

**Civil War & Reconstruction (1861-1877)**

Texts for course: James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, Vol. II; Eric Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction; Gerald Linderman, Embattled Courage; Gabor Boritt (ed.), Why the Confederacy Lost; and C. Clinton & N. Silber (eds.), Divided Houses

Purpose and Performance: The focus of this course is on the Civil War, described by Lincoln as "Our Fiery Trial," and the immediate postwar period, the era of Reconstruction. The story of Reconstruction defines in great measure what this "fiery trial" was all about.

One cautionary note so as not to misrepresent the course, the instructor has no expertise in military history. He has no enthusiasm for the military minutiae or what might be described as the "What-did-Robert-E-Lee-have-for-breakfast-on-the-third-day-at-Gettysburg" school of military history. On the other hand, he rejects the opposing school of thought that prefers to discuss the history of the Civil War without mentioning the "unpleasant facts" about the actual fighting. The expectation is that the assigned readings will provide a good interpretative overview of the military or battlefield side of the war and its impact on politics, diplomacy, economics and especially the social side or impact on the home front.

Class format: The course will be a mix of traditional lecture, discussion based on assigned readings, film excerpts, and a field trip (to be decided by the class).

Grades and all that: The grade in this course will be roughly based in the following manner:

Two hourly exams . . . .	20% each
One final exam . . . .	25%
One book report . . . .	15%
One directed research paper . . . .	20%

Informed class discussion will definitely count toward the final grade in the course.

Policy statement: You are expected to take tests and turn in assigned written work on the dates that appear in the syllabus. In the event of an emergency you must notify the instructor before the scheduled assignment. Instructor insists on some documentation explaining the reason for missing the assigned exam or the date for the announced written work. The instructor reserves the right to determine the nature of any make-up work or whether he will grade down any late assignment. As far as attendance is concerned:

History 225

Re: Questions for Embattled Courage

Formatting: Report should be at least 3-4 typewritten pages in length and double-spaced.

Questions:

1. In dealing with the perceptions of the soldiers, both Blue and Grey, Embattled Courage gives us an inside look at the changing nature of the war and how its fighters(whites only in this case)adjusted to those changes.

In order to achieve his purpose, Linderman divides the book into two parts, "Courage's War," and "A Perilous Education." Does this division make sense to you? In your eyes does the author achieve his purpose? Please discuss.

2. In his Epilogue, Linderman introduces another division between "Hiberation" and "Revival." Why? What does this section tell us about the culture of war in American society; the kind of country we were at the turn of the century. [Treat this with a briefer response than in # 1].

3. Overall, what were your strongest reactions to Embattled Courage? Does it illuminate or does the book simply bang away at the obvious? You can be brief but be candid.

You are permitted two unexcused absences. If you have more than two unexcused absences the instructor reserves the right to take this into account when computing the final course grade.

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January 24th . . . Orientation . . . . .

January 26th . . . . And the War Came . . . . .

Readings: McPherson, Ordeal by Fire(hereafter cited as Text, Chpt. 10; read also Lincoln's First Inaugural Address in Appendix

January 31st . . . Organizing for War/ Bean Counting--North & South . . . . .

Readings: Text, Chpts. 11 & 12; read also speech by Alexander Stephens in Appendix; and Introduction in Why the Confederacy Lost (hereafter cited as Boritt)

February 2nd . . . Early Campaigns/ Wartime Diplomacy. . .

Readings: Stephanie McCurry essay in Divided Houses; Text, Chpt. 13; and read also McPherson essay in Boritt. (The McCurry essay covers material appropriate for Jan. 31st period).

February 7th . . . The Commanders: Blue and the Gray . . . . .

Readings: Text, Chpts. 14 & 15; read also Gallagher essay in Boritt.

February 9th/. . . . Evolution of Northern War Aims . . . . .  
14th

Readings: Text, Chpts. 16 & 17; read also David Blight's essay in Boritt.

February 16th . . . War Behind the Lines: Women & the War . . .

Class: (May have a quest lecturer)

Readings: Text, Chpt. 21; read also two of the following essays from Divided Houses: K. Ross, Lyde Ross, and M. Fellman.

February 21st . . . Book Report on Embattled Courage due in class . . . . .

February 23rd . . . First Hourly Exam . . . . .



History 225  
Re: Directed research paper  
Due date(See syllabus)

Spring '95

Title: "Divided South: Cause of the Confederacy's Defeat?"

One of the most exciting and productive research areas in American history is the so-called "New Social History," especially the long neglected social history of the Civil War. (See James McPherson's excellent forward in Divided Houses).

While McPherson calls for historians to integrate the military or battlefield history with the home front or social history of the war, his idea of integration runs only one way: the events on the battlefield causes the changes in society, never visa versa. (See McPherson's essay in Boritt, "American Victory, American Defeat;" see also G. Boritt's own dogmatic assertion that the Confederacy lost the war on the battlefield--case closed, in his Introduction to Why the Confederacy Lost).

After having read McPherson (and Boritt's "final words") there is still a nagging doubt as to whether, indeed, the South's defeat can be attributed solely to battlefield reverses. The reasons for the Confederacy's defeat still remains mysterious even to McPherson (see his essay in Boritt, p. 18).

The purpose of this directed research paper is not for you to resolve this issue: Whether the South lost the war on the battlefield or the home front, but to examine one aspect of this question and draw your own conclusions:

What role did Southern womanhood play on the home front to weaken the Confederacy's military will or effort and help pull Ole Dixie down?

Formatting: The paper should be typed and double-spaced and a minimum of 6 pages in length.

Bibliography: The works you will consult are the following:

George Rabble, "Missing in Action:" Women of the Confederacy," in Divided Houses.

Drew G. Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," in Divided Houses

Reid Mitchell, " Afterword: The Soldiers' War: The Junction of Social History and Military History," on Library Reserve

Michael B. Chesson, "Harlots or Heroines? A New Look at the Richmond Riot," on Library Reserve

George Rabble, Two chapters from his book Civil Wars. Chpt. 5

"The Political Economy of the Southern Home Front," and Chpt. 8,

"The Coming of Lucifer's Legions," both on Library Reserve.

And a reread of the above cited views of McPherson and Boritt.