History 113: The American Civil War

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Course Description

In this course we will start by making an in-depth analysis of the coming of the war, considering the political, social, and cultural issues and attitudes that drove a wedge between Americans North and South. Sectional conflict centered on a series of questions that involved the future of African slavery and the southern way of life that was based on it. The bulk of our time will be spent discussing the military, political, and social history of the war years, both on the battlefields and the home fronts. We conclude with a brief discussion of Reconstruction, the process of readmitting southern states to the Union and helping ex-slaves make a transition to freedom.

Course rules and policies:

Expectations:
You are expected to read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss the readings on a daily basis. Since this is a summer class, you will be under a lot of pressure to keep up with the reading. On average, there is between 60 and 70 pages of reading per class period. That is a normal reading load, but because it is every day it is much more demanding than during a fall or spring semester. Do the best you can, use the weekends to catch up if you fall behind. All of the exams are due on Mondays.

Be sure that you contact me as soon as possible if you are having trouble with the course material or keeping up with the course requirements. I have listed reading assignments for Saturdays as well as weekdays, since this is an on-line course, and there will be discussion items (and often specific questions) posted to the board six days per week. Do not wait until the last week to let me know if you have a problem. Quite frankly, the summer course schedule is exhausting (for me, too!), and I know it is difficult to maintain this kind of pace for five weeks. Unfortunately, that’s the schedule we have, and again, contact me as soon as possible if are having problems with the material.

1 This syllabus is a revised version of History 315: The American Civil War, which is an Historical Studies course in the current General Education program. This course was taught via distance (on-line) in summer II, 2009, and the assignments, policies, and dates in the schedule reflect that organization. This syllabus is revised to indicate how the course would be taught as a History 113 course, including adjusted readings and assessments, to reflect its revision to the 100 level. As a History 113 class, of course, it might be taught on campus or on-line, but this sample syllabus is intended to be representative of the on-line format.
Because this is part of ISU’s General Education program, all assignments are graded for content and grammar, so be sure to run spell-check and proof-read carefully.

Do not plagiarize (see the guidelines below). In practical terms, do not copy information directly from the book or from each other. If you plagiarize, it will trigger disciplinary action as stipulated in the Student Code of Conduct. See below for more information.

For Students with Disabilities: Indiana State University seeks to provide effective services and accommodation for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Contact the Director of Student Support Services. The telephone number is 237-2301 and the office is located in Gillum Hall, Room 202A. The Director will ensure that you receive all the additional help that Indiana State offers.

If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, please notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classroom.

Academic Freedom:
“Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.”

The preceding comes from the American Association of University Professors’ statement on academic freedom. Though the entire statement speaks to many issues, it is this portion on the conduct of the course that is most relevant. For the purpose of Foundational Studies courses this means that faculty have the right to conduct their class in a fashion they deem appropriate as long as the material presented meets the learning objectives laid out by the entire faculty.

http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is a cornerstone of academic life. As stated on ISU’s website (http://www.indstate.edu/academicintegrity): “All students are expected to maintain professional behavior, which includes the highest standard of integrity and honesty.” Students are encouraged to visit this site for guidelines on academic integrity and plagiarism. The penalty for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, can include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the class, and/or referral to Student Judicial Programs. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:
1. Plagiarism.
2. Cheating.
3. Fraud.
4. Using another person’s material as one’s own.
5. Knowingly allowing another person to use one’s own work as their own.
If a student enrolled in this course engages in any form of academic dishonesty, the professor will report the incident as stipulated in the Code of Conduct, and will assign an appropriate penalty, at minimum a failing grade for the assignment. For more information, please see the Student Code of Conduct available on the web at:
http://www.indstate.edu/academicintegrity/studentguide.pdf
History offers a unique way to understand the world. It is a path to knowledge that engages in a creative and critical exploration of the past in order to illuminate the patterns, complexities, and contingencies that shape the human experience. As a result, History encompasses not only the individuals and groups whose interactions spark change over time but also the economic, political, social, cultural, scientific, religious, gender, and geographic forces, among others, that influence their behavior. Historians seek to understand the past by emphasizing the importance of context, establishing cause and effect, determining connections between individuals and events, applying cross-cultural analyses, and weighing different perspectives, all while carefully relying on documented source material to arrive at well-supported conclusions.

