The sectional conflict between North and South and the struggle over slavery’s expansion in the West set the stage for America’s bloodiest battle. We will address: slavery, secession, key Confederate and Union military campaigns, Emancipation and Reconstruction policies, and the everyday lives of Americans who experienced the transformations of the Civil War era. The course is designed to offer students an introduction to the debates and interventions expressed in the scholarly literature, and to introduce students to key primary sources to understand the research and interpretive processes that historians employ.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop an understanding of the critical ideas, debates, and issues in Civil War and Reconstruction scholarship.
- To develop an awareness of argument, evidence, interpretation, method and styles employed by historians.
- To ask thoughtful questions about the historical legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras.
- To strengthen critical thinking, communication, and reading skills.

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance & Participation (25%) Students are expected to complete all reading assignments and to form thoughtful and informed points of discussion, questions of inquiry, and ideas to share with fellow classmates. Student participation will be evaluated based upon the quality rather than quantity of points, observations, and questions posed in class. Each student will be asked to bring to every meeting: one key point, one observation, and one critical question for the class to consider. These will be collected at the beginning of each class.

Analytical Essay I (15%) The first analytical essay will require students to interrogate the historical debates about causation and the key factors that led to the American
Civil War. The prompt for Analytical Essay I will be distributed in class on **Monday, February 22, 2016.**

**Mid-Term Examination (20%)** The mid-term exam will cover themes, events, and debates discussed from Week 1 until Week 7.

**Analytical Essay II (15%)** The second analytical essay will ask students to analyze the challenges and opportunities of reorganizing a nation after slavery. In this essay, students will be expected to offer a critique of the victories and shortcomings of Reconstruction policies. A more formal essay prompt will be distributed on **Monday, April 4, 2016.**

**Final Examination (25%)** The final examination will cast a broader net of themes, events, and debates discussed throughout the semester with an emphasis on Week 8 through Week 14.

**Course Policies**

Students are expected to attend every class meeting and to arrive on time. If an absence is absolutely unavoidable please contact the professor in advance.

All electronic devices (computers, tablets, cell phones) must be turned off or silenced for the duration of the class. Out of respect for the privacy of the students speaking in class, video recording and audio recording are not permitted during any class sessions without permission from the instructor and the consent of fellow classmates. If you read course materials electronically, you are advised to print out the readings, or take notes on a separate document or notebook that you bring to class. Browsing the Internet is not conducive to sustained focus and participation in the brief amount of time we have to cover course material. As one professor has noted, “In-class note-taking is an art of intellectual engagement, not an exercise in mechanical transcription. Come to class prepared to take notes by hand.”

Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities documented at the Office of Disability Services. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services located in Peters G-27/G-28 (440-774-5588 and the Professor of any disability related needs.

If you are unable to complete the requirements of this course for any reason, the College does allow two categories of incompletes, educational and emergency. To further understand your options, consult the Dean of Studies website at: [http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-studies/policies/incompletes.dot](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-studies/policies/incompletes.dot)

All work submitted for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code and include a signed honor pledge (“I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in the assignment”). Any written work submitted must include citation or attribution of sources you consulted whether as a direct quote or paraphrase. Failure to adhere to the Honor Code will result in a grade penalty, withholding of a grade, failing grade, and/or reporting to the Student Honor Committee. Please consult a
reference librarian or myself if you have questions about how to properly cite sources or ideas in your work.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Studying the Civil War—Debates and Reflections**
- **Feb-1:** Introduction and Overview
- **Feb-3:** Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War?” *Atlantic*, Special Commemorative Issue: The Civil War (2011-12), 8 pages.

**Week 2: Slavery**
- **Feb-8:** Stephanie Smallwood, “Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities” in *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to an American Diaspora*, p. 53-64.

**Week 3: Politics, Sectionalism, and Expansion**

**Week 4: Secession and Disunion**
  - **Analytical Essay I Prompt**

**Week 5: War**

- **Mar-4:** Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (p. 27-77).

**Week 6: War**

  - Analytical Essay I Deadline (Prior to or at the beginning of class)

**Week 7: War**

- **Mar-18:** Mid-Term Exam

**Week 8: Spring Break — No Classes**

**Week 9: Stages of Emancipation**


**Week 10: Emancipation**


**Week 11: Reconstruction**

• **Apr-11:** John Hope Franklin, “The South’s New Leaders” in *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (1961) p. 84-103.
  - **Analytical Essay II Prompt (Prior to or at the beginning of class)**


**Week 12: Reconstruction**


• **Apr-20:** Annette Gordon-Reed, “Mr. President” and “The President Obstructs,” in *Andrew Johnson* (2011) p. 88-121.


**Week 13: Post-Civil War**

  - **Analytical Essay II Deadline**


Week 14: Memory

- **May-6**: Jeff Fortney, “Lest We Remember: Civil War Memory and Commemoration among the Five Tribes,” *American Indian Quarterly* 36 (2012), p. 525-44.
  - **Final Examination**