

The American Civil War: In History & Memory

HIST 3054 (Virtual) Spring 2022

Instructor: Mr. Seabrook

Office Hours: Virtual by appointment

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About the Course:

The Civil War occupies a unique space in American history. For many, America's most violent conflict provides endless historical curiosities, inspiring countless hobbyists and defining careers in tourism, popular culture, and academia. For others, the war is sacred, considered so deeply important to the nation that it affects our very identity. Despite how one relates to the Civil War, the historical reality is often more fascinating and complex than is often imagined, and its many legacies continue to impact the world in which we live. This class will explore this dynamic history in an online academic format.

Our goal is to cut through the mythology that often surrounds the Civil War era by reading carefully evidenced arguments that reveal the Civil War's complex realities. In the end, we will better understand the war era and its legacies and will be better equipped to engage important historical subjects that remain relevant to our national identity and politics.

The class will begin with a brief introduction to the legacies of the Civil War as we learn about why it still matters to Americans today and how it has been remembered, including its most pernicious mythologies. From there we will explore the causes of the conflict and its inextricable link with racialized chattel slavery. The years of bloody combat that left more than 750,000 combatants dead will then be covered. Finally, we will end our coverage of the war era by again touching base with the war's legacies, including the revolutionary period of Reconstruction that brought an end to the slave republic of the founding fathers and that simultaneously brought unprecedented freedom to the country while paving the way for the era of Jim Crow racial segregation. How the war has been represented in popular culture is also a central feature of the class, especially on film. *Many thanks to Dr. Taulby H. Edmondson.*

Required Texts:

All required materials are posted on Canvas, or links have been provided. No books are required to be purchased for this class. However, all materials listed in the syllabus, including podcasts, videos, films, and graphics, are required. Some of the films may require rental (usually less than \$5.00 to watch).

Please be aware that the American Civil War can be a controversial and painful topic. Some of what you read, listen to, or watch for this course may make you uncomfortable. Engagement with a diversity of viewpoints is an essential part of the historian's craft; it is tension, and not complacency, that leads to growth. In this class, we welcome open, honest debate and we won't shy away from "the hard stuff." I look forward to hearing your valuable and unique perspectives.

Questions about the course material (or anything else related to the Civil War)? Things you want to learn about that are not covered in the course? Don't hesitate to reach out! It is impossible to gain a thorough understanding of the countless aspects of the Civil War in one semester. This course is designed as a jumping off point for your own continuing exploration of the war and its legacies. That being said, I am happy to answer questions and address topics that you find interesting as much as possible given our limited time together. Just shoot me an email!

Film Day Screenings:

- *The Age of Slavery*. Director: Sabin Streeter, 2013.
- *Slavery and the Making of America*. Episode III: "Seeds of Destruction." Director: Chana Gazit, 2005.
- *Lincoln*. Director: Steven Spielberg, 2012.
- *Glory*. Director: Edward Zwick, 1989.
- *Gangs of New York*. Director: Martin Scorsese, 2002.
- *Slavery and the Making of America*. Episode IV: "The Challenge of Freedom." Director: Leslie D. Farrell, 2005.

- *The Free State of Jones*. Director: Gary Ross, 2016.
- *Gone with the Wind*. Director: Victor Fleming, 1939.

Requirements and Grading:

50% of Final Average: Quizzes

One comprehensive quiz is due at the end of almost every week of the course. The quizzes will be directly on Canvas and timed. Quizzes will cover only the content from the week in which they are assigned. Do note that since we are using a variety of “texts” for this course, all content is fair game for the quizzes. No matter what required “text” you are currently reading, listening to, or watching, be sure to take good notes and make sure that you understand the content and arguments. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Quiz Due Dates are bolded in Class Schedule

40% of Final Average: Critical Film Reviews

Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for watching eight films about the Civil War era. You are required to construct 3-4 page critical reviews for FOUR of them. Everyone is required to complete the film review for the film *Glory*, which will be due on April 1. You can choose the other THREE reviews that you wish to review.

By “critical,” you will analyze the film (giving a brief synopsis of the plot points and/or characters), but will focus mostly on relating the film’s themes, representations of events or people featured, and overall plot about the Civil War to the course material. An easy way to think about the review is to ask if the film is historically accurate and ask what is at stake in its accuracy/inaccuracy. You can challenge the film, or discuss how the film challenged you, or review it positively or negatively based on how well the film did with its themes and concepts. You are free to be as critical and creative in your reviews as you like.