Specific learning objectives of this, and all Historical Studies courses, include [referenced as HSO 1-4 throughout the syllabus]:

1. Analyze the origins and consequences of historical events and the roles of individuals and societal forces in bringing about change over time.
2. Explain historical events and changes as a continuous movement through time rather than as discrete and disconnected moments in time.
3. Locate and evaluate sources of evidence within the context of time, place, and culture.
4. Use an historical perspective to understand the world today and address contemporary issues.

In addition to these specific Historical Studies outcomes, in this course you will develop critical thinking skills through reading and discussing a variety of texts, analyzing and discussing primary documents, and making an argument in essay quizzes and exams. The study of history, in fact, involves constantly making arguments based on the evidence available to you. These skills are among the most basic learning objectives of the Foundational Studies program, which are [referenced as FSO 1-10 throughout the syllabus]:
1. Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems; 
2. Critically evaluate the ideas of others; 
3. Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history); 
4. Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts; 
5. Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship; 
6. Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies; 
7. Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context; 
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions; 
9. Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness; 
10. Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

The Foundational Studies program is also designed to build skills for applied learning. These Skill and Applied Learning Objectives are [referenced as SALO 1-3 throughout the syllabus]:

1. Developing critical thinking skills ² 
2. Developing information literacy skills³ 
3. Developing your writing skills (by including a graded writing component)

Course Learning Objectives in History 113: The American Civil War:

² Throughout the course we develop critical thinking skills through a close reading and analysis of both primary and secondary sources. These are done through the Blackboard discussion board (daily reading questions), essay quizzes, essay exams, and formal primary document analyses. Quiz and exam questions are designed to make students take a position and present evidence to substantiate their arguments. Because these are done through essays, students develop critical writing skills as well (SALO 1, and 3).

³ Throughout the course we will be addressing the issue of information literacy skills by critically examining web sites related to the subject. History is a discipline particularly vulnerable to myth, masquerading as fact, and perhaps as much as any subject the Civil War has been a battleground for those pushing a particular agenda. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan have been active on-line, promoting a version of this era that is at odds with all scholarly interpretation. Part of the course includes a tutorial exercise on evaluating web sites, which draws on a template from the University of California at Berkeley: https://webmail.indstate.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=c7b30cb2239d42b7a0b5c9ede5b85d50&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.lib.berkeley.edu%2fTeachingLib%2fGuides%2fInternet%2fEvaluate.html

Since this section is taught on-line, of course, students also need to communicate via Blackboard and be comfortable using basic software.
The summary points below indicate how students will meet all of the HSO, most of the FSO, and all of the SALO.

Content Objectives and Main Course Themes:

1. Understand the central role of slavery and race in the Civil War era. Slavery was the most important cause of the war; slavery allowed the Confederacy to fight as long as it did, but the collapse of slavery—as slaves ran away by the thousands—and the disintegration of the southern economy slowly undermined the southern war effort; the fate of African American slaves, and later freedmen, was a central issue in Northern politics during and after the war. The place of slavery and African Americans in the United States also became part of the ongoing discussion of equality in American life. These issues were central throughout this period, and the Reconstruction Amendments (13th-15th) were vital to social movements for equality in the late twentieth century. [HSO 1-4; FSO 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10; SALO 1-3]

