Gettysburg: Its Context in the American Civil War

Jeffrey C. Hall

Kalman 302  [the oldest science building, flanked by Bassine and Edison-Lecks; connected by an overpass to Friedland and at a right-angle to Bassine]

phone x63170; home 508-655-9317; e-mail: hall@brandeis.edu

Alternative for written contact: course website: Bulletin Board or Private E-mail (recommended between beginning of course and March 1)

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30-to-9:30 AM and 5-to-6 PM; or by appointment, any time, any day (Sunday through Saturday); make appointments by phone or e-mail (the latter best)

Evaluation:
1. MID-TERM EXAM
   - in class (March 8 or 12): open-notes, open-book(s)
   - based largely on lectures, but essay readings also come into play (marginally)

2. PAPER
   - analytical, research-related, on a highly specific subtopic to be chosen by each student in consultation with instructor; length, ~6-10 (double-spaced) pages; 10 pages max.
   - 4 stages:
     - conferences with instructor to formulate topic, and develop preliminary list of reading material as well as suggestions for how to seek sources
     - brief outline of paper topic - what will be researched covered? using what (preliminary) bibliographic materials?: due Tues. Feb. 26
     - draft of the paper (optional) - if submitted, to be turned in by Fri. Apr. 26
     - final version - due Tues. May 7 (day of last class)

3. FINAL EXAM
   - orals (May 9-16)
   - based largely on lectures
   - ~1 hour per student

Principal reading material:
- 3 compilations of essays, often provocative ones; several of the individual essays will be assigned in conjunction with the pertinent lecture sub-topics:
- a textbook on the Gettysburg campaign:
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<tr>
<th>Approx. No.</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Source material (examples only)</th>
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<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Introduction to Gettysburg: why a course about it? - is this merely an emotionally overcharged component of CivilWar buffery? how we'll deal with the subject - history &amp; historiography; other features of the course, including its requirements, mechanics</td>
<td>Shaara The Killer Angels; Hartwig A Killer Angels</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I. Leading up to Gettysburg in the broad sense: overview of the Civil War, 1861-1863</td>
<td>McPherson Battle Cry of Freedom; Brogan A Fresh Appraisal of the Civil War (1961)</td>
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<td>II. Participants at Gettysburg: Comparison of soldiers in the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, including an introduction to the key small-unit commanders, and discussions of cultural and social differences involving the different sources for these armies</td>
<td>Catton Glory Road; Welcher The Union Army; Katcher The Army of Robert E. Lee; McMurry Two Great Rebel Armies</td>
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<td>III. Leading up to Gettysburg in the immediate sense: The Battles of Chancellorsville and Brandy Station: movements northward - on foot and on horse; introduction to the controversies revolving round the latter</td>
<td>Sears Chancellorsville; Gallagher (ed) Chancellorsville; Wittenburg Brandy Station Seminar; Nye Here Come the Rebels; Palmer Lee Moves North; Nesbitt Saber and Scapegoat; J. E.B. Stuart and the Gettysburg Controversy; Longacre The Cavalry at Gettysburg</td>
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<td>IV. Attack vs. defense: Gettysburg as an exemplary means for discussing these phenomena and issues: military and cultural perspectives</td>
<td>McWhiney &amp; Jamieson Attack and Die; Griffith Battle Tactics of the Civil War; Luvaas The Military Legacy of the Civil War; Hegeman The American Civil War &amp; the Origins of Modern Warfare; Bilby Civil War Firearms</td>
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V. The First Day at Gettysburg: How elements of the armies collided there; role of Buford and his cavalry; fighting withdrawals and counter-attacks; a key mnemonic: 2/7 of the Union infantry large-units were "defeated," but the Army of the Potomac found a perfect place to make its stand

VI. Commanders of the armies at Gettysburg: Lee vs. Meade - biographies; the roles they played in the war before the summer of '63

VII. How do we know what happened at the Battle of Gettysburg (and in the others of this war)? contemporary accounts of participants vs. those written retrospectively
VIII. The Second Day at Gettysburg: extraordinary complexity involving the Union left made comprehensible(?); key mnemonic: the wrongheaded maneuver by a "political" General "foiled Lee’s hopes;" the Battle for Little Round Top: how did our understanding of it drift into mythology, and how was this problem solved? Historiographical lessons of Little Round Top for another war: Hill 107 on the Allied left in the Battle of Crete (fell); the Elsenborn Ridge on the Allied left in the Battle of the Bulge (held); redeployments and counterattacks; fighting withdrawals large and small; the forgotten battle on the Union right & Rebel left: the stand of Greene’s Brigade and the 137th New York

IX. Large-unit (Corps) commanders at Gettysburg; James Longstreet and Winfield Scott Hancock
X. The Third Day at Gettysburg: hours of further fighting at the top of the field; preludes: planning and bombardment "the 8 brigades that advanced and the 26 regiments that stood"; "high water mark" - double envelopment - repulse; key mnemonic: the stand of the 8th Ohio and how the destruction of Pickett's Charge seemed to flow from it

XI. The (forgotten) cavalry battles of July 3 & after; the retreat to and the escape across the Potomac

[1] Field trip (optional): tour of the battlefield at Gettysburg; visit to the Park Service's archives

1 XIII. The meaning of Gettysburg in the narrow sense: the mid '60s to the end of the century; the Confederate high tide? the turning point? impacts on Southern views of and writings about the war; this battle as the war in microcosm: could the South have succeeded at Gettysburg? - as way to discuss whether they could have won the war; why did they fight at Gettysburg? --as a way to discuss this question in terms of the entire war; broad aspects of Gettysburg historiography

1 XIV. Meaning of Gettysburg in the broader sense: why is the event within the War and in American history "etched deep in the national memory"? symptoms of this phenomenon
LaFantasie Feeling the Past at Gettysburg; Harrison Monuments, Markers & Tablets