The due dates for the review have been designed to allow you plenty of time to both watch the film and to familiarize yourself with the relevant readings. All should be streaming on one site or app or another), but please let me know if you have any problems/concerns about watching/acquiring them.

Film Review Due Dates are bolded in Class Schedule

10% of Final Average: Event/Site Visit and Review

You are required to attend one extracurricular event or visit a Civil War site before the end of the semester, about which you will write a 2-3 page critical summary. The summary should tell me what you did and what you learned, and relate it to the regular course content, even if it brings in a new concept. For instance, if you attend a lecture, what were the main course themes that appeared in the presentation? Did it expand or challenge the narrative of the course or specific classes? In the past, students have attended topical lectures, visited museums or reenactments, attended Civil War cooking demonstrations, and visited battlefield sites and Blackburg’s Smithfield Plantation. This is an open-ended assignment, and you can attend anything that you like as long as it pertains to the Civil War era, broadly defined.

Below is a list of local opportunities, but you can attend a battlefield, lecture, or museum anywhere one is located. For instance, if you're in Richmond or Northern Virginia for a holiday, you can visit any number of Civil War museums and sites. When appropriate, students include images in their paper summaries to "prove" their attendance. HOWEVER, if you are going to do an event or site visit that I have not advertised here or on Canvas, you will need to run it by me first so that I can sign off on it. There's lots of bad information out there about the Civil War era, as you will soon see.

Any event advertised below or on Canvas (as they come available) is pre-approved:

Mon January 24, 2022, 7:00 – 8:15 PM ET. "Celia, A Slave at 30: Revisiting a Classic in the History of Slavery and the Civil War Era." Originally published in 1991, Melton A. McLaurin's *Celia, A Slave* revealed the moral dilemmas of slavery through the story of an enslaved woman who fought back against sexual exploitation by her enslaver. The 30th anniversary edition of this classic work includes a new foreword by historians Daina Ramey Berry and Jennifer L. Morgan, evaluating its significance in the context of twenty-first-century scholarship. Join Drs. McLaurin, Berry, and Morgan for this free online discussion. The event is free but you must preregister with Zoom. https://virginiatech.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IKBJ3douRy-kwUbim6kRMA

Tues March 15, 2022, 7:00 – 8:15 PM ET. "Rites of Retaliation: Civilization, Soldiers, and Campaigns in the American Civil War." A free online lecture and discussion with Dr. Lorien Foote about her new book. The event is free but you must preregister with Zoom. https://virginiatech.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NmCWDxaTRfWEyTXGluUMPQ

Civil War Driving Tour of Southwest Virginia: <https://civilwar.vt.edu/driving-tour/>
This tour is a fun way to explore the Civil War's legacy in Southwest Virginia. To count for this assignment, you must visit at least three of the sites in Blacksburg:
<https://civilwar.vt.edu/historic-smithfield/> ; <https://civilwar.vt.edu/kentland-plantation/> ;
<https://civilwar.vt.edu/solitude-2/> ; <https://civilwar.vt.edu/westview-cemetery/>

*Details of time and place will be provided when they are finalized. Opportunities are always subject to change and cancellation.

Extra Effort Opportunities:

In addition to the one event/site visit that is required, you can do as many other opportunities as you wish. The same rules apply. If you do, write another short 2-3 page critical summary of each event or site you visit and you will receive "extra effort." It's basically extra credit, but you do have to make an effort to attend and/or participate in the event.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is not required and will not impact your grade if you do not participate in extra effort opportunities. But it is an easy, low-stakes way to boost your performance in the class, especially if the event is local. You will not be able to earn extra effort after April 22 unless you have informed me that you are interested in an event that was already scheduled.

Additional Resources:

Honor Code and notes on Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, and Writing Resources

- The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

- If you have questions or are unclear about what constitutes academic misconduct on an assignment, please speak with me. The normal sanction recommended for a violation of the Honor Code is an **F*** as your final course grade. The “F” represents failure in the course. The “*” is intended to identify a student who has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Virginia Tech.
- All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified. Commission of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct; however, this list is not exhaustive and other prohibited violations are also considered in violation of academic integrity.

