual-style-online>.

If you are not getting good grades because of your writing, run – don't walk – to the university's Writing Center for help. You can email the folks there at [writing@ku.edu](mailto:writing@ku.edu). The web page is here:

<http://www.writing.ku.edu>.

You will also have a **final project** due at the end of the semester. You get to pick the subject, as long as it pertains to the course. The only limit on what kind of project you do (documentary? Architectural rendering? Web site? Lecture with Power Point?) is your imagination, but it should represent an investment of effort similar to what you would put into a 2,500-3,000 word paper. Whatever medium you choose, the project *must be based principally on primary documents* and you need to submit a bibliography.

Unless you have made arrangements in advance, late submissions will be penalized a full grade per every 24 hours late, including weekend days. All written assignments should be submitted by the time class begins through SafeAssign on Blackboard.

### **Academic Misconduct**

This is the unhappy portion of the syllabus. Academic misconduct includes disruptive behavior, plagiarism, cheating, behavioral problems, and forgery of, among other things, another student's work or a professor's signature (for a full definition, see

<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/governance/>

[USRR.htm#art2sect6](https://documents.ku.edu/policies/governance/USRR.htm#art2sect6)). Students who run afoul of KU's rules in any of these areas will automatically and immediately fail the class, and the case will be referred to the department and Strong Hall, where it can be placed in your permanent record.

Students who have problems in many of these areas often cite stress, putting off projects, illness or being jammed up with multiple assignments due in the same week. None of these is a legitimate excuse. Plan your semester carefully from the beginning and arrange your schedule of work so you can avoid such situations. The Office of Student Success offers free workshops on how to manage time. If you cannot submit original work on time, it is your responsibility to notify me or the TA.

Plagiarism is theft, and the academic community treats it accordingly. Incidents of plagiarism are subject to severe sanctions and you should avoid jeopardizing your future. Basically, plagiarism is using another person's words or ideas without giving them credit for this. You should submit only original work. A complete copy of the University policy on plagiarism, including definitions and methods of avoidance, is available at:

[www.writing.ku.edu/instructors/docs/ku\\_handbook.html](http://www.writing.ku.edu/instructors/docs/ku_handbook.html) and

<http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/docs/integrity.shtml>

I use a digital plagiarism detection program to check any work that is not written in class. If you have more questions, the Writing Assistance Center site offers suggestions on how to avoid plagiarism.

The History Department's policy and procedures regarding academic misconduct are available at: <http://www.history.ku.edu/undergraduate/>.

### **Readings**

*Reminder: Primary documents will be posted each week on Blackboard > Course Documents.*

Reading due 1/26: The antebellum world (no class last week)

Readings:

- *Twelve Years a Slave*, intro and chaps 1-11
- Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, ch. 1 (Bb > Documents)

2/2: Slavery and the West (first response paper due)

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps 2-4
- *Twelve Years a Slave*, chaps 12-15
- Clinton, “Queen Bee of the Confederacy” (Bb > Documents)

2/9: The 1850s

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps 5-7
- *Twelve Years a Slave*, chaps 16-19

2/16: Evaluating the road to war

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps 8-9
- Finish *Twelve Years a Slave*, including appendices

2/23: National and military strategy

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps. 10-12

3/2: You’re in the army now

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps. 13-15
- *Weirding*, pp. 272-281

3/9: The seesaw of war

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps 16-18
- *Weirding*, pp. 191-214
- McPherson, “Who Freed the Slaves?” (Bb > Documents)
- Berlin, “Emancipation and Its Meaning in American Life” (Bb > Documents)

**Week of 3/16: Spring Break (woot woot!)**

3/23: Leadership in wartime

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chap. 19-20

- McPherson, “The Hedgehog and the Foxes” (Bb > Documents)

3/30: The second turning point

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chap. 21
- *Killer Angels*, pp. 3-150

4/6: Gettysburg

Readings:

- Finish *Killer Angels*

4/13: The revolutionary war

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chap. 22
- *Weirding*, pp. 301-320
- Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice” (Bb > Documents)

4/20: A matter of will

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chap. 23 and 24
- *Weirding*, pp. 95-121, 160-175

4/27: Grant, Sherman and the summer of ‘64

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chaps. 25-27

5/4: Victory and Defeat

Readings:

- *Battle Cry*, chap. 28
- *Weirding*, pp. 36-53, 321-339
- Schulten, “Sherman’s Maps” (Bb > Documents)

**5/7: Final project due**

## **Reading Primary Documents Like a Pro**

### **Sources 101**

- What kind of document is this?
- Who created it? What do you know or what have you found out about that person? Is this a reliable source – someone you can believe?
- What biases did the author or artist have, either that you know about through outside reading or by what is suggested in the document? How do those opinions shape what you are looking at?
- When was this written or drawn? What else was happening around that time? How might that have influenced what you see in the document?
- What was the purpose of this document? Was it aimed at a public or private audience?
- What point or points is the writer or artist making?
- Was the document intended to persuade others? How? Do you find it convincing? Can you find evidence that people at the time thought it was persuasive?
- If the document was not something designed to sway others, do you think it paints an accurate picture of a particular event?

### **Using multiple documents**

- How are the documents alike? How do the creators agree?
- How are the documents different? In what ways do the creators disagree?
- If you're reading several documents, do you see any patterns developing – ways in which the creators agree or disagree? What does that suggest to you?
- At what point can you feel comfortable making generalizations based on a set of documents? Is two documents enough? Three? A dozen? More?

