Course Description
This is a graduate research seminar centered thematically on the American Civil War period, which is defined broadly as the period from 1848-1868 (from the end of the war against Mexico to the beginning of congressional reconstruction). Each student will write a 35 page paper, based largely on primary source materials and including text, footnotes or endnotes, and bibliography, based on a topic related to the Civil War. All papers must declare a thesis, place the thesis in the context of historical literature, ground that argument in primary source evidence, and follow the discipline’s rules for citation, bibliography, and format. I must approve all paper topics.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Develop skills in historical research by identifying relevant primary and secondary sources and gathering and processing evidence drawn from those sources;
- Demonstrate advanced writing skills by making original, well-organized arguments grounded in primary sources and connected to the historical literature; and
- Demonstrate proficiency in methods of historical citation and matters of writing style.

Writing a research paper will be a new experience for some, and even the hardiest veterans of such efforts can sometimes find the process to be extraordinarily frustrating. As such, it is imperative that students meet frequently amongst yourselves and with me. Sometimes we all need to “vent” our frustrations about the ridiculous problems we’re having in researching and writing a paper like this. It is vital that we keep lines of communication open. You should feel free to drop by my office at any time.

You need to select a topic that you are interested in. You must also consider the strengths and weaknesses of our local libraries and repositories. A growing number of good sources are available electronically, but you must be able to have enough resources available locally to write a good paper. The claim that “my paper is late (or short, or poorly done, etc.) because I couldn't find enough materials” will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse. In other words, you need to select a topic that is interesting, enlightening, and doable.

The most important thing about your paper is its content. You have to have something to say, and you must be able to convince your reader that you have done enough research so as to merit serious consideration of your work. However, considerable attention will also be given to matters of style. Even the most informative and exhaustively-researched work will be doomed to
obscurity if you don’t speak and write effectively.

**Required Materials**


**Historical Writing**

This class follows the “History Area Style Guide for Upper-Division and Graduate Level Papers.” Every written assignment you turn in for this class must conform to this style guide, so read it carefully; I will adhere to it strictly when evaluating your work. For any questions or issues not addressed in the style guide, refer to Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*. If you still have doubts, consult me.

**Useful Tools**

The best single volume history of the Civil War is James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). It’s not required, but if you don’t have a copy, I urge you to get one, as every serious student of the Civil War should can profit from its contents. It would also be an excellent refresher if you feel uncomfortable with your background knowledge of America’s bloodiest conflict. The best scholarly journal on the subject is *Civil War History*, which is available at the Bell Library.

Never trust electronic files or computers. Periodically, you should print out everything you have stored that way, so that you have a relatively recent hard copy of everything you have regarding your paper. And make backup files, and then backup files of your backup files.

**Course Grade**

*Class Participation* (15 pts.) - Class participation grades will be based upon the quality of participation throughout the semester. Particularly important will be contributions you make during our discussions of the assigned readings, your oral presentations of your work, and the quality of comments and suggestions you make when assessing the work of fellow students.

Knowing about—and being able to discuss—what previous writers have said about the Civil War is essential to your success in this course. Thus we’ll devote parts of three classes to discussing the essays in *Writing the Civil War: The Quest for Understanding*. To help guide your reading,
I’ll distribute handouts suggesting key themes and questions that will be the basis of the discussion a week in advance. You’ll be expected to contribute, in a meaningful fashion, to each of these discussions.

Every professional historian must be able to tell others about their research. We’ll practice this twice—February 22 and April 25. On each occasion, you’ll have seven minutes (and I’ll hold everyone to this time limit) to discuss your work with the rest of the class. You should approach the oral reports you give on these evenings as a serious and important part of the class; in other words, don’t be under the illusion that “winging it” will suffice.

**Preliminary bibliography/informal description** (5 pts.) – Due February 8; see also handout. This must include at least 30 sources that deal with your approved paper topic. At least 15 of these sources must be primary. Of your secondary sources, at least 5 must be from scholarly academic journals. You must divide all of the materials in your bibliographies into 2 categories – primary and secondary.

Attached to this preliminary bibliography should be a ½ page informal description of your topic that speculates about the issues you plan to discuss, questions you hope to answer, and problems you foresee. This exercise is designed to encourage you to get started writing something about your project.

**Review of the literature/historiographical survey** (5 pts.) - Due February 29; see also handout. This should be an essay (three pages minimum), in which you survey what other historians have said about your topic and describe the contributions to this debate that you hope to make. It should be written in clear prose style. Although some of the particular questions and issues you deal with will probably change, you should be able to incorporate most of this into your final paper.

“I’m starting to write my paper because the professor said I had to assignment” (5 pts.) – Due March 21; see also handout. Seven pages of typewritten, double spaced text, with appropriate footnotes or endnotes. I have two goals in making this a requirement. First, it gives me an opportunity to see an early sample of your writing. I can often make suggestions at this point that will be helpful to you. Second, it forces you to get started writing your paper early. You will be graded on the basis of having written at least seven pages of text (not including historiographical materials that you turned in earlier). This doesn’t necessarily have to be the beginning of your paper; pick a section that you feel comfortable with and go to it!

