

## The American Civil War Syllabus



### Genesee Valley Central School District

**Instructor:** Mr. Michael A. Mead  
**Phone:** 585-268-7900, ext 2104  
**Email:** [mmead@genvalley.org](mailto:mmead@genvalley.org)  
**Daily Materials:** iPad/Chromebook, writing utensils, notebook and/or binder and/or storage folder, an open mind, and a positive attitude  
**Duration:** Full year (40 weeks); 1.0 High School Credit

#### Course Description:

Introduction to the causes of the American Civil War, its impact on the American nation, and its continued significance for American politics and society. This course will analyze the causes, campaigns, and consequences of America's most violent military experience. Topics include: the causes of the war; the political, economic, military, and diplomatic execution of the war; the problem of waging war in a democracy; the constitutional issues raised by the war; the reasons the South lost the Civil War; the impact of the war and reconstruction on American history; and the reconstruction policies of Lincoln, Johnson, and the Radical Republicans. Discussions will focus on the military aspects of the war.

#### Expectations:

Students are required to:

- Come to class prepared
- Positively participate
- Be respectful

#### Materials (must be brought to each class):

- 3-ringed binder
- Loose leaf paper
- Pen or pencil

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## Classroom Expectations and Classroom Policies:

1. **IF I GIVE YOU MORE THAN ONE DAY TO WORK ON AN ASSIGNMENT, TAKE HOME QUIZ/TEST, PROJECT, ETC., IT'S BECAUSE I EXPECT IT TO TAKE MORE THAN ONE DAY TO COMPLETE. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE OR EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE IT IN A STUDY HALL THE DAY IT IS DUE. IF YOU WAIT/PROCRASTINATE, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY COMPLAINTS!**
2. Be courteous and respectful of yourself and others, including the teacher.
3. Attend class, both physically and mentally. Attendance is important. I can't teach you if you aren't here. Be on time to class. Being late to class should not happen, but if it does, it should only occur rarely. Tardiness to class disrupts the learning process.
4. **Take good care of your materials and your device, including the charging block and charging cables. Food and drinks typically do not go well with electronics therefore, food and drinks (other than water bottles) will not be permitted without teacher permission.**
5. Be responsible and prepared by bringing all necessary materials to class every day. Stay organized. Make sure that your iPad is charged every day and working properly. Failure to plan on your part does not make an emergency on my part.
6. Ask questions and complete ALL assignments on time. It is difficult to make up work that is missed. Quite often students fall behind when lack of school attendance becomes an issue and/or students make it a habit of not completing work and/or handing it in by the designated due date. Late assignments will be accepted, within reasonable time frames, for school absences only as outlined in greater detail below.
7. Actively listen when others are speaking and allow others to focus without distractions.
8. **You are NOT to be on any device other than the one that you are expected to be using when directed by the teacher. Let's make sure that cell phones and other personal technology devices aren't an issue for either of us per the GVCS D BOE Policy.**
9. Stay seated unless otherwise directed. Wait to be excused by the teacher at the end of the class. The teacher dismisses you, not the bell.
10. I enjoy a good laugh as much as the next person, but let's make sure that we understand proper time and place for such events.
11. Class participation is required. Each of you equally shares the responsibility for creating a productive learning environment.
12. Group Work - You will occasionally work in groups, some of my choosing, some of yours. Choose who you work with carefully as you are graded on your class participation which includes this group work. If you have a concern with someone I have asked you to work with, please speak with me privately. I expect my students to work cooperatively, meaning that each person in the group shares the responsibilities and participates. Remember your positive attitudes!
13. Be familiar with the District's Acceptable Use Policies for accessing the internet and using the school owned devices and peripherals. Violations of the District's policies for Acceptable Use will be referred to school administration for possible consequences.
14. I understand that nature calls and that we all need to use the facilities from time to time, but let's not make it a habit of concentrating such needs all in one class period each day.
15. My classroom is not your bedroom or a restroom, do not brush your hair, spray perfume/deodorant, etc, or put on makeup/cosmetics in my classroom. It's rude and I have allergies.
16. **When you are absent from class, for whatever reason, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain the class notes and/or complete any class activities and assignments. I will not "hunt you down." High school students understand and accept their obligations and responsibilities accordingly.**

17. Check your Teams account often for updates, communications and notifications, assignments, etc., especially if you will miss a class for an educational reason or if you are ever absent from class. See #13 above for related information and reasons.
- 18. Don't plagiarize. This includes the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (unless you have permission from the teacher for specific purposes in advance). Do your own work. Anyone caught violating this rule will receive a "0" for the assignment, project, or assessment AND they will have to complete the assignment and/or assessment on their own for no credit to ensure that the necessary learning of knowledge, skills, and abilities occurred.**
19. Your status in terms of probation/ineligibility for school activities, athletics, and any other extracurricular events is determined by your class participation, preparedness, acceptable and proficient completion of classwork, homework, quizzes, projects, and tests. Submitting work merely to "get it done" to avoid being placed on the probation/ineligibility report is unacceptable and it will not suffice. I expect everyone's best work at all times. The grade you will receive is the grade that you will earn.
20. Be aware of and comply with the District Code of Conduct and building and class rules.
21. Most importantly - Have fun! Learning is supposed to be fun! I'm always open to legitimate and realistic suggestions for improving the courses I teach!

