

HISTORY 388: THE CIVIL WAR ERA

UW-Stevens Point

Fall 2021

Dr. Brett Barker

MW 3:30-4:45 PM

Class 82260 SEC 01

CCC 214

Contact Information:

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Office: CCC 477B Office Hours: W 2-3 and by appointment (in-person or Zoom)

Course Objectives:

This course examines the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Its aim is to help students gain a greater understanding of the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War, as well as the major issues and events during Reconstruction. By the end of the semester students should have gained the following specific knowledge and skills:

Knowledge: a demonstrated understanding of the following:

- the political, economic, and social roots of sectionalism, 1787-1861
- the nature of American society, North and South, in the decades after the American Revolution and their divergence in the antebellum period
- the importance of slavery for American history in general and sectionalism and Civil War in particular
- the immediate causes of secession and Civil War
- the military course of the war, and the experience of soldiers
- the importance of the civilian populations in the outcome of the war
- the significance of emancipation, and the experience of African-Americans during and after the war
- the political and social battles that defined Reconstruction and its abandonment
- the important changes during this era in South, North, and West

Skills: success in this course will also require demonstration of the following:

- the ability to read and listen with critical perception
- the ability to analyze and synthesize course materials
- the ability to distinguish between knowledge, values, beliefs, and opinions
- the ability to construct and support hypotheses and arguments orally and in writing

Attendance:

You must attend class. Past experience indicates that students who attend irregularly always do poorly in the course. As a courtesy to the instructor and other students, **please arrive on time and turn off your cell phone and computers. Texting or computer use in class is prohibited unless allowed by an official accommodation plan.** Repeated violation of this rule will result in a significant lowering of your class citizenship grade (see below). You are expected to be in class every meeting—if you have to miss for a legitimate reason, please inform the professor.

Texts (required):

James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire* (free through rental)

Kerry Trask, *Fire Within: A Civil War Narrative from Wisconsin*. ISBN: 9780873385879.

Phillip Paludan, *Victims: A True Story of the Civil War*. ISBN: 9781572333253.

Note: Additional readings of primary sources might be assigned. The documents themselves, or links to them, will be available by Friday noon on Canvas for the following Monday's class. They are considered an integral part of this course

Class Topics, Readings, and Assignment Schedule:

Part 1 (Weeks 1-4): A House Divided

Week 2 (9/8) Introduction: The Enduring Civil War
McPherson, Ch. 1

Week 3 (9/13-9/15) Underlying Divisions
McPherson, Chs. 2-5

Week 4 (9/20-9/22) "And The War Came"
McPherson, Chs. 6-9

FIRST EXAM DUE in Canvas on Friday, Oct. 1 at 11:59 PM

Part 2 (Weeks 5-12): A Remorseless, Revolutionary Struggle

Week 5 (9/27-9/29) Mobilizing for War
McPherson, Chs. 10-13

Week 6 (10/4-10/6) Confederate High Tide
McPherson, Chs. 14-17

Week 7 (10/11-10/13) A Divided South
Paludan, *Victims*, all

Week 8 (10/18-10/20) The Union in the Balance
McPherson, Chs. 18-21

Week 9 (10/25-10/27) A New Birth of Freedom
McPherson, Chs. 22-25

SECOND EXAM DUE in Canvas on Saturday, Nov. 6 at 11:59 PM

Weeks 10-12 (11/1-11/17) A Complex North
Trask, *Fire Within*, all

VICTIMS/FIRE WITHIN PAPER due in Canvas on Friday, Nov. 19 at 11:59 PM

Part 3 (Weeks 13-15): The River Has Its Bend

Week 13 (11/22-11/24) Two Reconstructions
McPherson, Chs. 26-28

Week 14 (11/29-12/1) Retreat from Reconstruction
McPherson, Chs. 29-31

Week 15 (12/6-12/8) America's Unfinished Revolution
McPherson, Chs. 32-33

FINAL DUE in Canvas on Thursday, Dec. 16 at 11:59 PM

Grading: Course grades will be based on the following:

25% Class Citizenship and Entry Tickets: Not only must you attend class, but you are also expected to participate in discussions. In evaluating your participation grade I will consider your attendance, the quantity and quality of your contributions, and your willingness to listen and interact with other students while integrating your comments into the flow of discussion. Repeated absences or habitual tardiness will significantly lower your grade. Anyone unable to attend every class in its entirety should speak with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

You will also sometimes be asked to post a brief "entry ticket" before class about the day's reading. This is to insure you have done the reading and form the basis of discussion in that day's class.

