



Abraham Lincoln's inauguration in front of the uncompleted U.S. Capitol building

THE CIVIL WAR & RECONSTRUCTION

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 exposed deep fault lines that have run through much of American history. Indeed, those fault lines continue to shape our world. In important ways we still live in the Civil War's aftermath. This course examines the Civil War not as an isolated event, but as an extended era in which basic aspects of what it meant to be American were challenged and sometimes radically recast. We will treat this era, running from roughly 1845 to 1877, in three distinct units. Unit 1 will investigate the *causes* of the war in the decades preceding its outbreak. Unit 2 will examine the war itself, paying special attention to the *experiences* of soldiers, civilians and enslaved people, as well as political and military leaders. Finally, Unit 3 will ask about the war's *outcomes* in the years that followed the formal end to hostilities, during the period known as Reconstruction. The aim of the course, therefore, is to understand not only *what* happened, but *why*, and thus to come to terms with this formative moment in American history.

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Course Details

HIST 3347
Fall 2023
MWF 10-10:50 am
Harold Simmons 207

Ariel Ron
Email: aron@smu.edu
Office hours: MW 1-2:30 pm / Dallas Hall 56

Student Learning Outcomes

Historical Context II (2012)/Historical Context (2016)

- (1) Students will be able to analyze both secondary and primary historical evidence.
- (2) Students will be able to develop and support extended historical discussions in their own prose, based both on critical understanding of specific historical problems and on evaluation of secondary and primary evidence.

Assigned Readings

- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Dover Thrift Edition)
- Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*
- Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*
- William W. Freehling, *The South Vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War*
- Additional readings listed in the schedule of classes below will be posted to Canvas
- Note: your books must have standard page numbers for reference. Typically, this means they must be physical copies or e-books that come as PDFs. Kindle versions are not acceptable because they do not meet this requirement.

Grading

Participation (attendance + discussion)	10%
Quizzes (worst quiz dropped)	10%
First essay	10%
First midterm exam	12%
Second essay	12%
Second midterm exam	12%
Third essay	16%
Final exam	18%

- This grading scheme means that roughly half of your semester grade depends on lecture material and half on reading
- Credit for improvement is built in because later assignments are weighted more heavily. The final two assignments—the third essay and final exam—account for about a third of your semester grade.
- The Canvas grade tracker is not good so you have to email me if you want to know your current grade.

COURSE GOVERNANCE

Course Policies

1. Attendance
 - 1.1. Prompt and regular attendance at all class meetings is required unless special circumstances intervene, such as an illness, religious observance or university extracurricular event.
 - 1.2. To have an absence excused, a student must present documentation of the special circumstance.
 - 1.3. For every five unexcused absences, a student's semester grade can be reduced by a full letter grade at my discretion.
2. Reading
 - 2.1. Reading assignments should be completed prior to the class for which they are listed.
 - 2.2. In general, books must be purchased. Do not delay getting them. If there is some reason that this is a problem for you, let me know and I will assist you.
 - 2.3. Class discussions require everyone's active and respectful engagement.
3. Classroom and communications
 - 3.1. No laptops or devices can be used in class. If you require accommodations, please let me know and I will make an appropriate exception.
 - 3.2. The midterm and final exams will be in-class "blue book" exams.
 - 3.3. Official class communications will occur by email and/or Canvas only. Be sure to check regularly or set alerts as appropriate.

Essay Grading Guidelines

These are the general features of a good academic essay:

- Argument: thesis is clearly stated, interesting, and supported by evidence;
- Organization: exposition, analysis and evidence are arranged in a logical sequence;
- Writing: fluid, clear, lean and free of errors.

I grade on this basis:

- A. Does most of the above very well and none of it less than well;
- B. Does most of the above reasonably well and none of it badly;
- C. Does some of the above passably and none of it disastrously;
- D. Does not meet standards in any area but exhibits some genuine effort;
- F. Let's not discuss it.

Pluses and minuses between these basic levels are matters of judgment and not subject to precise accounting.

TITLE IX AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Disability Accommodations

Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit smu.edu/DASS to begin the process. Once they are registered and approved, students then submit a DASS Accommodation Letter through the electronic portal, *DASS Link*, and then communicate directly with each of their instructors to make appropriate

arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, but rather require advance notice in order to implement.

Sexual Harassment

All forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, are violations of SMU's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or to receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU's Title IX Coordinator, at accessequity@smu.edu or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty or staff of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment, including resources available to assist students, please visit smu.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Under Title IX, students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting the Office of Student Advocacy and Support by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

SMU REQUIREMENTS

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. [Click here for a list of holidays.](#)

Medical-Related Absences

To ensure academic continuity and avoid any course penalties, students should follow procedures described by their instructors in order to be provided with appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and exams.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments that were missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for make-up work with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examinations or other missed assignments. (See current [Catalog](#) under heading of "Academic Records/Excused Absences.")

Final Exams

Final course examinations shall be given in all courses where appropriate, and some form of final assessment is essential. Final exams and assessments must be administered as specified in the official examination schedule. Exams cannot be administered or due during the last week of classes or during the Reading Period. Syllabi must state clearly the form of

the final exam or assessment, and the due date and time must match the official SMU exam schedule. Final exams are not required to be provided online.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to embrace and uphold the [SMU Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code will be acted upon in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the [Mustang Student Handbook](#).

