

HISTORY 412

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

PROFESSOR JENNIFER L. WEBER

3633 WESCOE

864-9457

JLWEBER@KU.EDU

**OFFICE HOURS: MON. 10-11 TU. AND TH.
& 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

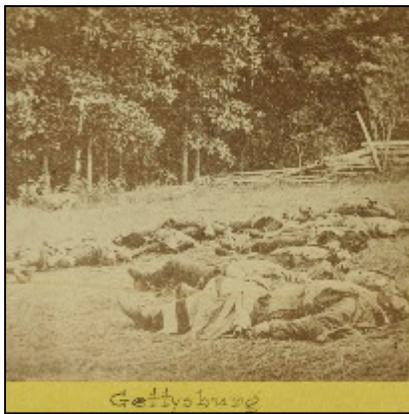


figure does not count the men who died at home after being declared unfit for duty or after the war ended. The toll was enormous. But as many observers, including President Abraham Lincoln, noted, it may have been the price the nation had to pay for slavery. “If God wills that [the war] continue until 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.

We'll be talking about Reconstruction briefly at the end of the course. Many historians regard Reconstruction as a failure. Others regard it as a success, albeit a limited one. Be thinking about how you regard it. What were its possibilities, and what

were its *realistic* possibilities? How did the political, economic, and social systems change after the war – and how *didn't* they change? Did Reconstruction really end in 1877? How do the war and its aftermath continue to shape American society?

We'll be dealing with these questions in lecture and in discussion sections, but thinking about them on your own will help you get the most out of your reading. The questions give you a sense for the big picture and the issues at stake, and should help you as you prepare for the midterm and the final exams.

BOOKS

The assigned texts are available at Jayhawk Bookstore:

Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Partners in Command*
Richard M. McMurry, *Two Great Rebel Armies*
James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire* (3d ed.)
Salomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*
Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*
Sam Watkins, *Company Aytch*
Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads*

GRADING

Midterms – 20% each
Discussion – 20%
Final – 40%

EXPECTATIONS

Students must arrive for class on time, remain attentive, stay for the entire class period, and otherwise conduct themselves in a manner conducive for creating an environment suitable for learning. The use of computers, pagers, phones, iPods and other electronic devices is prohibited in this class.

Students can expect me to arrive on time and prepared for class. They can expect to be able to meet with me during office hours or at a mutually agreed upon time, and to have my help in meeting their goals for the course.

Communication is the basis for learning and it is essential for the success of this and any class. Students can expect me to do my best to specify my expectations, but students must also communicate with me and listen. It is a student's responsibility to ask if they have any questions or concerns about the course expectations or content.

You must attend discussion sections. Be on time and be courteous toward your fellow students. Attendance and your participation in discussion section will count toward your final grade. If you miss more than four discussions, you will receive an automatic F for this part of the course. A significant part of your discussion grade depends on your speaking up in discussion – attendance alone is not enough to do well in this part of the grade (see grading guidelines at the back of the syllabus). If you are too shy to speak up in class or are experiencing a personal problem that is interfering with your work, *see your TA*. We can work out a strategy with you to help you succeed.

EXAMS

We will have two take-home midterms and a take-home final. You must submit each exam to the TA personally (not by email, under her door, in her mailbox, or to a

department secretary) and file a copy with WebAssign, which you'll find on the class Blackboard site. Late exams will be penalized one full grade per day, including each weekend day.

You'll find comprehensive grading standards at the end of this syllabus. If any of this is unclear, please ask for a clarification.

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>). 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 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

Week of 8/25: The Antebellum world

Readings:

- *Twelve Years a Slave*, intro and chaps 1-11
- *U.S. Constitution* (skim, paying special attention to mentions of slavery and secession – or lack thereof) http://www.constitution.org/constit_.htm

9/1: Slavery and the West

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps 3 and 4
- *Twelve Years a Slave*, chaps 12-15

- *The Liberator's* first editorial
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2928t.html>

9/8: The 1850s

Readings:

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

9/15: Evaluating the road to war

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps 8 and 9
- Finish *Twelve Years a Slave*, including appendices
- William H. Seward, "Irrepressible Conflict" speech
<http://www.nyhistory.com/central/conflict.htm>

9/29: **Midterm due**

10/1: National and military strategy

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps. 10-12
- *Copperheads*, chap. 1
- *Co. Aytch*, preface and chap. 1

10/6: You're in the army now

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps. 13-15
- *Copperheads*, chaps. 2-4

10/13: The seesaw of war

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps 16-17
- *Co. Aytch*, chaps 2 and 3

10/15: **Fall Break**

10/20: Leadership in wartime

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chap. 18
- *Partners*, chaps 2-4
- *Two Great Rebel Armies*, chaps 1 and 2
- The Emancipation Proclamation
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamatio

[n/transcript.html](#)

10/27: The second turning point

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chap. 19
- *Co. Aytch*, chaps 8-10
- *Partners*, chap. 6
- *Killer Angels*, foreword and chaps 1-4

11/3: Gettysburg

Readings:

- Finish *Killer Angels*

11/10: Midterm due

The revolutionary war

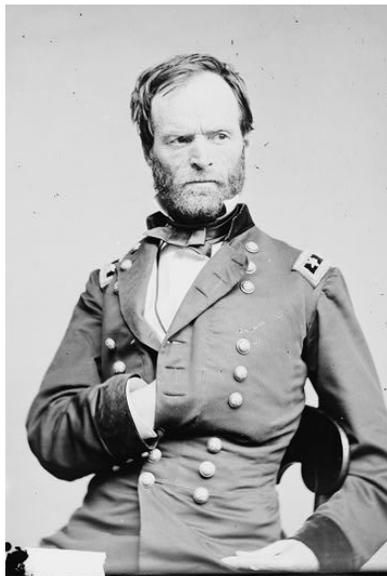
Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps. 20 and 21
- *Two Great Rebel Armies*, chaps. 3-8

11/17: A matter of will

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chap. 22
- *Copperheads*, chaps. 5-7



11/19 & 11/24: No class

12/1: Grant, Sherman and the summer of '64

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chaps. 23 and 24
- *Partners*, chap. 5
- *Co. Aytch*, chap. 13

12/8: Victory and Defeat

Readings:

- *Ordeal*, chap. 25-26
- *Partners*, chap. 7
- *Co. Aytch*, chaps. 16 and 17

12/18 Final exams due by 10:30

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. The paper that falls into this category is built on a critical reading of primary material and engages with secondary sources. An **A** or **A-** exam draws on primary and secondary readings along with lecture material.

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.

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 and is not adequately prepared risks the grade of **D** or **F**.