

HIST 5373: Graduate Readings Seminar in Civil War History
“The War for the Common Soldier”



Sam Houston State University
Fall Semester 2017

Wednesdays, 6:00-8:50pm
History Department Conference Room

Professor: Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan

Office: AB IV, Room 445

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00pm, or anytime by appointment

Preferred Communication Method: bmj018@shsu.edu

Course Description:

This graduate readings seminar will explore the experience of soldiering in the American Civil War, from enlistment through demobilization and beyond. Who fought in the Civil War, and why did they enlist? What kept Civil War soldiers in the ranks? Did a wave of disillusionment crash through the Union and Confederate armies? If not, then why not? How did rank and file soldiers tend to their physical, psychological, and emotional health on campaign? What was the experience of battle like? How did soldiers overcome the inhibition to kill? How did civilians receive returning veterans, and how did those veterans grapple with the weight of their wartime experiences? Did veterans collude in the bargain of sectional reconciliation, or were they most often obstacles to national reunion? These are only a few of the many key questions that we will examine together in this focused seminar. Our readings will include a mix of classic works and cutting-edge scholarship. While the focus will be on wrestling with the major interpretive questions and seminal debates that have animated Civil War history, we will also spend considerable time evaluating how historians work with evidence and frame questions about the past. Ultimately, my hope is that you emerge from this seminar conversant in some of Civil War history's oldest and most enduring questions—and equipped with the methodological tools that you need to become a successful professional historian.

Required Readings:

1. Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
2. James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
3. Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor, and Manhood in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
4. Jonathan W. White, *Emancipation, The Union Army, and The Reelection of Abraham Lincoln* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014).
5. Steven E. Sondergren, *The Army of the Potomac in the Overland and Petersburg Campaigns: Union Soldiers and Trench Warfare, 1864-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017).
6. Brian Craig Miller, *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015).
7. Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (New York: Liveright/W.W. Norton, 2015).
8. Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

9. Robert Bonner, *The Soldier's Pen: Firsthand Impressions of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

10. Jonathan W. White, *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Expectations and Assignments:

The success of the seminar depends on the active and engaged participation of the entire class. While not everyone is a natural classroom orator, it is imperative that you speak up and contribute actively to each discussion. Our classroom will be a safe environment for the exchange of ideas, and students are encouraged to respectfully debate, discuss, and even disagree with one other—including me—throughout the course. Those unable to abide by these rules will be referred to the Director of Graduate Studies, if necessary. The expectations for this course are as follows:

Each Week:

All students will come to class engaged and prepared to discuss the common readings (designated **CR** on the syllabus). Participation not only implies that you have read the assignment, but that you have read it actively (and have arrived in class with a short list of themes or probing questions that you would like to discuss). Even if you do not plan to take comprehensive examinations in Civil War history, you should get in the habit of preparing good reading notes in seminar. And if you do take a comprehensive exam in Civil War history, you will one day thank yourself for doing the bulk of the preparation *now*. Early in the semester, we will talk about what it means to take notes and read a book as a graduate student in history. Participation will account for **300 points, or 30% of the final grade**.

Once Per Semester:

Students will prepare a 500-word review essay on an assigned **CR** of their choice. (Because this assignment is intended to prepare students to write the longer papers in this course, my recommendation is that you complete it early in the semester. It will be helpful for us to begin a dialogue about your writing as soon as possible.) Book reviews are not book reports; rather, reviews offer an efficient and critical analysis of the book's contents, use of sources, intervention(s), and methodology before leveling a critique. For examples, you may consult the reviews published in any professional journal in the field—e.g. *Civil War History*, *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, *The Journal of American History*. The review will account for **50 points, or 5% of the final grade**.

Students will prepare a “scavenger hunt” essay, extending to **five or six double-spaced pages in length**. These essays will analyze an assigned primary source (or collection of sources) pertaining to the history of the American Civil War. Students may write on any topic prompted by their source(s), but *must connect their work to the assigned CR that*

week. Many of these sources will be located in the Thomason Room on the fourth floor of Newton Gresham Library, so plan ahead with this assignment. You will be assigned the topic for your scavenger hunt on the first day of class. This essay will be worth **100 points, or 10% of the final grade**.

Students will write a culminating essay of **fifteen pages in length**. The essay may either (a) assess a specific historiographical question related to the themes we covered in this seminar **or** (b) present original research into the lives and experiences of common soldiers during the Civil War. More details on this assignment will follow. The culminating essay, due at the end of the semester, will account for **300 points, or 30% of the final grade**.

