**History 268: A House Divided: America During the Civil War**

**Fall 2023 – Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45 – Rush Rheese 456**



**“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*.” – Abraham Lincoln, Illinois Republican State Convention, June 1858**

**Instructor:**

Sarabeth Rambold

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**Office Hours:** By appointment. Please feel free to email me anytime you would like to meet.

**Course Description:**

This course looks at the American Civil War, one of the most studied events in popular and academic history. As a class, we will examine and evaluate the war’s causes, its major events and battles, the politicians, authors, and reformers who have shaped our understanding of the conflict, its effect on the home-front, and its (long) lasting consequences. Additionally, we will develop an understanding of the vast historiography surrounding the Civil War by reading, discussing, and comparing influential historians’ interpretations of the conflict. In this class, we will elevate the experiences not just of the most famous generals and politicians, but also the experiences of women on the home-front, enslaved individuals who challenged chattel slavery, indigenous peoples forced to pick sides, and immigrant communities thrust in the roiling conflict.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this course students will be able to:

* Draw conclusions about the events that make up the U.S. Civil War and the vast historiography surrounding it.
* Understand the difference in methods needed for the study of different kinds of source material.
* Read, understand, and analyze primary and secondary source materials.
* Practice different styles of writing, particularly: argument-based writing and explanatory writing.
* Participate in source-based discussions with peers and instructors.
* Learn how to think like a historian.

**Required Reading:**

Before each class session, students will read a combination of articles, book chapters, and/or primary sources. Weekly readings can be on Blackboard.

**Assessment:**

Your grade will be based on two factors: active participation and writing. We will discuss what constitutes active participation and effective historical writing. As a baseline, I expect students to complete their readings, come prepared to share their responses to the readings, and submit well-organized written work on time.

**Assignments:**

**\*Please note that the descriptions below are brief. Do not worry: I will provide you with more in-depth handouts for each assignment.**

* **In-Class Oral Exam**
  + Due Date: Thursday, September 28
  + Format: We will devote this class to a formal group discussion of Unit One. Drawing on assigned readings, lecture notes, and class discussion, students will answer four questions.
  + Assignment Notes: Students will be provided with a list of potential questions prior to the exam from which to study.
* **Primary Source Analysis**
  + Due Date: Thursday, October 5
  + Format: Students will select any primary source from Unit One. Students will then use the corresponding secondary reading(s) (AKA the secondary reading assigned for the same week as the source selected) to write a historically grounded primary source analysis.
* **Article/Chapter Review**
  + Due Date: Thursday, November 9
  + Format: Students will select one of the designated articles or chapters from Unit Two (designated articles are denoted by \*\*) and write an organized review. This five-paragraph review will require students to assess an author’s central argument, their use of sources, and their writing style.
  + Assignment Notes: See my example review and my handout with writing tips.
* **Capstone Essay** 
  + Due Date: Tuesday, December 12
  + Format:Students will be given a choice between two sets of primary sources (a set of speeches and writings related to Abraham Lincoln’s views on slavery and the war OR Sarah Morgan Dawson’s wartime diary)**.** The primary materials will coincide with major course themes, therefore the secondary reading we complete as a class will provide students with necessary historical context.Students will be required to use one set of primary sources as well as *at least five* previously assigned secondary readings to write a 10-page argument-driven paper that draws directly on the primary and secondary sources to answer a question of their choice. The answer to said question must be in the form of a thesis statement.
  + Assignment Notes: We will have two writing workshops prior to the capstone being due. On Thursday, November 9, we will have a writing workshop that introduces students to the final project as well as the art of writing a formal history paper.On Tuesday, November 28, we will have a writing workshop where students with meet with individually to discuss their papers. Students must come to class that day with some form of an outline or rough draft.
* **Pop Quizzes** 
  + Format: To ensure that students stay up to date with readings and viewings, there will be a total of 9 pop quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will ask direct questions of the assigned materials for the day.
  + Assignment Notes: For your final grade, I will average the highest 6 scores and drop the lowest 3.

