CIVIL WAR LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

This course explores the military and political leadership of the American Civil War of 1861-1865. It examines the war’s political and social context, its military history, the evolving aims of the fighting, and the central actors and events that shape our understanding of leadership. The instructors, one a social psychologist and the other a Brigadier General and military historian, lecture or present material on occasion. For the most part, however, our class sessions are devoted to discussion of each day’s reading.

A highlight of the semester will be a trip to Gettysburg leaving mid-afternoon on Sunday October 17 and returning after dinner on Monday October 18. This trip is required for all students.

Below is a calendar listing topics and readings for each day the class meets. The assigned books are: What Caused the Civil War by Edward Ayers; Grant Moves South by Bruce Catton; Battle Cry of Freedom by James McPherson; The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara; and April 1865 by Jay Winik. Assigned articles or chapters are posted on e-reserve (ER), as indicated below.

Course Requirements

1. All students are expected to attend class and to come fully prepared to participate in discussion.

2. Each week you should email both instructors brief—about 150 words—questions or comments on either Tuesday’s or Thursday’s reading. We will coordinate the email assignments in class. The comments are due at noon on the day of the class. We will respond to them, ordinarily within a day or two.

3. There will be an exam on the material from the first part of the course on Thursday, October 21.

4. During the last two weeks of classes pairs of students will present their assessments of a single Civil War leader, or the relationship between or the
comparison of two leaders based on reading that we will plan together. We will ask each student to submit assessments of the relative contributions of each member of the pair.

5. A paper of approximately 15 pages is due on Friday, December 10, at 5:00 PM. It can be based on your presentation, or on another topic of your choosing. We will meet with you to discuss your plan for the paper. You may write the paper by yourself, or in pairs, either the same pair as for the presentation, or a different one. Again, we will ask those of you who do your papers in pairs to submit assessments of the relative contributions of each member of the pair.

Your course grade will be based on the five requirements above, each weighted equally, except that the presentation is weighted half as much as the other requirements.

Class Schedule and Readings

Tuesday, August 24

Introduction

Thursday, August 26

Beginnings


Tuesday, August 31 (Odd numbers email)

Lurching Toward War

McPherson, Chapters 3 – 5.

Thursday, September 2 (Even numbers email)

Davis and Lincoln

McPherson, Chapter 6

Tuesday, September 7 (Odd numbers email)

Secession

McPherson, Chapters 7 - 9

Thursday, September 9 (Even numbers email)

What Caused the Civil War


Tuesday, September 14 (Odd numbers email)

The Early Stages

McPherson, Chapters 11 and 12

Thursday, September 16 (Even numbers email)

“The River War in 1862”

McPherson, Chapter 13

Tuesday, September 21 (Odd numbers email)

Grant Moves South, Part 1

Bruce Catton (1960) *Grant Moves South* (Boston: Little, Brown) Chapters 1 - 5

Thursday, September 23 (Even numbers email)

Grant Moves South, Part 2
Catton, Chapters 6 - 8

Tuesday, September 28 (Odd numbers email)

Jackson, Lee, and McClellan

McPherson, Chapters 14 and 15

Thursday, September 30 (Even numbers email)

The Emancipation Proclamation and Antietam

McPherson, Chapters 16 and 17

Tuesday, October 5 (Odd numbers email)

Politics, National and International (Even numbers email)

McPherson, Chapters 18 – 20

Thursday, October 7 (Even numbers email)

The Killer Angels, Day 1


Fall Break

Thursday, October 14 (Odd numbers email)

The Killer Angels, Day 2

Shaara, Thursday, July 2, 1863: The Second Day
Sunday and Monday, October 17 and 18  GETTYSBURG TRIP

The Killer Angels, Day 3

Shaara, Friday, July 3, 1863: The Third Day; Afterword

Thursday, October 21

Midterm Exam

Tuesday, October 26 (Even numbers email)

Grant and Vicksburg


Thursday, October 28 (Odd numbers email)

If It Takes All Summer

McPherson, Chapters 23 – 25

Tuesday, November 2 (Even numbers email)

April 1865, I


Thursday, November 4 (Odd numbers email)

April 1865, II

Winik, Chapters 3 and 4

Tuesday, November 9 (Even numbers email)

April 1865, III
Winik, Chapters 5 and 6

Thursday, November 11 (Odd numbers email)

April 1865, IV

Winik, Chapters 7 and 8, Epilogue

Tuesday, November 16 (Even numbers email)

The End

McPherson, Chapters 26 – 28, Epilogue, Afterword

Thursday, November 18 and Tuesday, November 23

Student Presentations

Thanksgiving Vacation

Tuesday, November 30

Student Presentations

Thursday, December 2

Conclusions