

POINTERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. This is an upper-level course--at least in the numerical sense--which therefore is highly elective. In fact the subject looks as if "150B" might be merely a "curriculum-enrichment" item. As a corollary, it is not a "killer" course. Yet, let us not treat "Gettysburg" in such a cavalier manner that you--for example--merely visit the classes occasionally. Instead, I urge you to attend all of them; and take notes! You will be tested vigorously during the semester & at then end. Anything you glean from the reading will help you learn and remember. But you'll be held closely responsible mostly for what's presented and discussed in class. In addition, issues raised by the assigned essays (within 3 separate books) will be touched-on within the midterm & final, yet not heavily. Note that both tests are open-notes, open-book--which makes it all the more useful to have a good set of notes. This also creates the tacit demand that you "know everything," because you never have to memorize anything, let alone recall obscure "identifier" facts that are buried somewhere in the reading only. General comments on how you will be evaluated in the course:

You all start out with A's, and I want each of you to earn that grade. You'll not get it only if you drag me kicking & screaming away from such a starting point. Over the history of this course, a handful of students whose class attendance during a given time was not good nevertheless did superb jobs on the tests (more power to 'em); however, essentially all students who did not do so great on one or more of the exams were from the group that came to only half or 2/3 of the classes--although nothing was ever deducted for indifferent attendance as such. The numbers of students who do not do well in this course is always, to me, a surprisingly high proportion (albeit never half the class or something). This means, for example: Your instructor regards the subject as extremely interesting (so wouldn't all course participants agree, and vote with the feet?). But each year he's forced ("dragged kicking & screaming") into several situations for which he must award only grades that were earned. [Everyone can "get an A," but these are not automatic--meaning, for example, that there is no a-priori determined % of "A's & B+'s" in any JCH-instructed course.]

2.

- I need to meet with each of you individually during the first 2-to-3 weeks of the course, so I'll ask you to come to my office accordingly. I'll arrange these meetings via a sign-up sheet (to appear ~2nd week of classes). During such brief meetings, I would like to learn who you are (what year? what's your major?); why you elected to take a course on Gettysburg; what might be your preliminary guess about the sub-topic you will research in order to write your paper (early on, you may already be able to break this down into: something that's highly military, or a distinctly non-military aspect of that part of the Civil War--either of these broad areas being perfectly legitimate). Please scrutinize the course Bibliography once or twice, before the time of your appointment--because this could give you ideas for paper. The sign-up list of early-semester appointments will specify those time-slots in the context of Hall's office-hour set-up--unless one or

more of you would find it difficult-in-general to meet during the early-morning or -evening times (as specified near the top of the syllabus). In that case, you & I can arrange some other time that's mutually agreeable.

- This speaks to the matter of office-hours in general: use them (or make other appointments), whenever you feel that it would be useful -> -> necessary to speak with me. Do not lurk in silence if any kind of academic problem--or academically-impacting one--surfaces. When students liaise with me about some problem-or-the-other in a timely manner--those persons find me (surprisingly) accommodating. In contrast, students communicating such matters to me 1-2 days before a given deadline (exam- or paper-related) encounter a distinct non-accommodation (which surprises some, but should not).
- Getting to Hall's office--difficult, so please register the following route description and other information carefully: From vicinity of the Biology Office (119 Bassine), which is not-far from the Gerstenzang Science Library), take the nearby elevator to the top floor (PH) of Bassine. Go left out of elevator and enter the large, elongated laboratory you'll encounter within a few dozen feet (room # on entrance door: 95-415). Walk all the way through this lab and, not far from its exit door, you'll come to a link that connects Bassine (PH floor) to Kalman (3rd floor). Traverse it, and at the end of this link enter a conference/library room through the door on the right. Exit that room through its only other door, and you're ~10 feet away from Kalman 302. For any appointments arranged at times when the Kalman bldg. is locked--by University people, after 6 PM on weekdays and throughout weekends--call Hall (x63170) ~10 minutes before the time of your appointment, and he will arrange to meet you at a Science-Complex entrance door.
- Transmitting your written materials (paper outlines, drafts, final versions): any day before the deadline--in class, or in my mailbox (next to Bassine 119), or atop the orange file-cabinet next to my office (Kalman 302); on the due date--same places just indicated, by 6 PM; you're also welcome to submit these documents by e-mail or website attachment (won't work well if your paper is accompanied by diagrams for which you have hard-copy only, e.g., via photocopying from some Gettysburg-related work)

3.

