

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # 199
Action _____

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- Professor Xi Wang Phone 7-3203
 Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when?) A+ IUP, May 1999 (Certificate attached)
 Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
 Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Statement concerning departmental responsibility
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) Xi Wang
Department Chairperson Larry Bailey
College Dean [Signature] 4/17/2000
Director of Liberal Studies [Signature] 5/20/00

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Two or three samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students. Limit: 4 pages. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

Please number all pages. Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.

Before you submit: Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Liberal Studies Program

Certifies that

Wang Li

has participated in the *IUP Writing Workshop*
with facilitator Dr. Robert Yagelski

May 12, 1999 to May 14, 1999



A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Mary E. Sadler", is written over a horizontal line.

Mary E. Sadler
Director
Liberal Studies

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction (Writing Intensive)
Dr. Xi Wang
Writing Summary

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction is proposed for identification as a “W” course. The course is listed as an upper-level history elective and is offered every fall semester. Most students in the class are juniors and seniors. Students are drawn from a variety of majors; class size is limited to 25 students. The course will count toward a history major or minor.

Four types of writing will take place in this course:

1. EXAMS: WRITING FOR EVALUATION (50%)

There are two major exams, a mid-term and a final, each covering approximately one-half of the course material. Each exam has three types of questions: (a) one-paragraph identifications, which requires students to identify several terms and highlight their historical significance; (b) multi-paragraph short answers, which requires students to succinctly but adequately explain the causation or impact of certain historical events or to interpret the meaning of certain historical writings; and (c) an interpretative essay, which requires students to correctly and adequately apply what they have learned to addressing/interpreting a comprehensive issue. [See attachment] Students are expected to complete the exams during the 1-1/2 hour class period. A study guide will be distributed a week before each exam takes place. In evaluation the exams, the construction of essay counts 40% of the grade for the exam, each of the other two parts respectively counts 30%. Each exam counts 25% of the final grade; the exams will make up 50% of the final grade for the course.

2. REACTION PAPERS: WRITING TO ENHANCE READING (15%)

Students are expected to complete three out of six reaction paper assignments. The papers are based on the reading of the designated course packets which contain selections of primary historical sources. A typical format of a reaction paper consists of a summary and an interpretation of the chosen selections. [See attachment] The objective of the reaction paper is to encourage students to have a more in-depth understanding of issues considered in class and to learn to analyze primary sources. A secondary objective is to prepare students for writing the historical essay (addressed below). The reaction papers should be about 3-4 pages in length, neatly typed or word-processed, written in edited English. Each reaction paper will be graded 0 to 5 points (i.e. 0%-5% of the final grade for the course) with "5" indicating that a paper satisfactorily meets the requirement. The three reaction papers will make up 15% of the final grade for the course.

3. HISTORICAL ESSAY: WRITING TO INTEGRATE HISTORICAL QUESTIONS, RESEARCH AND ARGUMENTS (25%)

Students will be required to write a 10-15 page historical essay that will address a major historical question and involve the use of multiple sources from the assigned and possibly additional reading. This assignment (see attached) will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in a particular aspect of the course material and their ability to comprehend both primary and secondary sources used in class. The objective of this assignment is to encourage student to frame a historical question and to produce a finished, edited writing with insightful argument(s) supported by adequate evidence. The assignment will also allow students to learn and exercise the skills of professional historical writing, as it requires proper footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography. The assignment is monitored at various stages throughout the semester and graded accorded to distributed criteria. [See attachment]. The final paper will be worth 100 points, which will make up 25% of the final grade for the course. Students are required to turn in a first draft, which will be returned for revision and resubmission after revision. In case a student fails to turn in first draft the percentage calculation of his or her final paper is 15% instead of the standard 25%.

4. IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT: WRITING TO STIMULATE THOUGHT (10%)

In-class assignments will contribute to the fourth type of writing in this class, which makes up 10% of the final grade. In-class assignments are assigned in form of brief (i.e. no more than one hand-written page), in-class writings responding to a film or documentary, reading notes for a class discussion/debate, and an informed participation in a group presentation. Throughout the semester there shall be at least six times for such assignment to be given. To receive full grade (10%) in this category, a student must satisfactorily complete five of such assignments, and no make-up assignment will be given in this category. The objective of this assignment is to encourage student to participate in class discussion in an informed and prepared manner. The assignment will be graded 1 to 2 points with "2" indicating a satisfactory completion of the assigned work.

Summary of Writing Assignments for _____

Assignment	Pages	# of Assignments	Graded (yes/no)	Revisions (yes/no)	% of Final Grade
Exams	6-10	2	Yes	No	50%
Reaction Papers	3-4	3	Yes	No	15%
Historical Essay	10-15	1	Yes	Yes	25%
In-Class Assignments	1-2	5	Yes	No	10%

HI343/543

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Civil War and Reconstruction have always occupied a special place in the memory of the American nation. This is largely because the War and the subsequent reunion had transformed the United States in such a fundamental way that no other period could possibly match. The Civil War and Reconstruction have therefore become the most studied subjects of American history. Americans' preoccupation (or sometimes, obsession) with the period is also in part derived from the constitutional, political, economic, and social changes of the period, which continue to shape the American life today. There are still heated debates, in and out of the academic circles, over the issues that had once before been dealt with by the generation of the Civil War era. In a sense, these debates could be regarded as a soul-searching experience. As we study the Civil War and Reconstruction, we are actually making a painful but meaningful attempt to examine how such essential American values as freedom, equality and democracy have been defined and redefined.

It is under this intellectual context that we are going to study the history of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Covering roughly the period from 1840s to 1877, the course exams major events of this period, focusing on several large historical questions that in turn frame the structure of the course. These questions include: (1) Why did the Civil War occur? (2) How did the War transform the American nation and society? (3) What did Reconstruction accomplish and why did its idealism of reform eventually fail to prevail? (4) How did the legacies of the period shape the course of American history afterwards? Under each of these large questions, we will examine a number of related issues that help us to better understand the larger question. Classes will consist mostly of lectures and discussion, but there will be occasional films and visual presentations.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVE

It is hoped that this course will enable students to achieve success in the following aspects:

A. Knowledge: Student should have a firm grasp of the chronology of the main events during the Civil War and Reconstruction period. Students should be able to correctly identify sequence of those political, economic, constitutional and social developments that shaped the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction and explain how these developments related to each other.

B. Historical Thinking: Students should be able to recognize the connections between various historical developments, interpret implications of a certain events in a larger historical setting

and contrast and compare the historical experiences of different groups of Americans during this period.

C. Writing: Students should be able to integrate their historical knowledge and the interpretative methods and rationale into finished piece of writing. Students are expected to learn how to frame historical questions and use correct evidence to construct thoughtful and valid arguments.

D. The State of the Field: Students should be able to identify the main interpretations in the field of study, as well as to explain how these interpretations differ from one another in terms of perspective, theory, method and the use of sources.

III. REQUIRED READING

(A) Books:

Richard H. Sewell, A House Divided: Sectionalism and Civil War, 1848-1865 (1988)

Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Pvt. Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers, 1862-1864 (1996)

Gabor S. Boritt, ed., Why the Confederacy Lost (1993)

Eric Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877 (1990)

----, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War (1995 edition)

Thomas Holt, Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction (1977)

(B) Primary Sources

A number of primary documents are selected for the course. These selections are compiled in a Course Packet (CP), which is put on reserve in the Stapleton Library. A detailed list of these selections is attached to this syllabus.