2. Analyze the evolving relationship between state governments and the federal government. The action of secession—and Lincoln’s insistence that it was illegal and contrary to the Constitution—was the immediate cause of the war; during the war both national governments grew in size and took on new responsibilities (for example, the income tax, printing paper money, and conscription), which were controversial in both the Union and the Confederacy; the Union victory ensured that the federal government was, and would be, superior to the states. The Civil War era, in fact, marked the end of one period in the history of American federalism. Virtually since the Constitution took effect, Americans had debated the power of states relative to the federal government. Nullification and secession—what we usually refer to as the theory of states’ rights—remained theories throughout the antebellum period. The Union victory in the Civil War and expansion of federal responsibilities and authority forever shifted the federal balance in favor of Washington, but of course the ambiguity of federal-state relations remains central to all political debate today. [HSO 1-4; FSO 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10; SALO 1-3]

3. Analyze the close relationship between the battlefield and the home front, and between civilian politics and military events. The military course of the war was often responsible for political and social developments “at home,” particularly for President Lincoln’s political fortunes in the North. On the other hand, the increasingly miserable condition of southern civilians, especially women and children, led many Confederate soldiers to desert, which severely limited the South’s ability to win victory on the battlefield. The collapse of slavery similarly undermined the ability of southern armies to stay intact or effective. Thus, in both the Union and the Confederacy, there was a close relationship between the battlefield and the home front, including electoral politics and civilians’ support for the war effort. These themes, of course, are certainly relevant to American politics and society today: the impact of military events or foreign affairs on domestic culture and politics, for instance. [HSO 1-4; FSO 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10; SALO 1-3]
Required Readings

Christopher Olsen, *The American Civil War: A Hands-On History*
William Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography*
Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict & Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865*
+ additional material on-line

Blackboard Organization

The Blackboard site is organized around the five course units. Under every Unit tab there is a video introduction, folders for each individual day, and within each folder are the discussion items, questions, and any additional readings or documents. Quizzes will be posted under the folder for the day it is assigned; exams will be posted under the corresponding Unit tab. Under the Course Documents tab are reading guides for the books by Gienapp and Ash and guides for watching the movies. The Discussion Board will follow a day-by-day organization, normally with forums for each discussion question. The External Links tab includes some additional, particularly useful web sites and documents, as well as some other things. Also, please check the Announcements tab every day, and I will normally post a brief summary of what to look for in the material for that day.

Assignments, Quizzes, and Exams

1. Discussion Board. For each day’s topic there are a main theme and questions for discussion. Please make note of the questions before you do the assigned reading, and contribute to the discussion as often as possible. These discussions take the place of some of what we would do in class, so I anticipate that most students will participate most of the time. This portion of your grade will be calculated on both the quantity and quality of your posts.

*For some days there are additional documents or other short readings listed under the tab for that day. Be sure to check this for each day’s work. In most cases, the additional primary documents are included to help illustrate themes in the required readings. Questions will ask you to draw specifically on some of the additional readings.*

We will also be discussing several Hollywood movie clips, which are listed on the Course Outline below. Unfortunately, due to copyright restrictions, these clips cannot be streamed on-line. There is a copy of each movie available in the History Department office in Terre Haute. Of course the movies also will be available at most local video stores. Please plan ahead so that you have access to the movies. There will also be discussion questions for each of these movie clips and guides posted under the Course Documents tab.

2. Quizzes. There will be a series of short quizzes posted about once per week. These will cover the material assigned for that day and the days before that and since the previous quiz. They will be a mixture of multiple choice, short-answer, and essay. **Quizzes will be available**
for only 24 hours on the Blackboard site.

3. Unit Exams. There are four unit exams, which will be available on the Friday before they are due (each Monday). (There is no exam for Unit V, but rather a longer quiz.) The exams are primarily essay with some short-answer questions and a few multiple choice. You should submit your answers directly to me via e-mail as an attachment; use Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or PDF only. Do not use the Digital Drop Box feature in Blackboard.