**Weighted Grade Breakdown:**

* Article Review: 20%
* Oral Exam: 20%
* Capstone Essay: 40%
* Pop Quizzes: 10%
* Preparation and Participation: 10%

**Accommodations:** Please feel free to talk with me if there are any circumstances that might make successfully completing your work difficult. Students requiring classroom accommodations should contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

**Academic Honesty:**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. According to the University of Rochester’s Academic Honesty Policy: “Academic honesty means acting with truthfulness and sincerity in carrying out all aspects of our individual and collaborative work, maintaining ownership over our work and acknowledging our debt to the work of others.” Therefore, you must cite all sources you rely on to answer essay questions or any graded class writing. Additionally, you are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. I am happy to further discuss what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty/honesty in class.

**Thursday, August 31**

Introductions & Course Overview

**Tuesday, September 5**

Why do we study the Civil War?

* Readings:
  + Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*, chapter 1
  + James McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, chapter 1

**UNIT ONE: THE ROAD TO WAR**

**Thursday, September 7**

Antecedents: Slavery in the Constitution & the Louisiana Purchase

* Readings:
  + George William Van Cleve, *A Slaveholder’s Union: Slavery, Politics, and the Constitution in the Early American Republic*, chapter 4
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Missouri Compromise (1820)

**Tuesday, September 12 – Guest Speaker: Professor Tom Slaughter**

Antecedents: The Mexican American War & The Debate over the Spread of Slavery

* Readings:
  + David Potter, *The Impending Crisis: American Before the Civil War, 1848-1861*, chapter 3
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: William Henry Seward, “Higher Law” Speech to the Senate (1850)

**Thursday, September 14**

Chattel Slavery

* Readings:
  + Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, chapter 6
  + Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*, chapter 2

**Tuesday, September 19**

Abolition Efforts in America

* Readings:
  + Andrew Delbanco, “The Abolitionist Imagination,” in *The Abolitionist Imagination*, ed. by Andrew Delbanco
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Angelina Grimké Weld, “Speech in Pennsylvania Hall,” (1838)
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: William Lloyd Garrison, “No Compromise with the Evil of Slavery” (1854)

**Thursday, September 21**

Sectional Tension: Violence in the Congress, Violence in the Streets

* Readings:
  + Manisha Sinha, “The Caning of Charles Sumner: Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War,” *Journal of the Early Republic* (2003)
* Viewings:
  + American Experience, John Brown’s Holy War (2000)

**Tuesday, September 26**

Election of 1860 & Southern Succession

* Readings:
  + David Potter, *The Impending Crisis: American Before the Civil War, 1848-1861*, chapter 16
  + Edward Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863*, chapter 6
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Jefferson Davis’ Farewell Address to the Senate (January 1861)
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Abraham Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address (March 1861)

**Thursday, September 28 – Assignment One: In-Class Oral Exam**

**UNIT TWO: THE WAR**

**Tuesday, October 3**

Towards Total War

* Readings:
  + James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, chapter 10
* Viewings:
  + Ken Burns, The Civil War, episode 2 “A Very Bloody Affair” & episode 3 “Forever Free”

**Thursday, October 5 – NO CLASS. Assignment Two: Primary Source Analysis (due 5pm on Blackboard)**

**Tuesday, October 10**

The Union’s Turn Towards Emancipation

* Viewings:
  + Ken Burns, The Civil War, episode 4 “Simply Murder”
* Readings:
  + Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, chapter 6

**Thursday, October 12**

Total War & A War for Emancipation

* Viewings:
  + Ken Burns, The Civil War, episode 5 “The Universe of Battle,” episode 6 “Valley of the Shadow of Death.”
* Readings:
  + Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, chapter 7

**Tuesday, October 17**

The Brutality of (Total) War

* Readings:
  + Lance Janda, “Shutting the Gates of Mercy: The American Origins of Total War, 1860-1880,” *Journal of Military History* (1995)
  + \*\*Lisa Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War*, chapter 4