A. CHEATING

The intentional use of authorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.

B. PLAGIARISM

The copying of language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one’s own original work.

C. FALSIFICATION

The statement of any untruth—either verbally or in writing—with respect to any element of one’s academic work or attempts thereof.

D. FABRICATION

Making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents or attempts thereof.

E. MULTIPLE SUBMISSION

The submission for credit—without authorization of the instructor receiving the work—of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution, or attempts thereof.

F. COMPLICITY

Intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.

G. VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL, PROGRAM, COURSE, OR FACULTY RULES

The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, Course, or Faculty rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

Please familiarize yourself with the honor code and matters of academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility: <http://honorsystem.vt.edu>

Writing:

- For a good website that includes instructions and links on how to correctly cite in multiple formats, go to <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>
- You are also encouraged to utilize the Virginia Tech Writing Center, a free service for all Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff, at all levels. The writing center is located in Newman Library's second floor learning commons, just past the elevators, and they work with writing and reading assignments from any course in the University. They can also help you with writing projects that are not linked to classes. Walk-in sessions are possible, time permitting, but students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment. <http://www.lib.vt.edu/about/writing/> or (540) 231-5436
- If you have questions about improving your writing or desire extra feedback to grow as a writer, please let me know and I will assist as time allows.

ADA Compliant Dis/ability Statement

If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.); if you have emergency medical information to share with me; or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. <http://www.hr.vt.edu/index.html>

VT Principles of Community

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve). <http://www.hr.vt.edu/employment/>

Course Schedule:

The course schedule is designed to resemble a traditional MWF class. But this is an online, entirely virtual course, meaning that we will not meet face-to-face. The course schedule is therefore one suggestion about how to plan and complete your readings, which is based on a normal in-person format. It is not required that you follow it, and you can divvy the readings, films, and other assignments up as you need, and as fits your own schedule. But do be aware that the due dates for quizzes and film reviews are final, so you will need to get each relevant assignment completed before that due date passes. If this recommended schedule works for you, great! But you do have a lot of freedom to complete this course on your own time. The course schedule is also a strong recommendation for the order in which you should complete the readings. Getting out of order could be confusing.

Week 1

Jan. 19 - Introduction: Why the Civil War Still Matters

Read: Waugh, "Memory of the Civil War in American Culture"

Blight, "The Civil War isn't Over"

Coates, "Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War?"

"Dutch King Willem-Alexander retires coach amid slavery row" (*just one very recent example of the global debates happening over the legacies of slavery*)

Jan. 21 - The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory, Pt. I

Read: Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth"

Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History"

Neely, Holzer, & Boritt, "Introduction: The Burial of Latane" and "Conclusion: In Memoriam"

No quiz this week

Week 2

Jan. 24 - The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory, Pt. II

Read: Bates, "'Oh, I'm a Good Ol' Rebel': Reenactment, Racism, and the Lost Cause"

Daley, "Texas Will Finally Teach That Slavery Was Main Cause of the Civil War"

Sawchuk, "How is Slavery Taught in U.S. Schools?"

Jan. 26 - The Peculiar Institution, Pt. I

Read: Faust, "Slavery in the American Experience"

Rael, "A Compact for the Good of America?," **Pts. I and II**

Jan. 28 - The Peculiar Institution, Pt. II

Read: Zinn, "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation Without Freedom"

Holzer, "Weapon of Last Resort"

Week 3

Jan. 31 - Film Day

Read: "Making Sense of Film: A Guide"

Note: This reading will help you learn to "read" a film, which will be useful for your film reviews. Take notes as you watch; films are also fair game on quizzes.

Watch: *The Age of Slavery* Available on Kanopy. You may need to sign in with your VT account, but it should be available: <https://www.kanopy.com/product/age-slavery>

Feb. 2 - Frederick Douglass

Read: Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Preface, Letter from Wendell Phillips, Chapters 1-5

Scroll through the entire graphics of *USA Today*'s "growth of slavery graphic." It is very well done and a great resource that helps visualize a complex historical process. It will be on the quiz, so examine it closely: <https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/1619-african-slavery-history-maps-routes-interactive-graphic/>

Feb. 4 - Southern Politics

Read: Matt Karp Interview, "When the South Held the Keys"

Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Chapters 6-11, Appendix, Parody