Generative AI is not permitted in this course. The use of any form of Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, DALL-E) is not permitted in this course. The assignments have been designed to ensure that you develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills associated with the learning outcomes laid out in the syllabus. Because generative AI tools and detection software are developing at a rapid pace, it is possible that assignments you turn in might appear as “false positives” and raise concerns of possible academic dishonesty. To ensure that you can demonstrate intellectual ownership of the assignments you submit, you are therefore encouraged to maintain clear evidence of your work (e.g., time-stamped drafts and notes; copies and links to source material). Any violation of these rules will be treated at the undergraduate level within the SMU Student Honor Code and at the graduate and professional level within the honor codes found in their respective school policies. If there is sufficient cause for concern, an incident report will be submitted for review by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

- **Essays will be scanned with Turnitin.**

STUDENT SUPPORT

Student Academic Success Programs

Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students who would like support for subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; smu.edu/sasp.

Caring Community Connections Program

CCC is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. The online referral form can be found at smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc. After a referral form is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Anyone who is unclear about what steps to take if they have concerns about students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.

Mental Health Resources: On-Call and Ongoing Counseling Services

Throughout the academic year, students may encounter different stressors or go through life experiences which impact their mental health and academic performance. Students who are in distress or have concerns about their mental health can schedule a same-day or next-day appointment to speak with a counselor by calling [Counseling Services](#). Counselors are available at any time, day or night for students in crisis at this number: 214-768-2277 (then select option 2) They will be connected with a counselor immediately. Students seeking ongoing counseling should call the same number (214-768-2277, then select option 1) during normal business hours to schedule an initial appointment.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- WEEK 1 *Premonitions*
M 8/21 Introduction
W 8/23 Roots of sectionalism
F 8/25 Discussion: Mississippi's secession declaration (1861) / Faust, "We Should Grow Too Fond of It" (2004)

~ UNIT 1: CAUSES ~

- WEEK 2 *The North and the South*
M 8/28 Slave country's expansion
W 8/30 Emergence of the North
F 9/1 Discussion: Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) – all

- WEEK 3 *Structures of Political Contestation*
M 9/4 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
W 9/6 Political parties and social movements / ***First essay due**
F 9/8 Anti-slavery and pro-slavery

- WEEK 4 *The Crisis of the 1850s*
M 9/11 The territorial shears
W 9/13 The Republicans vs. the Slave Power
F 9/15 Discussion: Dew, *Apostles of Disunion* (2002), pp. 1-103

- WEEK 5 *First Exam Week*
M 9/18 Secession
W 9/20 Review
F 9/22 ***First midterm exam**

~ UNIT 2: THE WAR ~

- WEEK 6 *First Shots*
M 9/25 Mobilizing for war
W 9/27 1862: The shock of battle
F 9/29 Discussion: Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* (2008), preface to ch. 4 (pp. xi-136)

- WEEK 7 *War in Earnest*
M 10/2 A people's contest
W 10/4 1863: Hard war
F 10/6 Discussion: Faust, *Republic of Suffering*, ch. 5 to epilogue (pp. 137-272)

- WEEK 8 *Turning Points*
M 10/9 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
W 10/11 Slavery's unraveling / ***Second essay due**
F 10/13 Discussion: Freehling, *The South Vs. the South* (2001), preface to ch. 5 (pp. xi-84)

WEEK 9 *State and economy*
M 10/16 The money war
W 10/18 Republican economic policy
F 10/20 Discussion: Freehling, *South Vs. the South*, ch. 5-10 (pp. 85-206)

WEEK 10 *Second exam week*
M 10/23 1864-65: Politics and the military
W 10/25 Review
F 10/27 ***Second midterm exam**

~ UNIT 3: OUTCOMES ~

WEEK 11 *Third essay preparation*
M 10/30 Discussion: Freedmen & Southern Society Project essays
W 11/1 Discussion: Freedmen & Southern Society Project documents
F 11/3 Discussion: Freedmen & Southern Society Project documents / ***Preliminary essay assignment due**

WEEK 12 *Reconstruction's promise*
M 11/6 From Lincoln to Johnson
W 11/8 Radical Reconstruction
F 11/10 Discussion: Douglass, "Our Composite Nationality" (1869)

WEEK 13 *Reconstruction's demise*
M 11/13 An unfinished revolution
W 11/15 Land, taxes and violence
F 11/17 Discussion: Tourgée, "To the Voters of Guilford" (1867), "Letter to Senator Joseph C. Abbot" (1870), "Root, Hog or Die" (1876); Gray, "Plan of the Campaign" (1876)

WEEK 14 *A finished revolution*
M 11/20 How Reconstruction ended
W 11/22 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
F 11/24 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15
M 11/27 Discussion: Tourgée, "From the Veteran and His Pipe" (1885), "A Bystander's Notes: White Caps" (1888) / Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1890)
W 11/29 Remembering the Civil War / Discussion: DuBois, "The Propaganda of History" (1935)
F 12/1 Discussion and reflection / ***Third essay due**
M 12/4 Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 13, 8:00 – 11:00 AM