

HTS 3009 -- THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Lawrence Foster
316 DM Smith Building
Phone: 404-894-6845
e-mail: larry.foster@hts.gatech.edu

Spring Semester 2008
M, W, F, 9:00 a.m.

This course will focus one of the most critical periods in the history of the United States that culminated in the devastating American Civil War from 1861 through 1865. That conflict cost more lives than all other wars in American history combined prior to Vietnam, and it has contributed to profound and continuing transformations in American life during nearly a century and a half since it ended.

The first third of the course will focus on the sectional conflicts that helped cause the Civil War. Most of the remaining two-thirds of the course will focus on the four years of the war itself, evaluating the war within both the narrative and analytical perspectives of recent scholarship. The last week of the course will briefly consider the crucial aftermath of the Civil War known as Reconstruction, as well as the issues that the Civil War continues to raise for us today.

Evaluation in the course will be based on three mid-term exams (indicated below in the "Reading Assignments and Exam Schedule"), on an analytical book review or similar project, and on a final comprehensive exam. The exams will be based on both the readings and on the lecture/discussions.

Please note that the first exam in the class will come very early--on Wednesday, January 23, the middle of the third week of the course!

That first exam will be based on the students' reading of the Jeanette Keith's lively overview of the history of the American South from 1607 to 1877. Starting with this two week "crash course" in Southern history will help insure that all students begin the class with a knowledge of some of the most important elements in 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, which will all be read in full, are:

Jeanette Keith, The South: A Concise History, Vol. 1
James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era
Stephen B. Oates, Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myths

The class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the truly staggering range of writing about the issues connected with the Civil War, each student will also be required, in consultation with the professor, to do an analytical book review or special project.

NOTE WELL: Students are expected to attend class regularly, come on time at the scheduled beginning of each class (no later than 9:05 a.m.), and be ready to participate actively in discussions on the assigned readings.

Class roll will be taken after the first week. Missing 6 or more unexcused class sessions (the equivalent of 2 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, it is expected that all students will adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

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.

January 7--begin Jeanette Keith, The South, Introduction and Chapter 1, (pp. 1-51)

January 9--begin Keith, Chapter 2 (pp. 53-97)

January 11--begin Keith, Chapter 3 (pp. 99-140)

January 14--begin Keith, Chapter 4 (pp. 142-182)

January 16--begin Keith, Chapter 5 (pp. 184-214)

January 18--Review for Exam #1

NO CLASS--Monday, January 21--Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday celebrated

EXAM #1--Wednesday, January 23

January 23--begin James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, Prologue and Chapter 1 (pp. 3-46)

January 25--begin McPherson, Chapter 2 (pp. 47-77)

January 28--begin McPherson, Chapter 3 (pp. 78-116)

January 30--begin McPherson, Chapter 4 (pp. 117-144)

February 1--begin McPherson, Chapter 5 (pp. 145-169)

February 4--begin McPherson, Chapter 6 (pp. 170-201)

February 6--begin McPherson, Chapter 7 (pp. 202-233)
 February 11--begin McPherson, Chapter 8 (pp. 234-275)
 February 13--begin Stephen Oates, Abraham Lincoln, Prelude and Part 1
 (pp. xi-xiv, 3-30)
 February 15--begin Oates, Parts 2 and 3 (pp. 33-86), and McPherson,
 Chapter 9 (pp. 276-307)

February 18--Review for Exam #2

EXAM #2--Wednesday, February 20

February 20--begin McPherson, Chapter 10 (pp. 308-338)
 February 22--begin Oates, pp. 89-119
 February 25--begin Oates, pp. 120-147
 February 27--begin McPherson, Chapter 11 (pp. 339-368)
 February 29--begin McPherson, Chapter 12 (pp. 369-391)
 March 3--begin McPherson, Chapter 13 (pp. 392-427)
 March 5--begin McPherson, Chapter 14 (pp. 428-453)
 March 7--begin McPherson, Chapter 15 (pp. 454-489)
 March 10--begin McPherson, Chapter 16 (pp. 490-510)
 March 12--begin McPherson, Chapter 17 (pp. 511-545)
 March 14--begin McPherson, Chapter 18 (pp. 546-567)

NO CLASS--March 17-21--Georgia Tech Spring Break--work on
 your Book Reviews

March 24--begin McPherson, Chapter 19 (pp. 568-590)
 March 26--begin McPherson, Chapter 20 (pp. 591-625)
 March 28--begin McPherson, Chapter 21 (pp. 626-665)

March 31--Review for Exam #3

EXAM #3--Wednesday, April 2

April 2--begin McPherson, Chapter 22 (pp. 666-688)
 April 4--begin McPherson, Chapter 23 (pp. 689-717)
 April 7--work on your Book Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS due--Wednesday, April 9

April 9--begin McPherson, Chapter 24 (pp. 718-750)
April 11--begin McPherson, Chapter 25 (pp. 751-773)
April 14--begin McPherson, Chapter 26 (pp. 774-806)
April 16--begin McPherson, Chapter 27 (pp. 807-830)
April 18--begin McPherson, Chapter 28 (pp. 831-852) and Epilogue (pp. 853-862)
April 21--begin Oates, Part 5 (pp. 151-190)
April 23--review Keith, Chapter 5 (184-214)

April 25--review for the Final Exam

FINAL EXAM--Tuesday, April 29, 2:50 p.m.