IV. REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION METHODS

The course requirement includes two major exams, three reaction papers, one historical essay and five in-class assignments. Final course grade is determined as follows:

50%	Exams (2)
15%	Reaction Papers (3)
25%	Historical Essay (1)
10%	In-class Assignments (5)

A=90% and over; B=80%-90%; C=70%-79%; D=60%-69%; F=below 60%

Explanations for each requirement category:

Exams: There shall be two major exams, a mid-term and a final, each covering approximately one-half of the course material. Each exam has three types of questions: (a) one-paragraph identifications, which requires students to identify several terms and highlight their historical significance; (b) multi-paragraph short answers, which requires students to succinctly but adequately explain the causation or impact of certain historical events or to interpret the meaning of certain historical writings; and (c) an interpretative essay, which requires students to correctly and adequately apply what they have learned to addressing/interpreting a comprehensive issue. Students are expected to complete the exams during the 1-1/2 hour class period. A study guide will be distributed a week before each exam takes place. In evaluation the exams, the construction of essay counts 40% of the grade for the exam, each of the other two parts respectively counts 30%. Each exam counts 25% of the final grade; the exams will make up 50% of the final grade for the course.

Reaction Papers: Students are expected to complete three out of six reaction paper assignments. The papers are based on the reading of the designated course packets which contain selections of primary historical sources. A typical format of a reaction paper consists of a summary and an interpretation of the chosen selections. The objective of the reaction paper is to encourage students to have a more in-depth understanding of issues considered in class and to learn to analyze primary sources. A secondary objective is to prepare students for writing the historical essay (addressed below). The reaction papers should be about 3-4 pages in length, neatly typed or word-processed, written in edited English. Each reaction paper will be graded 0 to 5 points (i.e. 0%-5% of the final grade for the course) with "5" indicating that a paper satisfactorily meets the requirement. The three reaction papers will make up 15% of the final grade for the course.

Historical Essay: Students will be required to write a 10-15 page historical essay that will address a major historical question and involve the use of multiple sources from the assigned and possibly additional reading. This assignment will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in a particular aspect of the course material and their ability to comprehend both primary and secondary sources used in class. The objective of this assignment is to encourage student to frame a historical question and to produce a finished, edited writing with insightful argument(s) supported by adequate evidence. The assignment will also allow students to learn and exercise the skills of professional historical writing as it requires proper footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography. The assignment is monitored at various stages throughout the semester and graded accorded to such distributed criteria as quality of question, arguments, strength and use of evidence, observations of professional writing guidelines. The final paper will be worth 100 points, which will make up 25% of the final grade for the course. Students are required to turn in a first draft, which will be returned for revision and resubmission after revision. In case a student fails to turn in first draft the percentage calculation of his or her final paper is 15% instead of the standard 25%. In other words, if you fail to submit a first draft you will be unable to receive a full grade in this category.

In-class Assignments: In-class assignments will contribute to the fourth type of writing in this class, which makes up 10% of the final grade. In-class assignments are assigned in form of brief (i.e. no more than one hand-written page), in-class writings responding to a film or documentary,

reading notes for a class discussion/debate, and an informed participation in a group presentation. Throughout the semester there shall be at least six times for such assignment to be given. To receive full grade (10%) in this category, a student must satisfactorily complete five of such assignments, and no make-up assignment will be given in this category. The objective of this assignment is to encourage student to participate in class discussion in an informed and prepared manner. The assignment will be graded 1 to 2 points with "2" indicating a satisfactory completion of the assigned work.

V. SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: "CP" stands for "Course Packet" (on reserve)

Week 1 -- Introduction: Historians and the Interpretations of the Civil War

Week 2 -- The Creation of the Slave South and the Proslavery Ideology

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 1-21
CP Folder #1

Week 3 -- Sectional Conflicts over the Territorial Expansion

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 22-39
CP Folder #2

Week 4 -- The Politics of Antislavery Movement

Reading: Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men

Week 5 -- The Session Crises

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 40-83
CP Folder #3

Week 6 -- Wartime Strategies and Motivations

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 84-100
Boritt, Why the Confederacy Lost, pp. 43-77
CP Folder #4

Week 7 -- Americans Go to War; Why They Fought?

