

JACK MILLER CENTER

History Of The Civil War

March 24, 2014 by JMC

SHARE

History of the Civil War, John Brown University

HST 3243

American Civil War

Spring 2008

MWF 12:00-12:50 a.m.

Cathedral 301

John Brown University

War is at best barbarism.... Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell.

–William Tecumseh Sherman

It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.

–Robert E. Lee

Professor: Dr. Preston Jones

Office: Cathedral 306

Mail: Box 3037

Phone: (479) 524-4438

Office Hours: MWF: 2:30-3:30

Tues: 7:30-8:45

Thurs: 2:30-3:30

Email: Pjones@jbu.edu

Required Texts:

- Reid Mitchell, *The American Civil War* (Essex, England: Pearson Education, 2001). An excellent overview of the major themes of the war.
- Robert Hunt Rhodes, ed., *All for the Union: The Civil War Diary and Letters of Elisha Hunt Rhodes* (New York: Orion Books, 1985). Perhaps the best known Union soldier's diary from the war.
- Sam R. Watkins, *Co. Aytch* (New York: Touchstone, 2003). One of the best war memoirs ever written. In a crowded and competitive field, this memoir by a Confederate soldier has stood the test of time.

- **William Baxter, *Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove; Or, Scenes and Incidents of the War in Arkansas*(Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000). An interesting early memoir of the war in the Fayetteville region. Of interest to us primarily because it discusses the war in this region.**

Class Purpose: The less sophisticated purpose of the course is to learn the basics of the American Civil War—its origins, course, and consequences. The course’s more sophisticated, and more interesting, purpose is to reflect on the political, cultural, psychological and spiritual meanings of the war.

Class Grade: The students’ grades will be based on performance on 6 quizzes (5% each), 3 exams (10% each), 2 papers (10% each), and a final exam (20%).

Students should keep track of their own grades and file all quizzes, exams, and papers. If there is a question about the grade at the end of the semester, it will be difficult to resolve the question unless the students have their work saved.

Exams: The first exam will focus on material covered since the beginning of the class; the second and third exams will focus on material covered since the most recent exam, though students should expect also to see some questions on material covered in previous exams.

For the first exam students also need to know the following about the battles listed below: chronological order (month and year); casualties* (rounded to the nearest 100); strategic or tactical significance; victor. Draw on the civilwar.com and the class text, *The American Civil War*.

Battles: First Bull Run*; Pea Ridge*; Hampton Roads; Shiloh*; Seven Days; Second Bull Run; Antietam*; Fredericksburg; Chancellorsville; Gettysburg*; Vicksburg; Chickamauga; Wilderness*; Cold Harbor; Franklin; Nashville.

Papers: Students will pick two paper topics from one of the four following options. It is up to the student which topic to take up first and second.

- **The phrase “war is hell” means, in its most basic sense, that war is really terrible. But can the phrase be taken more literally? If people can participate in the kingdom of heaven and, in some way, bring an element of heaven to earth, can they do the same with the realm of hell? This will involve a serious engagement with the Christian tradition’s theological reflection on the concept of hell. Bring what you learn to bear on your reading of *All for the Union, Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove*, and, especially, *Co. Aytch*. The work of at least three major figures in Christian tradition—e.g. Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards—should be consulted.**
- **War veterans often say that, for the combatant, war is about survival, the well-being of the comrade close to you, and the security of one’s immediate environment. In war zones, soldiers do not indulge in philosophy or idealism; they do not contemplate the big picture or grand strategy. To what extent is this view of combatants’ place in war borne out in *All for the Union* and *Co. Aytch*?**
- ***All for the Union*, a diary, reveals the tedium that comprises much of a soldier’s life; and it reports combat in a matter-of-fact kind of way. *Co. Aytch*, a memoir, eliminates much**

detail and reveals the horrors of combat. In this memoir, memory has done its work—a story has been wrenched from innumerable details. Reflect on these Civil War sources drawing on what psychologists tell us about memory. How does memory work? What gets left out and what sticks, and why? What is the process whereby memory creates stories from myriad confusing details? And so on. This will involve reading serious psychological literature on memory and bringing what you learn from it to bear on your thinking about history. The work of Daniel Schacter and Elizabeth Loftus (and their citations/bibliographies) might be a good place to start. Also see chapters on memory in psychology textbooks for resources. At least four serious, published psychological sources should be consulted.

- *All for the Union* seems almost emotionless; *Co. Aytch* is sometimes humorous, sometimes wrenching. It is hard not to think that Watkins is describing some emotions he felt but, probably like Rhodes, would not have shared in the combat zone. Read at least two serious works on the psychological effects of combat on warriors and bring what you learn from this reading to bear on a discussion of the books by Rhodes and Watkins. Examples of the kinds of works you can consult are: Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in the Twentieth Century* (1999); and Richard Holmes, *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle* (1985)

Paper due dates: February 15 and April 2.

Papers should be 4-5 pages in length.

Aretē (areth): This is the classical Greek word for excellence. Make *areth* your goal. *Areth* can't be achieved if the paper is a rush job, or if the sources are weak, if the research is superficial, or if serious thought hasn't gone into the paper, or if the writing is full of problems.