**Thursday, October 19 – Guest Speaker: Austin Miller, PhD Candidate, Southern Methodist University**

The Civil War West

* Readings:
  + \*\*Lance Blyth, “Kit Carson and the War for the Southwest: Separation and Survival Along the Rio Grande, 1862-1868,” in *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* ed. by Adam Arenson and Andrew Graybill
  + \*\*Mark Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*, chapter 5

**Tuesday, October 24**

The African-American Wartime Experience

* Readings:
  + \*\*Chandra Manning, “Working for Citizenship in Civil War Contraband Camps,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* (2014)
  + \*\*Thavolia Glymph, *The Woman’s Fight: The Civil War’s Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation*, chapter 3

**Thursday, October 26**

The Northern Homefront & The Strains of War

* Readings:
  + \*\*Tyler Anbinder, “Which Poor Man’s Fight? Immigrants and the Federal Conscription of 1863,” *Civil War History* (2006)
  + \*\*Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War*, chapter 3
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Susan B Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Women’s Loyal National League

**Tuesday, October 31**

The Southern Homefront & The Strains of War

* Readings:
  + \*\*Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*, chapter 5
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: Selections from Mary Chestnut’s diary.

**Thursday, November 2**

Gender and the Civil War

* Readings
  + \*\*LeeAnne Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia 1860-1890*, chapter 4
  + \*\*“Fighting Like Men: Civil War Dilemmas of Abolitionist Manhood,” in *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*, ed. by Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber

**Tuesday, November 7**

The Close of the War

* Viewings:
  + Ken Burns, The Civil War, episode 8 “War is All Hell,” episode 9 “The Better Angels of our Nature.”

**Thursday, November 9 – Assignment Three: Article/Chapter Review (due start of class on Blackboard)**

**IN-CLASS WRITING WORKSHOP: Introduction to the capstone paper and writing an argumentative history paper**

**UNIT THREE: AFTERMATHS AND LEGACIES**

**Tuesday, November 14**

Death and Mourning

* Readings:
  + Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, chapter 3 and chapter 5

**Thursday, November 16**

Reconstruction(s)

* Readings:
  + Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, chapter 5 and chapter 6
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865)
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1868)
  + PRIMARY SOURCE: 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1870)

**Tuesday, November 21**

Remembering and Forgetting

* Readings
  + David Blight, “‘For Something beyond the Battlefield’: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” *Journal of American History* (1989)
  + David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, chapter 3

**Thursday, November 23 – No Class. Thanksgiving Break**

**Tuesday, November 28**

**IN-CLASS WRITING WORKSHOP: One-on-One meetings**

**You must come to class with something related to your paper.**

**Thursday, November 30**

Memorialization

* Read:
  + Juliet Macur, “The Confederate Flag Didn’t Bother Bubba Wallace. Until it Did.,” *The New York Times*, June 2020
  + Jonah Engel Bromwich, “What Does it Mean to Tear Down a Statue,” *The New York Times*, June 2020
  + Hilary Neroni, “Confederate Signifiers in Vermont: Fetish Objects and Racist Enjoyments,” in *Lacan and Race*, ed. by Sheldon George and Derek Hook

**Tuesday, December 5**

The Civil War & Pop Culture

* Viewings:
  + Glory (1989)
  + Cold Mountain (2003)
* Listen/View:
  + The Band, “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,”
  + Lynyrd Skynyrd, “Sweet Home Alabama,”
  + Tom Petty, “Rebels”
  + Justin Townes Earl, “Lone Pine Hill”

**Thursday, December 7**

Our Times

* Readings:
  + Kristina Rizga, “How to Teach the Civil War in the Deep South,” *The Atlantic*, December 2018
  + Michel Paradis, “The Lost Cause’s Long Legacy,” *The Atlantic*, June 2020
  + Aimee Ortiz and Johnny Diaz, “George Floyd Protests Reignite Debate Over Confederate Statues,” *The New York Times*, November 2021

**Tuesday, December 12 – No Class. Assignment Four: Capstone Essay (due 5pm on Blackboard)**