This course will focus one of the most critical periods in the history of the United States—a period that culminated in a devastating Civil War between 1861 and 1865. The American Civil War cost more lives than all other wars in American history combined before the Vietnam War, and it has had a profound and continuing impact on American life and values during almost a century-and-a-half since the war ended.

The first third of this course will focus on the sectional conflicts that contributed to the coming of the Civil War. Then the primary part of the course will focus on the four years of conflict during the war itself, evaluating the war with the aid of narrative and analytical perspectives from recent scholarship. The final week of the course will briefly consider the crucial aftermath of the Civil War known as Reconstruction, as well as on the many broader issues the American Civil War continues to raise for us today.

Evaluation in the course will be based upon three mid-term essay exams (indicated below in the “Reading Assignments and Exam Schedule”); on a book review or similar project approved in advance with the instructor; and on a final comprehensive essay exam. The exams will be based upon both the readings and the lecture/discussions.

Please note that the first exam in the class will come very early—on Wednesday, May 28—the middle of the third week of the course!

That first exam will be based primarily upon reading Jeanette Keith’s lively overview of the history of the American South from 1607 through 1877. Starting with this two week "crash course" in Southern history will help insure that all students begin the class with a knowledge of some of the most important elements in the history of the American South, within which the events and issues of the Civil War period can best be understood.

The three required books, all of which will be read in full, are:

Jeanette Keith, The South: A Concise History, Vol. 1
James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction,
(either the 3rd or the 4th edition will be fine; they are identical for the chapters we'll be reading)
Michael P. Jackson, ed., Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War: Selected Writings and Speeches—SECOND EDITION ONLY
The class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the truly staggering range of writing about the issues connected with the Civil War, each student will also be required, in consultation with the professor, to do an analytical book review or special project.

NOTE WELL: Students are expected to attend class regularly, come on time at the scheduled beginning of each class (no later than 12:00 noon., NOT 12:05 p.m.), and be ready to participate actively in discussions on the assigned readings. Exceptions will be made for those with classes across campus.

Class roll will be taken after the first week. Missing four (4) or more unexcused class sessions (the equivalent of two full weeks of the course) may be grounds for a reduction in the student's overall course grade by as much as one full grade level (10 points).

Throughout the course, all students will be expected to follow the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

**Area E Approved Learning Outcome:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

**Explain how the course satisfies the learning outcome:**

This course will focus on the factors that contributed to the outbreak of the American Civil War; on the events of the Civil War itself; and, more briefly, on Reconstruction after the Civil War. Students will learn how political, social, and economic forces influence social behavior by exploring the controversies that contributed to the coming of the Civil War; the events and issues during the Civil War itself, and the difficult aftermath of the Civil War. Students will demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcomes through four written examinations based on the lectures and readings; in-class discussions; and a 6-10 page analytical book review that will integrate course concepts and materials.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the economic, political, and social forces that shaped the young United States during the half-century before, during, and after the Civil War.

2. Students will demonstrate the ability to describe and analyze the major economic, political, and social factors—both long- and short-range—that contributed to coming of the Civil War, including the role the issue of slavery played in the coming of the Civil War.
3. Students will be able to describe the major economic, political, social, and military strengths and weaknesses of the Union and the Confederate sides at the outset of the Civil War, as well as how those strengths and weaknesses changed during the war and influenced the outcome of the war.

4. Students will demonstrate their ability to describe the most important military conflicts and strategies used during the Civil War, as well as the impact that economic, social, and political factors had on military success and failure throughout the war.

5. Students will be able to describe the role that slavery and race relations played in the coming of the Civil War, the Civil War itself, and Reconstruction after the Civil War.

6. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the larger economic, political, and social ways in which the Civil War has influenced American life from the end of the war to the present.

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM SCHEDULE:

NOTE: Students are expected, as a minimum, to begin reading the assignments by the start of the date indicated and to finish reading those assignments before the beginning of the next class. Students hoping to earn an "A" in the course should try to finish their reading in advance of the schedule below in order to allow sufficient time for proper review before the exams.

May 12--begin Jeanette Keith, The South, introduction and chapter 1 (pp. 1-52)
May 14--begin Keith, chapter 2 (pp. 53-98)
May 16--begin Keith, chapter 3 (pp. 99-141)
May 19--begin Keith, chapter 4 (pp. 142-183)
May 21--begin Keith, chapter 5 (pp. 184-215)
May 23--Review for Exam #1

NO CLASS--Monday, May 26--Memorial Day Holiday celebrated--Review for EXAM #1!

EXAM #1--Wednesday, May 28

*May 28--begin James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, chapter 1 (pp. 1-26)
May 30--begin McPherson, chapters 2-4 (pp. 27-77)
June 2--begin McPherson, chapter 5-6 (pp. 79-108) AND Johnson, ed., Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War, chapter 1 (pp. 1-29)
June 4-- McPherson, chapter 7 (pp. 109-124) AND Lincoln, chapter 2 (pp. 30-57)
June 6-- begin Lincoln, chapter 3 (pp. 58-93)
June 9--begin McPherson, chapters 8-10 (pp. 125-177)
June 11--begin McPherson, chapters 11-12 (pp. 179-226) AND Lincoln, chapter 4 (pp. 94-112)
June 13--Begin McPherson, chapter 13-15 (pp. 227-282)
June 16--begin McPherson, chapters 16 (pp. 283-302) AND Lincoln, chapter 5 (pp. 113-142)
June 18--begin McPherson, chapter 17 (pp. 303-326)

June 20--Review for Exam #2

EXAM #2--Wednesday, June 25

*June 25--begin McPherson, chapter 18 (pp. 327-348)
June 27--begin McPherson, chapter 19 (pp. 349-372) AND Lincoln, chapter 6 (pp. 143-161)

June 30--begin McPherson, chapter 20 (pp. 373-398) AND McPherson, chapter 21 (pp. 399-424)
July 2--begin McPherson, chapter 22 (pp. 425-442) AND Lincoln, chapter 7 (pp. 162-187)

NO CLASS--Friday, July 4--Fourth of July holiday

*July 4--begin McPherson, chapter 23 (pp. 443-470)
July 7--begin McPherson, chapter 24 (pp. 471-494)
July 9--Review for Exam #3

EXAM #3--Friday, July 11

July 11, 14--work on Book Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS due--Wednesday, July 16

July 16--begin McPherson, chapter 25 (pp. 495-526)
July 18--begin Lincoln, chapter 8 (pp. 188-210)
July 21--begin McPherson, chapter 26 (pp. 533-553)
July 23--review Keith, chapter 5 (pp. 184-215)
July 25--Review for the Final Exam

FINAL EXAM--Monday, July 28, 11:30 a.m.-2:20 p.m.