Reading: Smith, Price of Patriotism
Burgess, ed., An Uncommon Soldier
Boritt, Why the Confederacy Lost, pp. 109-132

Week 8 -- The Meaning of Combat

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 126-148
Boritt, Why the Confederacy Lost, pp. 81-108
CP Folder #5

Week 9-- The Home Front: North and South

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 101-125
CP Folder #6

Week 10 -- The War and the Emancipation

Reading: Sewell, A House Divided, pp. 161-180
Ira Berlin: "Who Freed the Slaves?" (in the Folder 7 of the CP)
Boritt, Why the Confederacy Lost, pp. 135-162
CP Folder #7

Week 11 -- Why the North Won the War

Reading: Boritt, Why Confederacy Lost, pp. 17-42

Week 12 -- Presidential and Radical Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction, chs. 1-2, 5-6
CP Folder #8

Week 13-- Social and Economic Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction, chs. 3-4, 7-8
CP Folder #9

Week 14 -- Black Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction, ch. 9
Holt, Black Over White

Week 15 -- The Compromise of 1877 and the Retreat from Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction, chs. 10-12
CP Folder #10

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction

Course Packet (CP): Table of Contents

Folder #1: Views on Slavery, North and South Compared

Lydia Maria Child Describes How Slavery Harms the South, 1833
Frederick Law Olmsted Observes Southern Lassitude, 1854
Hinton Rowan Helper Exposes Southern Economic Backwardness, 1857
Frederick Law Olmsted Criticizes the South's Lack of Material Progress, 1861
James Henry Hammond Claims Southern Cultural Superiority, 1845
George Fitzhugh Praises Southern Society, 1854
J.D.B., DeBow Explains Why Nonslaveholders Should Support Slavery, 1860

Folder #2: Sectional Politics in the 1850s

Independent Democrats Protest the Kansas-Nebraska Act, January 1854
Senator Stephen Douglas Explains the Objectives of His Bill, February 1854
Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts Ridicules the Southern Gentry, 1856
Congressman Thomas S. Bocock of Virginia Defends Preston Brooks, 1856
Senator William H. Seward of New York Warns of an Irrepressible Conflict, October 1858
Senator Albert G. Brown of Mississippi Renounces the Protection of the Union, December 1859

Folder #3: The Secession Crisis

Lincoln Explains What Is at Stake, December 1860
John A. Gilmer of North Carolina Urges Delay and Conciliation, March 1861
William H. Seward Advises Restraint, March 1861
Former Congressman Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia Advises against Secession, November 1860
Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia Defends His Own and His State's Honor, November 1860
The Raleigh North Carolina Standard Weighs Honor and Secession, December 1860

Folder #4: Fighting the War: The Generals

General George B. McClellan Gives a Lesson in Grad Strategy, July 1862
General Robert E. Lee Takes the Offensive, September 1862
General E. Porter Alexander, C.S.A., Assesses Lee and McClellan at Antietam, September 1862
General Alexander Later Criticizes the Confederacy's Conduct of the War, c. 1900
General Henry W. Halleck, U.S.A. Acknowledges That the War Has Changed Course, March 1863
The Union Army Redefines the Rule of War: Lieber's Code, May 1863
General William T. Sherman Explains How the War Has Changed, September 1864
General Ulysses S. Grant Reports His Assignment Accomplished, July 1865

Folder #5: Lincoln as Political and Military Leader

Lincoln Explains His "Paramount Object of Saving the Union, August 1862
Salmon P. Chase Reports Lincoln's Decision on Emancipation, September 1862
Lincoln Proclaims the Meaning of the Conflict, The Gettysburg Address, November 1863
Lincoln Recounts How He Proceeded toward Emancipation, April 1864

Lincoln reveals an Early Grasp of Military Strategy, January 1862
Lincoln Advises against Engaging Lee's Army after Gettysburg, September 1863

Folder #6: Home Front: North and South Compared; Women in the Civil War
North

Henry W. Bellows Explains the Work and Goals of the Sanitary Commission, January 1864
President Lincoln Addresses the Philadelphia Central Fair, June 1864
Mary Livermore Recounts How She Organized the Northwestern Sanitary Fair in 1864, 1889
Martin Ryerson Reports How Workers Are Reacting to the Draft, July 1863
Trade Union Members Call for an International Industrial Assembly of North America, August 1864
Cincinnati Sewing Women Protest Their Wartime Wages, February 1865