Twice Per Semester:

Seminar students will prepare, in addition to the common readings, a second monograph (designated **Report Book** on the syllabus). When a student is assigned to the **Report Book**, he/she will prepare an organized, 12-15 minute presentation to the class on that book. On both occasions, you will prepare a **1-page précis** of the book for distribution to the class. This précis should clearly capture the argument, sources, evidence, methods, innovations, and weaknesses of the report book; it is your responsibility to make copies of the précis for the class. **On ONE of these occasions**, the student will prepare a **five- to six- page, double spaced comparative review essay**, analyzing both books together and situating them in their larger historiographic conversation(s). It may be useful to consult readings from the “suggested” readings list. These assignments should be prepared in the style of the essays published in the journal *Reviews in American History*. This essay will account for **150 points, or 15% of the final grade**, while the two précis and oral reports will count for a total of **100 points, or 10% of the final grade**.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. A copy of the University policy is available on the Sam Houston State University website. If you need clarification about what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask or see me during office hours.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE:** No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors, (not the official surface courteousness of the Generals, not the few great battles) of the Secession war; and it is best they should not—the real war will never get in the books.

Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days*

1 – August 23 – Housekeeping and Introduction to the Course

The following readings are recommended as synthetic overviews of the Civil War era. For those students desiring an especially efficient narrative (92 pages) of the Civil War as the seminar begins, the Masur book is strongly recommended.

Suggested Readings:

James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*

Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln*

Susannah J. Ural, *Don't Hurry Me Down to Hades*

Louis Masur, *The Civil War: A Concise History*

2 – August 30 – The Contours of Civil War History

CR: “Worrying About the Civil War,” in Edward L. Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?: Reflections on the South and Southern History* (2005); William Pencak, “The American Civil War Did Not Take Place—With Apologies to Baudrillard,” *Rethinking History* 6 (2002): 217-221; Drew Gilpin Faust, “‘We Should Grow Too Fond’: Why We Love the Civil War,” *Civil War History* 50, no. 4 (2004): 368-383; Gary W. Gallagher and Kathryn Shively Meier, “Coming to Terms with Civil War Military History,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 4 (December 2014): 487-508; Jason Phillips, “Battling Stereotypes: A Taxonomy of Civil War Soldiers,” *History Compass* 6 (2008); selected readings about the white supremacist terrorism in Charlottesville, Virginia, as assigned.

3 – September 6 – Home Fronts and Battle Fronts

CR: Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair*; Maris A. Vinovskis, “Have Social Historians Lost The Civil War?”

Report Book: Steven Ramold, *Across the Divide: Union Soldiers View the Northern Home Front* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

Scavenger Hunt: Valley of the Shadow Project [online]

Suggested Readings:

Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*
J. Matthew Gallman, *The North Fights the Civil War: The Home Front*
Paul Cimbala and Randall Miller, eds., *An Uncommon Time*
Paul Cimbala and Randall Miller, eds., *Union Soldiers and the Northern Homefront*
George Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism*
Drew Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the Civil War*
Russell Johnson, *Warriors into Workers*
G. Ward Hubbs, *Guarding Greensboro*
Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War*
Maris Vinovskis, *Toward a Social History of the Civil War*

4 – September 13 – Combat Motivation

CR: James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*; W.J. Rorabaugh, “Who Fought for the North in the Civil War?”

Report Book: Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage*

Scavenger Hunt: Soldiers’ Letters in the Thomason Room

Suggested Readings:

Michael Barton, *Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers*
Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Experiences*
Steven E. Woodworth, *While God Was Marching On*
Aaron Sheehan-Dean, ed., *The View from the Ground*
Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle or Liberty, Virtue, and Progress*
Charles D. Gear, *Why Texans Fought in the Civil War*
Kenneth Noe, *Reluctant Rebels*
James W. Geary, *We Need Men*
Stephen Berry, *All That Makes a Man*

5 – September 20 – Multivocality Within Civil War Armies

CR: Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*

Report Books: Judith Giesberg, *Sex and the Civil War* & Ryan Keating, *Shades of Green*

Scavenger Hunt: *Harpers Weekly* [bound volumes in the Thomason Room]

Suggested Readings:

Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*
Susannah J. Ural, ed., *Civil War Citizens* and *The Harp and the Eagle*
Ryan Keating, *Shades of Green*
Stephen Ash, *When the Yankees Came*
Grady McWhiney and Perry Jamieson, *Attack and Die*
Nina Silber and Catherine Clinton, eds., *Battle Scars*