4. Primary Document Analyses. We will discuss primary documents throughout the course—there are documents embedded in each chapter of *The American Civil War: A Hands-On History*, and many primary documents on-line. These are often the subject of our discussion questions for each day. In addition, everyone will write up two short analyses of documents (of your choice) that can come from our reading or another source. Your analyses should be in the form of an essay and consider each document in terms of: authorship (including biases and intent); audience; and context (considered broadly). There is a detailed template with more extensive discussion under the “course documents” tab.

Normally I do not accept late quizzes or exams, but if you have a particular scheduling problem for an assignment, please contact me in advance.

**Grading**

1. Discussion. Participation in the Discussion Board
   200 points
2. Quizzes. 4 @ 50 points each + 1 @ 100 points
   300
3. Exams. 4 @ 100 points each
   400
4. Primary document analyses. 2 @ 50 points each
   100

1000 points total
Course Outline, Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Unit I: The Coming of the War

Please watch the video introductions to the course and to Unit I

7-13 Sectionalism to 1850
   Olsen, 1  Gienapp, to p. 24

7-14 Abolitionists & the Northern Critique of Slavery
   Olsen, 2  Gienapp, 25-37

7-15 The Southern Defense of Slavery
   Olsen, 3  Gienapp, 37-48

   Quiz #1

7-16 War, Expansion, & Free Soil
   Olsen, 4  Gienapp, 49-66

7-17 The Election of 1860 & Secession
   Olsen, 5

7-18 Secession (continued)
   Gienapp, 66-81

4 Each unit in the schedule below has been annotated in a footnote to indicate how daily discussion and lecture help students meet the HSO, FSO, and SALO.
5 In Unit I we examine the coming of the war, particularly the divisive place of slavery in American life. We discuss how different Americans viewed slavery’s place in the country, and why it became such a divisive issue in American culture and politics. This involves examining what “slavery” meant to many people, including the unpleasant reality that most white Americans simply didn’t think much about African Americans. This allows us to consider how and why opposition to slavery and slavery expansion developed, coming from both long-term changes (the growth of a bourgeois middle class, particularly in the North, the impact of the Second Great Awakening, and so forth) and more immediate causes (the founding of the American Antislavery Society, publication of The Liberator, publication of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, the Fugitive Slave Act, and others). We also discuss how this modern antislavery movement built on the work of British abolitionists and earlier African Americans who worked to end slavery. Primary documents we read include William Lloyd Garrison’s Liberator, speeches from Angelia Grimke Weld and other abolitionists, and writings and sermons from Southerners defending slavery. HSO, 1-4; FSO, 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8; SALO, 1-3.

Examples of how we develop critical reading, thinking, and writing skills are indicated in the discussion questions, quizzes, and exam covering this unit, which are attached below.
Unit II: The Limited War

*Please watch the video introduction to Unit II*

7-20 The Confederacy, Ft. Sumter, the Upper South, & the Border States
   Olsen, 6

**Unit I Exam Due**

7-21 The Confederacy, Ft. Sumter, the Upper South, & the Border States (continued)
   Gienapp, 82-85  Ash, through p. 12

7-22 Union and Confederate War Aims, Strategy, Comparative Advantages
   Olsen, 7  Gienapp, 85-95

