

Syllabus
HIST 455-* – Britain and the American Civil War**
Spring 2020

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Course Description: This course explores Great Britain's relationship to the American Civil War, from the antebellum period through the surrender of the last Confederate warship in Liverpool, England in November 1865. This course will explore several topics central to the conflict, including the international slave trade and abolitionist movement, the industrial revolution and global cotton economy, wartime propaganda in Britain, and British neutrality and diplomacy with both the Union and the Confederacy.

Learning Outcomes:

- Content knowledge:
 - Knowledge of origins and evolution of the Atlantic slave trade and the role that Britain played first as a participant and later as the naval leader in stamping out that trade
 - Knowledge of the origins and the evolution of the global abolitionist movement, and Britain's role as a world leader
 - Knowledge of the origins and evolution of the global industrial revolution and the role that Britain played as an industrialization leader in the Western World and also the central role of textile production to the industrial revolution
 - Knowledge of the global cotton economy and the prominent role that faith in the economic power of "King Cotton" played in the escalating sectional tensions between North and South during the antebellum period, the decision to secede from the Union in 1860-61, and in southern efforts to gain British recognition during the Civil War
 - Knowledge of the illicit shipbuilding activities that the Confederacy contracted in Britain during the war and the Union's efforts to have these ship's seized by the British government and to hold the government responsible after the war for reimbursing American shippers for the losses they sustain to Confederate commerce raiders
 - Knowledge of the diplomacy conducted by both the Union and the Confederacy in Britain during the war and the major players and issues involved on both sides
 - Basic understanding and proficiency in the emerging historiography regarding the global nature of the American Civil War
- Skills-based goals:
 - Writing proficiency
 - Awareness of Historical Context
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Sequential Logic
 - Analytical Thinking
 - Field Observation
 - Working with Primary and Secondary Sources
 - Crafting an Argument

Required Reading:

*****Students will be asked to read selections from the following books**

- Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (2007).
- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014).
- Don Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the of the American Civil War* (2015).

Readings: Reading is an essential component of this course and provides important historical background for understanding and interpreting the historical sites you will visit and the museum artifacts and displays you will see. This will not be a burdensome reading load, so you are expected to complete all of the assigned readings.

Attendance and Participation: *BSU Student Rules* states: “Students are responsible for satisfactory attendance in each course for which they are registered. The instructor, within the context of this policy statement, shall determine satisfactory attendance. The approval of excused absences and the assignment of makeup work are the prerogative of the course instructor ... Students should contact faculty members in advance of any absence whenever feasible or upon their return to classes, to determine the impact of the absence on academic requirements.”

Students are expected to attend all pre- and post-travel meetings at Bridgewater State University and attend the scheduled events while in England.

Research Paper: Students are required to complete a 6-8 page research paper related to the topic of this course. This assignment will enable you to pursue your particular interest under the broad topic of Britain and the American Civil War. Your paper topic will be selected by you but must be approved by the professor. Please refer to the assignment sheet for more details.

Presentation: During our post-travel meetings, students are required to present a 15-minute oral presentation accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation should focus on how your travel experience enhanced your understanding of the history of the events we will be discussing in this course. Please refer to the assignment sheet for more details.

Journal: Students are required to maintain an online journal of their travel experiences and submit this to the professor for a grade at the end of the study tour.

Grade breakdown:

Paper: 30%
Presentation: 20%
Participation: 30%
Journal: 20%