South

President Davis Explains the Confederate Cause, December 1862
Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia Denounces Confederate Policy, September 1862
Plain Folk Protest the Burden of the War, February 1863
Vice President Alexander H. Stephens Recommends an Alternative Confederate Strategy, January 1864
The North Carolina Legislature Protests the Confederate Draft and Martial Law, May 1864
The Raleigh North Carolina Standard Urges Voters to Endorse a Negotiated Peace, July 1864
Congressman Warren Aiken of Georgia Contemplates the Fate of Slavery, October 1864

Women

Hannah Ropes Expresses the Frustration of a Union Nurse, October 1862
Kate Cumming Criticizes Southern Women, September 1863
Phoebe Yates Pember Commends Southern Women (undated)
Susie King Taylor Describes Her Role in Union Army Camps, 1864
Mary Livermore Explains the Role of Women in the Union War Effort, 1889
Gertrude Thomas Finds Confederate Prospects Gloomy, 1864
Catherine Edmondston of North Carolina Discusses matters Public and Domestic, January 1865
Cornelia Peacke McDonald Comments on Class and Conscription, March 1865

Folder #7: Emancipation and Its Meaning

General Benjamin F. Butler Discovers the "Contrabands," July 1861
The Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Considers Policy toward the Ex-Slaves, June 1863
President Lincoln Defends Emancipation, August 1863
The U.S. Adjutant General Describes the Condition of Fleeing Slaves, August 1863
Frederick Douglass States the Freedmen's Demands, April 1865
Gertrude Thomas Is Upset that Her Slaves Are Leaving, May 1865

Folder #8: Political and Constitutional Reconstruction

Richard H. Dana Jr., Presents His "Grasp of War" Theory, June 1865
Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois Explains His Civil Rights Bill, January and April 1866
Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania States His Terms, January 1867
Representative George W. Julian of Indiana Outlines the Scope of Reconstruction, January 1867

Senator John Sherman of Ohio Urges Caution and Moderation, February 1867
Congress's Terms for Readmission and Reconstruction, June 1866 and March 1867 (14th
Constitutional Amendment, Reconstruction Act of Thirty-Ninth Congress)

Folder #9: Economic and Social Reconstruction

South Carolina African Americans Present Their Demands, November 1865
Mattie Curtis Remembers Her Struggle after Emancipation
Henry Adams Reports on Women and Fieldwork, 1867
Richard H. Gain of South Carolina Stresses the Importance of Land, February 1868
Edward King Describes the Postwar Plantation System in the Natchez District, 1875

Folder #10: Retreat from Reconstruction

Former Governor James L. Orr Defends South Carolina's Republican Government, June 1871
Representative L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi Assails Reconstruction, June 1874
Governor William P. Kellogg of Louisiana Demands Punishment for the Coushatta Assassins,
September 1874
Representative Alexander White of Alabama Defends "Carpetbaggers," February 1875
Charles Nordhoff Censures Mississippi Politicians, 1875
Governor Adelbert Ames Deplores the Violence in Mississippi, September 1875

Sample exam

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction

I. Identify *five* of the following and highlight the historical significance of each term identified. Try to write your answer in one paragraph (5 x 6 Points = 30 Points)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) 10 Percent Plan | 2) Thaddeus Stevens |
| 3) Wade-Davis Plan | 4) Black Codes |
| 5) Freedmen's Bank | 6) Redemption |
| 7) Hiram Revels | 8) Sharecropping |
| 9) Civil Rights Act of 1866 | |

II. Succinctly address *two* of the following questions. The nature of these questions requires you to construct an effective answer in a multiple-paragraph format. (2 x 15 Points = 30 Points)

1. What was the real causation of the impeachment of Johnson? Why did the Republicans fail to achieve an conviction as they had hoped?
2. Discuss the causes that contributed to the "undoing" of Reconstruction?
3. Describe at least two aspects in which the freedmen demonstrate their determination to define meaning of freedom in the post-Civil War period?
4. In what sense did the Slaughterhouse Cases ruling (1873) contribute to the coming of the Jim Crow South?