7-23 The War in 1861 & 1862
   Olsen, 8  Gienapp, 95-98

7-24 The Southern Home Front in 1861
   Ash, 1-2

**Quiz #2**

7-25 Families and Communities at War

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6 In Unit II we examine how the war began and strategy developed during its first few months. This puts particular emphasis on the decisions and actions of individuals, particularly Presidents Lincoln and Davis, but also Union commanders such as Gen. Butler, and the actions of runaway slaves. All of these individuals—against the backdrop of large-scale forces, most particularly the increasing destructiveness of the war—helped shape Union strategy relative to slavery and Confederate civilians. We also trace how the war affected civilians and communities, including those such as Terre Haute (we look at mobilization in Vigo County, for instance). Finally, we analyze how the war’s progress shaped northern politics and the fortunes of Lincoln’s Republican Party through 1862. This includes how Union voters perceived how the war was progressing, rather than how Union forces were actually doing. The perception of how the war was going—both in the Union and the Confederacy—had to be measured against what people expected when the war began. To that end, we consider what contemporaries enumerated as each side’s advantages when the war began. Primary documents include several newspaper articles that trace how the war was reported and economic statistics of the country in 1860, among others. **HSO, 1-4; FSO, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10; SALO, 1-3.**
Olsen, 9
In Unit III we examine the transformation of the war in 1862 and 1863. This focuses on the individual conclusions reached by Union leaders, particularly President Lincoln. But they were made against the underlying forces at work in the war itself, especially the horrendous death toll and general destruction that made a restoration of the Union with slavery increasingly unacceptable for many people in the Union. These changes allow for a detailed examination of change over time, multiple causation, and how immediate and long-term forces come together to precipitate crucial changes: Lincoln’s decision to broaden the war effort and, of course, issue the Emancipation Proclamation. These choices changed the war and ultimately changed the course of American history—how individuals make decisions that can be momentous, and what the context is that dictates those decisions. Primary sources include the Emancipation Proclamation and Gettysburg Address, among others. **HSO, 1-4; FSO, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10; SALO, 1-3.**
In Unit IV we focus on how the massive death toll and devastation affected individuals and communities in both the Union and Confederacy. Ultimately the Southern war effort collapsed because too many civilians were no longer willing to support the war effort in the face of starvation and the death of so many family members. In the Union, communities were similarly affected, and we spend some time analyzing the cost of the war in places like Terre Haute and Vigo County. The close connection between military progress and home front politics was particularly clear in the presidential election of 1864. We make an in-depth analysis of the election and how Lincoln’s leadership was perceived by voters in the Union. Primary documents include many articles and cartoons related to the election. Finally, we consider how the war affected the Republican Party and northerners in general. Of central importance was the service of African American men in combat, which convinced many whites that black men (not women, yet) deserved citizenship (still to be defined) and at least a measure of equality. This change in attitude was perhaps the defining moment of the entire Civil War era because it signaled the beginning of a new definition of civil rights and equality—it would take more than a century for the nation to live up to this beginning, of course, and it’s hardly complete, but it began during the war and was forced primarily by the service of African American men in the Union Army and Navy. HSO, 1-4; FSO, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10; SALO, 1-3.
In the final unit of the course we consider the ways in which, and the reasons why, the promises of equality and civil rights were not fulfilled during Reconstruction. The forces of racism and localism eventually overwhelmed the wartime sentiments that favored national government activism and a broader commitment to civil rights for African American men and women. Again we analyze the combination of individual actions and the broader context in which those took place as the foundation for understanding change and continuity over time. The success of some Union leaders to force passage and ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments, in particular, allows us to highlight how the actions of many individuals in both the North and South contributed to these actions. If southern whites had accepted defeat, and not tried to re-impose slavery through the so-called “Black Codes,” the northern mainstream probably would not have been converted to the Radical Republican program, which included suffrage for black men. The formation of the Ku Klux Klan, and similar vigilante organizations, helped convince northern whites that African Americans would never be safe without the right to vote and access to basic civil rights. National leaders failed to enforce the Reconstruction Amendments—for reasons of politics and racism, which we consider—but the foundation of the modern Civil Rights movement was laid in the 1870s. Primary documents include testimony from former slaves, the Reconstruction Amendments, and the Black Codes. These allow for a discussion of changing notions of citizenship, different perspectives on the same issue and how personal background and bias shape our outlook of different cultures, and how individual decisions have often unforeseen ethical dimensions.

HSO, 1-4; FSO, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10; SALO, 1-3.
Olsen, 19

**Quiz #5**

8-13  Catch-up: finish what you haven’t finished yet!