Margaret Creighton, *The Colors of Courage*
Christian Keller, *Chancellorsville and the Germans*
William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*

6 – September 27 – Soldiers and the Politics of Slavery, Race, and Emancipation

CR: Jonathan W. White, *Emancipation, The Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln*

Report Book: Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*

Scavenger Hunt: Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers

Suggested Readings:

Joseph Allan Frank, *With Ballot and Bayonet*
David Blight and Brooks Simpson, eds., *Union & Emancipation*
Glenn David Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation*
Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War*
Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*
Chandra Manning, *Troubled Refuge*

short, informal proposal for final project is due by **Friday, September 29 at noon, sent as a Microsoft Word document in an e-mail attachment.

7 – October 4 – Enduring the Ordeal of Battle

CR: Steve Sondergren, *The Army of the Potomac in the Overland and Petersburg Campaigns*

Report Book: J. Tracy Power, *Lee's Miserables*

Scavenger Hunt: Union Regimental Histories in the Thomason Room

Suggested Readings:

Mark M. Smith, *The Smell of Battle, The Taste of Siege*
Mark Dunkelman, *Marching with Sherman and Brothers One and All*
Kenneth Noe, *Perryville: This Grand Havoc of Battle*
Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion*
Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle*
Steven Woodworth, *While God Is Marching On*
Timothy Wesley, *The Politics of Faith During the Civil War*
Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility*
Lesley Gordon, *A Broken Regiment*
Kent Gramm, ed., *Battle*

8 – October 11 – Soldiers, Medicine, and the Environment

CR: Brian Craig Miller, *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South*

Report Book: Kathryn Shively Meier, *Nature's Civil War*

Scavenger Hunt: J. Mark Smither Civil War Letters, Thomason Room

Suggested Readings:

Margaret Humphreys, *Marrow of Tragedy and Intensely Human*

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the Civil War*

Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation*

Ira Rutkow, *Bleeding Blue and Gray*

Brian A. Drake, ed., *The Blue, The Gray, and The Green*

Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land*

Andrew Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers*

Jim Downs, *Sick From Freedom*

Adam Wesley Dean, *An Agrarian Republic*

Matthew Stith, *Extreme Civil War*

9 – October 18 – NO CLASS

Dr. Jordan presenting papers in Petersburg and Newport News, Virginia—take the week to catch up on your reading or work ahead on your term papers.

10 – October 25 – The Challenges of Veteranhood and Reintegration

CR: Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home* and “Our Work Is Not Yet Finished’: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War, 1865-1872,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 4 (December 2015); Jordan, “The Hour That Lasted Fifty Years.”

Report Book: Paul Cimballa, *Veterans North and South*

Scavenger Hunt: *The National Tribune* (Library of Congress) & *Confederate Veteran*

Suggested Readings:

James Marten, *Sing Not War and America's Corporal*

Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*

Eric T. Dean, Jr., *Shook Over Hell*

Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*

Jeffrey McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*

Stephen Berry, ed., *Weirding the War*

Patrick Kelly, *Creating a National Home*

Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck, *Race, Ethnicity, and Disability*

11 – November 1 – African-American Veterans and Civil War Memory

CR: Barbara Gannon, *The Won Cause*

Report Book: David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*

Scavenger Hunt: Grand Army of the Republic Materials [online]

Suggested Readings:

Kelly Mezurek, *For Their Own Cause*

Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm*

Keith Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*

Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*

M. Keith Harris, *Across the Bloody Chasm*

John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*

Robert Hunt, *The Good Men Who Won the War*

Donald Shaffer, *After the Glory*

Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*

Paul Buck, *The Road to Reunion*

William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead*

12 – November 8 – Writing the War and Unit Histories

CR: Robert Bonner, *The Soldiers' Pen*

Report Book: Lesley J. Gordon, *A Broken Regiment*

Scavenger Hunt: William Oland Bourne Collection, Library of Congress [online]

Suggested Readings:

William Barney, *The Making of a Confederate*

Richard F. Miller, *Harvard's Civil War*

John Lundberg, *Grandbury's Texas Brigade*

Susannah Ural, *Hood's Texas Brigade*

Mark Dunkelman, *War's Relentless Hand*

13/14 – November 15/22 – Writing Week and Thanksgiving – NO CLASS

15 – November 29 – Was It All A Dream (or a Nightmare)?

CR: White, *Midnight in America*