## The Response Paper

Response papers are designed to make you think more closely about what you are reading. They allow me know what you are thinking about and how you think, and they often can be a good foundation for discussion in class. The key things to remember are:

- Response papers are not a review, but an *analysis* of the source(s). A mere summary of what the author said will not earn you a good grade.
- You should always have an opinion that is articulated in your thesis.
- The question behind your thesis should always be a debatable point (e.g., why did the North win the war?). Your thesis should not be an observation (“Abraham Lincoln had a hard start in life”) or a statement over which reasonable people would not disagree (“slavery was bad”).
- Your paper should integrate your answers to the questions posed in “Reading Documents Like a Pro” with what you already know about American history.

Yes!

- ✓ The response paper should consider who the author was, the context in which it was written, what the intent of the material was, whether it succeeded in its intent, and what it illuminates about history.
- ✓ You may want to write about what the source did not discuss or what questions it left you with.
- ✓ You may write about whatever interests you about the source, whether it is the main argument (assuming there is one), or one element (e.g., what does this say about gender or race relations), or something that struck you as odd.
- ✓ You might also want to comment on the actions of historical figures. For instance, did Lincoln wait too long to free the slaves?
- ✓ Feel free to compare and contrast with other sources we read earlier in the semester.
- ✓ When looking at multiple sources in one week, compare and contrast among them.
- ✓ Be sure to provide evidence for the case you’re making. This can be a direct quotation, your paraphrase of something, or an episode that illustrates your point. Remember to footnote using the Chicago Manual of Style format.

Not so much

- ⇓ Because this paper is analytical, it should not have the tone of “I really liked/did not like this because ...”
- ⇓ The paper should not summarize the work in question the way a book review would, for example.
- ⇓ Avoid writing in the first person.

## **Writing a Successful History Paper**

1. In any essay, *you must have an opinion*. State this opinion in the first paragraph. This will be the argument, or thesis, that you spend the rest of the essay explaining and proving.
2. Use topic sentences. That's the first sentence in every paragraph. Every sentence in the paragraph should be related to what you said in your topic sentence. If a sentence is about another topic, delete it from this paragraph.
3. Give examples. We also call this "evidence." This can be a quotation or your paraphrasing a quotation, or illustrating your point with a brief story. This shows your reader that you did not pull your opinion out of thin air. Think like a lawyer: you can't win a case if you can't prove it with witness's testimony, DNA testing, and/or other physical evidence. Prove it prove it prove it.
4. Think in a linear manner. For some of you this is natural. A leads to B. B leads to C. C leads to D. And so on. Other people like to wander in circles until they settle on a point, kind of like a dog walking around its bed before lying down. If you're this kind of thinker, do the circling in the privacy of your own head, but not on the page. Historians are more inclined to be linear thinkers, or at least writers, and history professors give the best grades to people whose transitions from here to there make sense.
5. Be clear. Remember: the object of a paper is to get the good ideas from your brain to the reader's brain intact. If your writing is not clear, it's like static on the radio. I can't hear you. Clear writing is evidence of clear thinking, though, so be sure to *leave yourself enough time to think* so that you're clear about your ideas before you ever start writing them down.
6. Outline. Even with short papers, this helps clarify your ideas and allows you to be organized. Look at that outline with a cold eye: Do what you have to say and the way you are organizing your argument make sense?
7. Don't try to sound smart. Seriously. This is how people get in trouble and sound, um, not so smart. Don't use words if you do not know *exactly* what they mean. Look them up if you aren't sure. Simple words and simple sentences are easier to read and to understand. You'll sound smart if you have good ideas and communicate them effectively.
8. Spell check, grammar check, and then read your paper all the way through. Rewrite where you're not clear and reorganize if you have to. Repeat.
9. Footnote. This is not optional. Give the sources of quotes, ideas, numbers – anything that is not generally known information. Historians use the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or Kate Turabian) as the model for how to write footnotes and bibliographies. You can find the basics here: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)  
You can access a full version through the KU library. Go to the library homepage > databases > C > Chicago Manual of Style.

## Grading Guidelines

### *Papers and Exams*

An **A** or **A-** paper or exam is one that is good enough to be read aloud in a class. It is clearly written and well organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, and is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples. An **A** or **A-** exam draws on primary and secondary readings along with lecture material. Note that you cannot earn an **A** without using primary sources.

A **B+** or **B** paper or exam demonstrates many aspects of **A**-level work but falls short of it in either the organization and clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category are solid works containing flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A **B-** paper or exam demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer's independent argument because of weaknesses in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence.

A **C+**, **C**, or **C-** paper or exam offers little more than a mere a summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between **A** and **C-** are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the **D** or **F** categories demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A **D** paper or exam demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student's command of course or research material.

An **F** paper or exam demonstrates no competence in the course or research materials. It indicates a student's neglect or lack of effort in the course.

All papers must cite sources using footnotes in Chicago Manual of Style format. Students who fail to cite accurately will suffer in their grade.

## Discussion Sections

A student who receives an **A** for participation in discussion section typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind and has submitted a probing question ahead of time via Blackboard. An 'A' discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

A student who receives a **B** for participation in discussion section typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A 'B' discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

A student who receives a **C** for discussion section attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in the conversation.

A student who fails to attend discussion section regularly, does not participate online, or is not adequately prepared for discussion risks the grade of **D** or **F**.