III. Write an essay to address *one* of the following questions. The essay must present a reasonably clear and effective argument supported by adequate evidence (40 Points)

- A. Why would some historian argue that the three constitutional amendments enacted during the Reconstruction era represent a sincere effort of the Republicans to make the nation anew? Do you agree with such argument? Explain why or why not.
- B. How does Holt's study of the black leadership in South Carolina help us to understand the complications of the Reconstruction era? To answer this question, knowledge of the Holt book must be adequately demonstrated and used as the basis for discussion.

Sample Reaction Paper Assignment

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction

Reaction Paper #1

1. For this reaction paper, after you have read the selections in CP Folder #1 and write on following questions:

- a) Identify major arguments in regard of slavery as presented by both antislavery and proslavery writers in 1850s?
- b) Explain how such debate reflected the historical circumstances in which these arguments were made and reveal the relations between slavery and the coming of the Civil War.

2. Your writing must demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the reading. It is important to incorporate the primary sources into your writing. For this writing, use parentheses to indicate the sources of quotes if you decide to cite the authors in your writing. Here is an example:

.... Northern abolitionists held that a fundamental difference between the Northerner and Southerner was that the former “enjoys progress in itself” and “finds his happiness in doing “ while the latter was very close-minded and “has much less curiosity than Northerners.” (Olmsted, Folder #1, p. 3)

3. The paper must be neatly typed or word processed. It is also expected that it follow standard English usage and spelling. Your paper doesn't have to be flawless; but if there are enough errors to be distracting, I will simply return the paper and ask you clean it up before I read it. The length for the paper should be between 3-4 pages (the maximum is 5 pages).

4. The paper will be graded 0 to 5 points (0%-5% of the final grade)

- 5 -- A very good paper; this is what you are expected to do.
- 4 -- The paper meets the minimum expectation, but not enough effort has been put into the writing
- 3 and below -- The paper does not meet the minimum requirements.

Sample Historical Essay Assignment

HI343: Civil War and Reconstruction

Historical Essay Assignment

As part of the class requirement, each student is expected to write a historical essay of 10-12 pages on a subject of the Civil War and Reconstruction era. Here are the specifics regarding the essay:

1. **Objective:** The objective of this assignment is to provide you an opportunity to learn the craft of professional historical writing. Specifically, the assignment requires you to do the following: (a) framing and conceptualizing historical questions; (b) identifying and using evidence/information from a number of "ready" sources (the secondary readings and some published primary sources); (c) using the good and strong evidence to write an essay that generates an intellectual argument.

2. **Topic:** You may select a topic that has been under discussion in class, or covered in the reading, and, ideally, that also matches your personal interest. A number of directions will be suggested. Whatever topic you intend to write on, it should be something that is manageable.

3. **Materials:** Although the paper does not require extensive research of primary sources, it does require an effective use of the sources provided in the assigned readings (including the reserved CP folders). You are also encouraged to use other secondary sources. I enclose with this Instruction a guide about how to conduct a research on the materials of the Civil War history (see Appendix III). For those of you who wish to consider using primary sources, please see me for further instruction. Instructions for footnotes and bibliography will be distributed in class in a separate sheet.

4. **Mechanisms:** I will schedule two conferences with each student either in group or individually: one to determine the topic and the other to discuss the revision. A schedule of the conferences will be distributed to class later. Please make every effort to attend these conferences since the assignment of historical essay is a major feature of this class.

5. **Revision and Resubmission:** Revision of the paper is required. After I receive your first draft, I will comment it on both the content and style. The paper will be returned to you for revision. You will need to resubmit the paper in its final version in order to receive full points. If you fail to submit first draft, the percentage calculation of your paper is 15% instead of the standard 25% in the final grade for the course. In other words, if you fail to submit a first draft you will be unable to receive a full grade in this category.

6. **Grading criteria of the essay:**

35 points - Quality of historical question and arguments/interpretations

35 points - Quality and use of evidence

20 points - Writing (Clarity, grammar, spelling, syntax, etc.)

10 points - Footnotes/endnotes and bibliography