15% Exam 1: This will consist of a take-home exam that covers Part 1 of the course (due Oct. 1). It will be open-book and be in an essay format.

20% Exam 2: Similar to Exam 1, except that it will cover Part 2 of the course (due Nov. 6).

20% Victims/Fire Within Paper: This paper will ask you to answer a question relating to these two books that allows you to demonstrate your comprehension of their content and themes (due Nov. 19).

20% Final: The final will also be a take-home exam and it will consist of two sections. The first will resemble a third written exam that will cover Weeks 13-15. The second portion of the final will consist of a comprehensive essay. **It will be due on Thursday, Dec. 16.**

Because of university policies about reporting grades, I cannot be flexible about this deadline. Please be sure to submit this final promptly.

Two Important Notes about the Course:

1. Assignments are due on the dates specified. In all other cases, late work will be penalized.

2. **Academic Honesty and Classroom Behavior:** This course is part of the UW-Stevens Point academic community, an academic community that is bound together by the traditions and practice of scholarship. Honest intellectual work – on examinations and on written assignments—is essential to the success of this community of scholars. Using classmates’ responses to answer exam questions or disguising words written by others as your own undermines the trust and respect on which our course depends. The work in this course is challenging and will demand a good deal of each of you. I have every confidence that each of you can succeed. Doing your own work will enhance your sense of accomplishment when the semester comes to a close.

Additionally, the classroom environment is a unique opportunity for students to share ideas, opinions, discuss classroom and course content. As each student is entitled to contribute in class, specific expectations are necessary to ensure a thriving classroom environment. Expectations include: arriving to class on time, being prepared for class, no electronic devices, unless authorized to do so, any loud shouting, excessive side conversations, arriving to class under the influence of any alcohol or drugs, profane language, and verbal or physical threats, intimidation of any kind, or any other behavior that may be disruptive to the professor or other students. If any of this behavior is exhibited, you may be asked to leave the class for the day. Any continued disruptive behavior may result in a referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Reading and HIST 388:

There is a sizeable amount of reading in this class. The expectation is that you will spend several hours a week reading—it is the major thing students must do to succeed in the course. You should take notes on all of the reading you do and come to class with those notes, prepared to discuss the assigned pages. Class will not consist of lectures—it will mostly consist of a discussion led by the professor that relies on you as students to share what you learned from the reading and ask for help in understanding the material. If you do so, this class will be interactive, engaging, and you will learn a lot.

Students with Disabilities:

The University has a legal responsibility to provide accommodations and program access as mandated by Section 54 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The university’s philosophy is to not only provide what is mandated but also convey its genuine concern for one’s total well-being. If accommodations are needed, please contact the instructor as well as the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (DATC), located on the Stevens Point campus. Students can also pick up an application for accommodations packet in the Solution Center.

DATC contact information:

(715) 346-3365 (Voice)

(715) 346-3362 (TDD only)

or via email at datctr@uwsp.edu

Office Hours and Appointments: Every one of you should come visit me during my office hours this semester. My office hours are time set aside for students, and successful students take advantage of them. Whether it's a simple question or a serious problem in the course, you should never hesitate to drop in or make an appointment if my office hours do not fit your schedule. We can meet in-person or via Zoom for appointments.

Changes to the Syllabus:

I have tried to make this syllabus as accurate, complete, and helpful as possible. I do not anticipate changing any elements of this course, but I reserve the right to do so. Any changes will be announced in class with as much advance notice as possible.

COVID and the Classroom:

Face Coverings:

- At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

Other Guidance:

- Please monitor your own health each day using the screening tool. If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646).
- o As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.