Week 3 Quiz due by end of day

Week 4

Feb. 7 - The Abolition Movement

Film review for *The Age of Slavery* due by end of day

Read: Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

Rael, "The Distinction Between Slavery and Race in U.S. History"

Rael, "How the Alliance between Slaves and Abolitionists Ended Slavery"

Feb. 9 - Road to Secession, Pt. 1

Read: Bain-Conkin et al., "The Sectional Crisis"

To access linked primary sources (not required): <https://www.americanyawp.com/text/13-the-sectional-crisis/>

Feb. 11 - Road to Secession, Pt. II

Read: Meyers, "The Election of 1860"

Week 4 Quiz due by end of day

Week 5

Feb. 14 - Secession Pt. I

Read: Link, "Secession"

To access linked primary sources (not required):

<https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/secession.html>

South Carolina Declaration of Secession, 1860

Feb. 16 - Secession Part II

Lankford, "Virginia Convention of 1861"

Davis, "Ratification of the Confederate Constitution"

Detzer, "Fort Sumter"

Feb. 18 - Film Day

Watch: *Slavery and the Making of America*, Ep. III, Seeds of Destruction

Available on Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Slavery-Making-America-Season-1/dp/B079C3SVCG>

Week 5 Quiz due by end of day

Week 6

Feb. 21 - What Caused the Civil War?

Read: Woods, "Causes of the Civil War"

Coates, "What This Cruel War Was Over"

Feb. 23 - Mobilizations & Motivations

Read: Balcerski et al., "The Civil War," sections I – III (pages 1 – 17)

Rodgers, "Billy Yank"

Williams, "Johnny Reb"

Rhea, "Why Non-Slaveholding Southerners Fought"

Feb. 25 - No Assigned Readings

Film review for *Slavery and the Making of America* due by end of day

Week 6 Quiz due by end of day

Week 7

Feb. 28 - The War Begins

Read: Detzer, “The War Begins”

Detzer, “Bull Run”

****This is also the last day to resign without grade penalty****

Mar. 2 - 1861-1862: Confederate Ascendency

Read: Quarstein, “The Peninsula Campaign”

Groom, “Why Shiloh Matters”

Mar. 4 - Lincoln & Emancipation

Read: Balcerski et al., “The Civil War,” sections IV – V (pages 17 – 30)

Masur, “The Emancipation Proclamation”

Holzer – “A Promise Fulfilled”

Oakes, “The War of Northern Aggression”

Week 7 Quiz due by end of day

Week 8

March 5-13 - Spring Break – No Assigned Readings

Week 9

Mar. 14 - Film Day

Screening: *Lincoln*

Available at Youtube for \$3.99

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KXG_RQ3seQ

It may also be currently streaming on your favorite service, so feel free to check.

Mar. 16 - African American Soldiers, Pt. 1

Read: Gannon, African American Soldiers

Cimprich, “Fort Pillow”

Saltville Battle and Massacre

Mar. 18 - African American Soldiers, Pt. 2

Read: Blatt, “Glory: Hollywood History, Popular Culture, and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment”

William Henry Singleton, a formerly enslaved man, recalls fighting for the Union

Week 9 Quiz due by end of day

Week 10

Mar. 21 - Women & Children in the Civil War

Film review for *Lincoln* due by end of day

Read: Campbell, "Gender and the Civil War"

Moore, "Boys of the Civil War"

Haas and Talley, "A Refugee at Hanover Tavern" (*excerpt from a contextualization of a Civil War diary*)

Mar. 23 - Film Day

Screening: *Glory*. NOTE: Everyone is required to review *Glory*. The Blatt reading should be integral to your reviews.

Available at Amazon Prime Video and Vudu (\$2.99) or YouTube (\$3.99)

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B00170GYDE/ref=atv_dl_rdr

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ny8KGUqTNkM>

<https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Glory/12423>

It may also be currently streaming on your favorite service, so feel free to check.