In addition to judging the papers' content, the professor will assess the quality of the papers as written works. Students must pay attention to grammar, syntax, and so on. Papers that are exceptionally well done will receive extra credit at the professor's discretion.

Staple the papers. Do not email them. An unstapled paper = 3% deducted from the student's final grade.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned dates. Please do not email the professor questions about the papers. Ask questions about the papers in class, so others can benefit from the question and the answer.

Sleep: Living in a constant state of sleep deprivation is self-defeating; it diminishes one's quality of life and academic work. You're not as busy as you think you are. Organize your life and get the sleep you need.

Lap tops: Students wishing to use laptops must sit in the front row and use the laptops in class only for things directly related to the class.

Class participation: In the real world employers assume that their employees will show up, will be punctual, reliable, awake, and ready to be productive. Employees who do not fulfill their obligations usually pay a price. The same rules apply here. The professor reserves the right to deduct up to 3% from a student's grade for each breach.

Academic Corruption: Plagiarism and other forms of academic corruption are destructive of the educational enterprise and cannot be taken lightly. Students who demean themselves, the university

and the life of the mind by engaging in such activities will automatically fail the course and will be reported to the academic dean.

Make-Up Policy: In the rare event that a student will need to miss an examination for a legitimate reason, the student will be allowed to make up the exam.

Disabilities: The university's policy on disabilities can be found on page 13 of the 2007-2009 catalogue.

Spring Break: Friday, March 14 is a regular class day. Students should not make travel plans for Spring Break until after their regularly-scheduled classes have ended.

The Final Examination: The final examination is comprehensive. Students must sit for the final exam at the specified time. Obvious exceptions are death or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family, or illness of the student as certified by the university nurse or other responsible person.

Class Schedule

January 9: Introduction

January 11: The origins of the war: Colonial times through the Articles of Confederation

- **Class lecture. Prepare for the first exam.**

January 14: The origins of the war: The Constitutional Convention through the War of 1812

- **Class lecture. Prepare for the first exam.**

January 16: The origins of the War: The Missouri Compromise through the Dred Scott case

- *American Civil War, 6-12*

January 18: The triggers of the War: John Brown, the election of 1860, and the immediate aftermath

- *American Civil War, 12-15, 83-84*

January 21: Lincoln's ideas before the war

- **This and the following two class topics draw on Lincoln's writings.**

January 23: Lincoln's ideas during the war

January 25: Lincoln's virtues

January 28: Mobilization, strategy, and tactics

- *The American Civil War, pp. 19-23*

January 30: Enflamed passions at the war's outset

- *Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove, pp. 1-9*

February 1: Preachers

- *Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove, pp. 50-58*
- *All for the Union, Oct. 16, 1864; Nov. 27, '64.*
- *Co. Aytch, pp. 86-88.*

February 4: The Romance of War

- *Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove, pp. 16-23.*

February 6: The Union homefront

- *The American Civil War, pp. 30-39*

February 8: **First Exam**

February 11: The war according to Sidney George Fisher's diary

February 13: The Confederacy

- ***The American Civil War*, pp. 40-50, 94-100**

February 15: The war according to Mary Boykin Chesnut's diary

First paper due at the beginning of class.

February 18: The nuts and bolts of Union military service

- **Based on *The Military Handbook & Soldier's Manual (1861)***

February 20: The tedium of war

- **Draws on *All for the Union*. Have the book in class**

February 22: The psychology of war

- **Draws on *All for the Union*. Have the book in class.**

February 25: Slaves, the Emancipation Proclamation, and black troops

- ***The American Civil War*, pp. 27-29, 54-62**

February 27: The war according to James Henry Gooding's letters from the front

February 29: Politics

- ***The American Civil War*, pp 61-64**

March 3: The Union, the Confederacy, and Britain

March 5: Guerillas; the sacking of civilian population centers

- ***Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove*, pp. 24-31, 59-68**
- ***The American Civil War*, 104-107**

March 7: The Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas

- ***Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove*, pp. 42-49**

March 10: The Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas

- ***Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove*, pp. 81-98**

March 12: The Battle of Gettysburg

- ***All for the Union*, pp. 113-118**
- ***The Civil War*, 90-91**

March 14: **Second exam**

March 17-21: Spring Break

March 24: Rumors, the "sad reality" of the Confederacy, and desertion

- ***Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove*, pp. 69-80, 116-126**
- ***All for the Union*, pp. 215-229**

March 26: The war according to Wiley Britton, *Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863*

March 28: The war according to Richard Taylor, *Personal Experiences of the Civil War*

March 31: The war according to William Fletcher, *Rebel Private: Front and Rear*

April 2: *Co Aytch*, pp. 1-30

Second paper due at the beginning of class

April 4: *Co Aytch*, pp. 31-58

April 7: *Co Aytch*, pp. 59-91

April 9: *Co Aytch*, pp. 92-127

April 11: *Co Aytch*, pp. 128-158

April 14: *Co Aytch*, pp. 159-192

April 16: *Co Aytch*, pp. 193-228

April 18: **Third exam**

April 21: Plans for Reconstruction

- *The American Civil War, 76-79.*

April 23: Surrender and Lincoln's assassination

- *All for the Union, 223-232*
- *Co. Aytch, 229-234*

April 25: Why did soldiers fight?

- **Draws on James McPherson's *For Cause and Comrades* (1997)**