- You received 4 (verbal) handouts at the first class, and there will be further word-processed ones. Nearly all of this material will be accessible by Brandeis intranet, so that you can retrieve some needed item, or use the soft-copy version to search for something-or-the-other.
- To find the History 150B website, enter webct [in Internet Explorer (best), or Netscape, or the like]. From off campus: webct@brandeis.edu Within this site, there is a link to the older course webpage; or you can directly enter: <http://www.bio.brandeis.edu/pages/classes/hist150b/> An important proportion of the material on this intra-site site is "non-verbal," and you may find it valuable to access the relevant maps and diagrams.

4. Evening get-together:

"Open house" at my home. This opportunity will occur in March, in conjunction with a visit to the course of a Gettysburg historian. If there is

interest in the open-house (when I ask in class a couple weeks in advance), you'll get a chance to meet this person beyond hearing him lecture in class. Given sufficient "I'm-interested" responses from you (when the time comes), I'll tell you:

- the exact date
- directions to the location
- information on arrangements as to how you can get a ride to it if you need one

5. Field trip:

- I will be glad to take the class (or some appreciable proportion of it) around the battlefield at Gettysburg. If there is enough interest, the tour will occur during the spring break. We'll meet at Gettysburg on & at a pre-arranged date & location. You might be willing & able to make your way to Gettysburg, PA, just on general principles. Or, you might find yourself in the mid-Atlantic region during this break because that's where your family lives. Or, I could help you find a ride (such as from a classmate) or give you one myself. If you need lodging for one or more nights--that can be arranged for you, too, at the home of my brother or sister & families, who live in Maryland a few miles northwest of Washington (where I will be staying the night before and the night following the tour). In previous years, friends & family of people in the class asked to join the tour--and they were of course welcome. In several instances, the homes of students' parents &/or friends are in the Washington, Baltimore, or Philadelphia areas (see above), which would create your own private lodging.
- Having said all this - neither I, nor any of us involved in the course, "have to" do this field trip. Therefore, it is important for you actively to communicate with me about the tour, if you would like to exercise this course option. I realize it's unlikely that you could know now whether you are interested. Yet, as the time approaches: Contact me by e-mail if you would like to go to Gettysburg; also, I'll remind you of this opportunity in class (~early -> mid-March). If I have received a sufficient number of positive communications about the trip, I will let you know (during the 2nd half of March) how & precisely when the tour will occur, including specific arrangements for transport, lodging, and a rendezvous point.

6. Verbal & visual aids:

- The course Bibliography lists a (ridiculously) large number of Gettysburg-related items (although this list refers to a frighteningly tiny fraction of all that's available about this subject). If you sense at anytime--or, especially in terms of coming up with paper topics and writing about them--that perusing -> heavily using works from this list would be useful: Let me know by e-mail, and we can arrange for you to make use of the item(s). However, this will have to occur via "non-circulating reserve" (as we'll discuss when & if you request a given book or article).
- I own a copy of the 1993 movie *Gettysburg* (such as it is). I also store in my office a set tapes the comprise the 1990 Civil War series--produced by Ken Burns & Co. for PBS. Any of you who wishes is welcome to borrow these tapes, in order to: view a rather rollicking portrayal of the battle; &/or obtain more background information about the Civil War era than will be presented in class.

7. Evaluation (also see 1.):

- Midterm: 75 points (max.)
- paper: 125 points
- Final Exam: 200 points

TOTAL: 400 points (= perfect score)

It is neither possible nor necessary to attach letter grades to individual evaluative components. However, you'll be informed during the course (regarding the Midterm), and after if you wish (paper, Final, aggregate scores), about the average numerical scores. Final letter grades will be based (obviously) on the aggregate scores--taking into account (within reason) the class average.