**Complete Draft** (10 pts.) - Three copies due April 4; see also handout. Grades for these drafts will be based upon the completeness of the product. A complete draft must include at least thirty-five typed, double spaced pages of text, footnotes or endnotes, and bibliography. A completed draft must include some form of introduction, historiography, thematic development, evidence, interpretations, footnotes or endnotes, conclusions, and a bibliography. To receive full credit, each of these components must be fully developed, not simply listed, implied, or suggested. You’ll receive plenty of suggestions for additional research, emphasis, and rewriting at that time,
but grades for drafts will be based upon the completeness of the product rather than the style, neatness, or organization of the text and accompanying notes.

On April 4, extra copies of drafts will be exchanged among fellow students, who will then read these drafts and be ready to comment in written and verbal form on April 11. These comments are intended to provide additional input to students, and to provide each student with greater perspective on the entire research and writing process. They will follow a guide, based upon what manuscript readers for historical journals and university presses comment on, which I provide. I will follow the same format when I make my own reader’s report on each of your papers.

Once again, remember to bring three copies of your complete draft with you to class: one for your student reader, one for me, and one for you to keep. Never trust electronic files.

Final Paper (60 pts.) - Due May 4, by 3 pm in my office; see also handout. Final papers must include a cover sheet as well as a minimum of thirty-five pages of text, endnotes or footnotes, and a complete bibliography. All papers must be typed and double-spaced. The use of word processors is encouraged, but the right margin of the text must not be justified.

Key factors in grading the final paper will include:
1) quality and depth of research, especially in primary source materials;
2) quality and depth of analysis and interpretation:
3) effectiveness of organization, style, and proofreading, in the text as well as the accompanying footnotes/endnotes and bibliography;
4) effectiveness in developing the historiographical context;
5) effectiveness in following the directions outlined above.

Course Policies
Expectations - I assume that each of you is a bona fide graduate student. This means that you read the weekly assignments on time and are ready to discuss the materials in a serious fashion in class. It also means that you expect to attend the class 100% of the time, and have made home and work arrangements to allow this to happen.

Late work - All work submitted after the listed deadlines will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late.

Plagiarism - Plagiarism is a serious academic offense akin to stealing someone else's child. Students who commit plagiarism, whether intentional or not, will receive, at minimum, a grade of zero on the assignment. Extreme cases of plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the course, as well as a letter submitted to your permanent academic file. For a good scholarly discussion of plagiarism, see A Manual for Writers, 77-80. For university rules, regulations, and penalties, see http://www.tamu.edu/catalog/catalog07/graduate/general/gen_policies.html (scroll to “Academic Integrity” and “Academic Honesty”).
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tentative Schedule of Events</th>
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<td>Jan. 11</td>
<td>Introduction; Using the Bell Library (print materials)</td>
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| Jan. 18    | Part 1: Historiographical discussions: Military themes. Discuss the Gallagher, Thomas, Glatthaar, and Mitchell essays in *Writing the Civil War*  
Part 2: Electronic sources and the Civil War |
| Jan. 25    | Part 1: Historiographical discussions: Political themes. Discuss the Neely, Holt, Rable, and Benedict essays in *Writing the Civil War*.  
Part 2: Bibliographies. Bring Turabian to class. |
| Feb. 1     | Meet in University Archives. Part 1: Tour of University Archives  
Part 2: Historiographical discussions: Social and Economic themes. Discuss the Paludan, Roark, Faust, and Kolchin essays in *Writing the Civil War*. |
| Feb. 8     | Writing as a process. Review Turabian, 5-23, 39-47, 62-81, 98-108, 347-58, and bring it to class.  
Preliminary bibliographies/informal descriptions due |
| Feb. 15*   | Mandatory individual conferences |
| Feb. 22    | Part 1: Oral progress reports  
Part 2: Footnotes. Bring Turabian to class. |
| Feb. 29*   | Review of the literature/Historiographical survey due in my office by 7:00.  
Optional individual conferences |
| Mar. 14    | **Spring Break; no class** |
| Mar. 21*   | Mandatory individual conferences; “I’m starting to write my paper because the professor said I had to assignment” due in my office. |
| Mar. 28*   | Optional individual conferences |
| Apr. 4     | Complete drafts due; bring three copies of your draft to class |
| Apr. 11    | Complete drafts returned; Revising Style. Peruse *The Elements of Style*, especially “Elementary Rules of Usage” 1, 3, 9, 11; and “Elementary Principles of
Composition” 13, 14, 15, 17, 22. Bring *The Elements of Style* to class.

Apr. 18* Optional individual conferences

Apr. 25 Oral Reports and Summing Up

May 4 Final papers due in my office by 3:00

*On these dates, there will be no formal class meeting. I will be in my office (or helping students in the library; if I’m doing that, I’ll post a sign to that effect on my door) until 9 o’clock for additional consultation on these evenings. It’s a good idea to use me as a resource during these times.

**Other matters**

**Academic Advising**
Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors. In our college the undergraduate advisor is Linda Miller (825-3466, Linda.miller@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-3466, Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu). Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood. Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information please call (361) 825-5931 or log on to http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at 825-5816 or visit their office in CCH 116.

**Grade Appeal Process**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.