### **Topics and Chapters to be Covered during this Course (also see Course Description):**

Introduction and Background Information

Causes and Events Leading to the War

Military Overview

Overview of the Civil War

Eastern and Western Theaters

Reconstruction

The Armies and Important Battles

Officers and Other Important and Influential People of the Time

### **Grading Policy:**

- Homework – 30%
  - Homework will be assigned and is a very important part of your grade. Homework is considered but not limited to study guides, essays, projects, and discussion questions. You will be graded on your homework's:
    - Completion
    - Accuracy
    - Neatness
    - Grammar and spelling
    - Ability to successfully define, discuss, and evaluate material

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- Homework provides you with an excellent opportunity to learn more about a topic discussed or to preview information for an upcoming discussion. Please take your homework seriously. Copying other students' work or getting your answers from the internet is not tolerated. These are both forms of plagiarism and can be read about further in your Student Handbook.
- Tests/Projects – 35%
  - There will be a test at the end of each unit. Test structure and grading will be explained prior to the first exam. Study! Study your notes, homework assignments, readings and study guides before each exam.
- Quizzes – 35%
  - Quizzes will be given often and these will be announced. You will also have unannounced quizzes based on material we are learning in class. In order to ensure success, you must stay on top of your homework, notes and readings.
- Participation – while participation is not graded, it is expected!
  - This is incredibly important! I expect each student to participate in class daily.

### **Homework/Late Work Policy**

In order to be successful in this course, it is necessary that you come intellectually prepared each day. Homework is expected to be completed and to the best of your ability. Homework is due at the beginning of class which means it may not be completed during the class period it is due. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, it must be turned in the following class period. You will be provided appropriate extensions for extended absences per the Student Handbook. When absent, it is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for missed notes, assignments, etc. via email, at the beginning of the day they return during homeroom, or at the beginning of class the day they return. Students who know they will be absent ahead of time for things such as orthodontist appointments, doctor's appointments, family vacation, etc. must contact me before their absence to find out what they will be missing. **If the assignment and/or test/quiz is scheduled and assigned, and you are NOT absent when it is assigned and you return before the date the assignment is due and/or when the test/quiz is scheduled, you do NOT qualify for additional days to hand in and/or complete the work.**

Assignments will only be accepted for 50% reduced grade one day after the due date. If it is more than 1 day late, the assignment will not be accepted and will be counted as a zero. (If turned in later on the due date, it is still considered one day late). Certain time-sensitive assignments, such as essays, take-home exams, projects, and work discussed in class will not be accepted late. Homework is a serious responsibility and will be considered as such in this course. If you are absent, it would be perfectly acceptable for you to email me your completed homework assignment.

### **Disruptions in Class will be Handled in the Following Ways (not necessarily always in this order):**

- One warning
- Phone call or email to parents if the disruptions do not stop after one warning.
- Referral to the Principal if necessary.
- If you disrupt the learning of others, you will be removed from my classroom.

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### **Films, Movie Clips, YouTube Videos, Etc:**

If time permits, we will view the following (or portions of) in class:

- Gettysburg
- Gods and Generals
- Ken Burns' Civil War
- Civil War Journal
- The Civil War: The Story and the Artillery
- Lincoln
- Glory
- The Red Badge of Courage
- Harriet
- North and South
- Andersonville
- Ride With the Devil
- Class of '61
- Saving Lincoln
- Field of Lost Shoes
- Rebel
- Copperhead
- The Last Days of the Civil War
- Various movies from YouTube, National Geographic, History Channel, etc. as deemed appropriate

By signing your name at the end of this document, you are acknowledging that you are aware and give permission for your child to view appropriate media. At most, I may show a film or YouTube video rated PG 13 and/or TV-14 if I believe it has relevant information supporting the curricular goals of this course. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to email the teacher if you want more information or if you prefer that you be given the opportunity to discuss the specifics of any such media prior to giving (or denying) permission for your child to view such materials. Rest assured, in the rare event that I find film(s) and/or video(s) with a higher audience rating, other than those listed above, I will absolutely seek each parent's/guardian's expressed written permission prior to showing such films.

Dear Parents/Guardians:

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with your child(ren). I sincerely look forward to the year ahead! These guidelines and expectations are outlined in detail in order to provide a nurturing learning environment for all of my students. After you have carefully reviewed my class procedures and grading policies, please take a minute to complete the bottom portion of this form. *In the event of a shutdown*, it will be very important for me to have an **email address** and **phone number** to remain in contact with you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information outlined in this packet or any matter throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact me.

mmead@genvalley.org  
585-268-7900 ext. 2104 (immediately following school hours)

Regards,  
Mr. Mead

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To be filled out by parent/guardian

Parent Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best phone number to reach you:** \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand Mr. Mead's **The American Civil War** class procedures, expectations and grading policies as outlined in this packet. I agree as parent/guardian to do my part in helping my student do the best they can to achieve success in this course. I will contact Mr. Mead with concerns or questions throughout the school year as needed.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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