

Civil War Era Studies

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Program Description

Begun in 1998 with funding from the Henry R. Luce Foundation, the Civil War Era Studies department oversees two interdisciplinary academic programs on the Civil War era: the Civil War Era Studies minor and The Gettysburg Semester. The Civil War Era Studies Minor is an interdisciplinary program concentrating on mid-nineteenth century America and on the period's enduring importance for modern America.

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Program Requirements

Requirements for the Civil War Era Studies Minor

Six course credits are required, including Civil War Era Studies 205 and 400. The remaining four courses may be selected from the CWES cross-listed elective courses. The four elective courses are subject to the following restrictions: The electives must be in at least two different departments. (IDS courses and electives with a CWES designation will be treated as separate departments.) No more than two elective courses can be from the student's major field of study; and no more than two electives may be taken at the 100 level.

Students are allowed to fill one elective requirement with either an internship or an independent study course, subject to the normal College requirements.

Course Listing

Course level:

| [200](#) | [300](#) | [400](#)

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CWES-205 Introduction to the American Civil War Era

Interdisciplinary introduction to the Civil War Era (roughly 1848-1877) in American history. Student is introduced to the basic history of the Civil War, with an emphasis on the fundamental causes of the war, the war years themselves, both at home and on the battlefield, and Reconstruction period. Assigned readings include a mix of primary sources and a basic survey text. History majors may count CWES 205 as a major course.

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CWES-320 Aftermath: The Experience of War and ‘Modern’ Memory

This is a course that will examine, primarily, two conflicts in modern history and their lasting representations in cultural history and literary memory. Wars have long cultural legacies. Both the American Civil War and First World War changed not only the ‘war generation’ of each conflict, but also, demonstrate case studies of the representation of war and the polemics of memory within nation states. In this class students will engage with the cultural and military histories of two different conflicts and compare their lasting impact in our contemporary perception of war and society. As such, the ‘experience of war’ will be our broad topic of consideration. We will access this theme by examining memory sources that detail and represent these experiences over time. The class’s methodological themes will address the following: conceptions of victory and defeat, the memory of participants and their representations of war, the writing of history and the mythologies created by conflicts and their chroniclers. By studying the cultural history of combat and its aftermath, students will learn something about the way history is written and historical events depicted over time. Through interdisciplinary representations of war in film and literature, it is hoped that students will gain an understanding of the changing perceptions of wars, within the conception of modern memory.

CWES-330 John Brown: Freedom Fighter or Fanatic?,

Martyr or terrorist? Freedom fighter or fanatic? These questions remain controversial 150 years after John Brown’s failed attempt to foment a slave insurrection by seizing the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The course examines the events in Brown’s life and also contextualizes him within the broader cultural, intellectual and economic developments of his era. A variety of interpretations is explored in order to assess Brown’s role in history and his legacy as a symbol in the struggle for freedom and racial equality.

CWES-337 Reconstruction and the Legacy of the American Civil War

An exploration of the various aspects of Reconstruction, including political conflicts over how the defeated South would be treated, the struggle over civil rights for African Americans, an overview of Reconstruction historiography, the contested nature of Civil War memory, and the enduring legacy of this vital yet often overlooked period of our past.

CWES-346 American Women and the Civil War Era

This course examines the experience of women during the Civil War Era. The principal focus of the course is to understand how mothers, wives and daughters negotiated significant wartime transitions. We will explore how women created and reacted to their shifting social, political, and cultural roles. Arranged

thematically and chronologically, this course surveys primary and secondary sources that highlight recent historiographical trends and theoretical frameworks.

CWES-350 The American Civil War in the West

An examination of the Civil War in the West from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. The course covers the actions of both the Union and Confederate armies and navies, ethnic minorities, and military technology (especially naval technology). Using primary and secondary materials, students master the historical content as well as develop their research and writing skills.

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CWES-400 Seminar: American Civil War Era

Interdisciplinary seminar which addresses the social, political and cultural history of the Civil War era. Seminar focus shifts on a revolving basis to feature society, politics, and culture through institutions, art, philosophy, political formation, and print culture. This course is the capstone seminar for the CWES Minor, but it is open to other students as well.

CWES-421 Seminar: Interpretation of the American Civil War

Seminar which surveys the most influential historical interpretations of the Civil War. Intensive reading of interpretive work on Civil War era religion, slavery, gender identity, home-front issues, postwar adjustment, and soldier motivations. A major research project, based on topics connected with resources and collections in Gettysburg, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Carlisle, Baltimore and Washington, is the principal responsibility of this course. Serves as a core course for The Gettysburg Semester.

CWES-425 Field Experience in Civil War Era Studies

Seminar devoted to the military experience of the Civil War. Involves detailed examination of the 19th century American military, and the major battles and battlefields of the eastern theater of the Civil War. Students participate in a series of day-long field trips to Harpers Ferry, Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Harpers Ferry, and Washington, D.C. There are three formal tours of the Gettysburg battlefield and borough, and a weekend trip to the Richmond/Petersburg battle sites. Students compile a weekly journal to comment on the battle sites, and to respond to readings to an assigned list of significant battle narratives. Serves as a core course for THE GETTYSBURG SEMESTER.

CWES-450 Individualized Study-Tutorial

Individualized tutorial counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-451 Individualized Study-Tutorial

Individualized tutorial counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded S/U.

CWES-452 Individualized Study-Tutorial

Individualized tutorial not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-453 Individualized Study-Tutorial

Individualized tutorial not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded S/U.

CWES-460 Individualized Study-Research

Individualized research counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-461 Individualized Study-Research

Individualized research counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded S/U.

CWES-462 Individualized Study-Research

Individualized research not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-463 Individualized Study-Research

Individualized research not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor graded S/U.

CWES-470 Individualized Study-Internship

Internship counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-471 Individualized Study-Internship

Internship counting toward the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded S/U.

CWES-472 Individualized Study-Internship

Internship not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded A-F.

CWES-473 Individualized Study-Internship

Internship not counting in the minimum requirements in a major or minor, graded S/U.

CWES-474 Summer Internship

Summer Internship graded A-F, counting in the minimum requirements for a major or minor only with written permission filed in the Registrar's Office.

CWES-475 Summer Internship

Summer Internship graded S/U, counting in the minimum requirements for a major or minor only with written permission filed in the Registrar's Office.

CWES-477 Half Credit Internship

Half credit internship, graded S/U.

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