Mar. 25 - 1863: The Nation Might Live

Read: Bryant, "Chancellorsville"

Adelman and Taub, "Gettysburg"

Peatman, "The Gettysburg Address"

Week 10 Quiz due by end of day

Week 11

Mar. 28 - Grant Is My Man and I am His

Read: Waugh, "'I Only Knew What Was in My Mind,'" 307-322

Waugh, "Ulysses Simpson Grant"

Mar 30 - 1864: The Hard Hand of War

Read: Ashdown and Caudill, "Sherman's March to the Sea"

Noyalas, "An Omen of the Final Sunset for the Confederacy"

Stremlau et al, "Native Americans in the Civil War"

Whisonant, "Geology and the War in Southwestern Virginia: Union Raiders in the New River Valley, May 1864"

Apr. 1 Film Day

Screening: *Gangs of New York*. NOTE: This film includes key themes related to the period, including race/racism, immigration, and the Draft Riots in 1863. Make your review of this film relevant to those or any themes that you pick up on about the Civil War era. Available at Youtube and Amazon Video for \$2.99 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIjvHqBccM> https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B006RXQ800/ref=atv_dl_rdr It may also be currently streaming on your favorite service, so feel free to check.

Film review for *Glory* due by end of day

Week 11 Quiz due by end of day

Week 12

Apr. 4 - Leave Them Only Their Eyes With Which to Weep

Read: Faust, "Death and Dying"

Doyle, "How the Civil War Changed the World"

Apr. 6 - These Men We Must Kill

Read: Slotkin, "The Battle of the Crater"

Kelman, "The Sand Creek Massacre"

Apr. 8 - 1865: Jubilation in Victory; Despair in Defeat

Film review for *Gangs of New York* due by end of day

Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"

Calkins, "On the Road to Appomattox"

Waugh, "'I Only Knew What Was in My Mind,'" 322-331 (Canvas)

Week 12 Quiz due by end of day

Week 13

Apr. 11 - Film Day

Screening: *Slavery and the Making of America*, Ep. IV

Available on Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Slavery-Making-America-Season-1/dp/B079C3SVCG>

Apr. 13 - The Second American Revolution

Abernathy et al., "Reconstruction"

To access linked primary sources (not required): <https://www.americanyawp.com/text/15-reconstruction/>

Levine, "The Second American Revolution"

Apr. 15 - The Failed Revolution and the End of Reconstruction

Dailey, "The Confederate General Who Was Erased"

Boissoneault, "The Deadliest Massacre of Reconstruction"

Listen: Backstory, "A More Perfect Union"

<https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/a-more-perfect-union>

Week 13 Quiz due by end of day

Week 14

Apr. 18 - Film Day

Screening: *The Free State of Jones*

Available at Youtube for \$2.99

It may also be currently streaming on your favorite service, so feel free to check.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOZ_1BdSfEA

Apr. 20 - Confederate Detractors

Film review for *Slavery and the Making of America* due by end of day

Read: Merritt, "War Happens in Dark Places, Too"

Williams, "Southern Unionism"

Apr. 22 - The Cinematic Lost Cause

Jones, "The Cinematic Lost Cause"

Chadwick, "The War Comes to Tara"

Week 14 Quiz due by end of day

Week 15

Apr. 25 - Film Day

Screening: *Gone with the Wind*

Available on Youtube and iTunes for \$3.99

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNcs-rMjvw4>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/movie/gone-with-the-wind/id324708730>

NOTE: If you've never watched GWTW before, know that it is problematic for its racism and its Lost Cause version of history. However, it is one of the most popular films of all time and has done more than anything else to impact how we imagine the Civil War and Reconstruction in popular memory. It is also very long, so split up your viewing if you need to. There's an intermission!

Apr. 27 - Rethinking *Gone with the Wind* History and Its Impact

Read: Hill, "Slavery on Film: Why Now?"

Edmondson, "Protesting a Bigger and Better *Birth of a Nation*"

Apr. 29 - Enduring Legacies, Pt. I

Film review for *Free State of Jones* due by end of day

Read: Peterson, "Apotheosis"

Blight, "Forgetting Why We Remember"

Blight, "The Battle for Memorial Day in New Orleans"

Week 15 Quiz due by end of day

Week 16

May 2 - Enduring Legacies, Pt. II

Film review for *Gone with the Wind* due by end of day

Read: Landrieu, “Address on Confederate Monuments”

Coski, “The Second American Flag”

Groce, “History, Memory, and the Struggle for the Future”

Listen: Backstory Podcast, “The Battle for Charlottesville’s Soul”

<https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/the-battle-for-charlottesvilles-soul>

Final quiz due by end of day

May 4 – Last Day of Classes – No New Assignments

Deadline to make up late work