This course is survey of recent scholarship in 19th century US history. While we will cover a variety of topics and themes in the context of the 19th century, the organizing focus of this course is the enslavement of African Americans, the struggle to end it, and the legacy of the bondage and forced labor of African Americans through the end of the 19th century. Within that there are some sub-themes: violence and its cultural and political impacts; gender and sexuality; courts and the law; capitalism; science and medicine; and historical memory. Although this class centers on race and slavery, the readings intentionally avoid a North vs. South orientation, and instead frame the 19th century as one of interaction and movement between East and West.

Class meetings
You are expected to read all of the material in advance of each class. You should be able to identify the central argument of the weekly reading, to discuss the evidence and sources the author relies on, and explain its historiographic contribution. It may be helpful to look up reviews of and/or reactions to the piece. In addition, I would like you to be familiar with the authors of each piece – what their academic credentials are, what else they have written or done, and what their career trajectory has been.

Short Writing Assignments
Each student will write two "paired" book reviews of 3,000 words each. On those weeks, students will read the assigned book as well as the paired book and write a review of the two. See Reviews in American History for examples of this kind of review. Students will select which weeks they want to read and review books, so please come to class the first day with a sense of which ones you would like to do. (For the first week, your review will be due week 2.) In addition, each student will write a review of one of the Lincoln biographies.

Final paper
You will write a long (15-20 page) final essay on the assigned books in the class, using a question/topic/prompt that I will give you later in the semester.

Discussion leader
Each student will be the discussion leader for two class meetings. These meetings will be the ones for which you are writing a book review. On these weeks, you should be prepared to give a brief overview of the book for the class as well as the paired reading that you selected. You will begin the class discussion of the book by asking the 4 – 5 discussion questions about the book.

Grading
Class participation: 20%
Weekly reading

**Week 1: January 18**
Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Harvard/Belknap 2013)

Paired review:

Paired Review

**Week 2: January 25**

Paired Review

**Week 3: February 1**

Paired Review

**Week 4: February 8**

[article by job candidate]

Paired Review

Paired Review
Rachel Hope Cleves, *Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America* (Oxford 2016)
**Week 5: February 15**
Kimberly M. Welch, *Black Litigants in the Antebellum American South* (UNC, 2018)

[Article by job candidate]

**Paired Review:** Laura Edwards, *The People and Their Peace: Legal Culture and the Transformation of Inequality in the Post-Revolutionary South* (UNC, 2009)

**Paired Review**

**Week 6: February 22**
No class. Each student should read one biography of Abraham Lincoln and write a review of it. We will discuss these books March 1.

**Week 7: March 1**

[Article by job candidate]

**Paired Review**

**Paired Review**

**Week 8: March 8**
No Class. Spring break.

**Week 9: March 15**
Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Harvard, 2010)

**Paired Review**
Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (Knopf, 2008)

**Paired Review**

**Week 10: March 22**
Gregory Downs and Kate Masur, eds, *The World the Civil War Made* (UNC 2015)

**Paired Review**
William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (UNC 2014)

**Week 11: March 29**

**Paired Review**

**Week 12: April 4**
Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (Yale 2007)

**Paired Review**
Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation’s Diaspora Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (UNC 2009)

**Week 13: April 12**

**Paired Review**
Katherine Osburn, *Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class, and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South, 1830-1977* (Nebraska, 2014)

**Week 14: April 19**
Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku-Klux The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (UNC 2015)

**Paired Review**

**Paired Review**

**Week 15: April 26**
Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me. African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (NYU, 2012)

**Paired Review**

**Week 16: May 3**