LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The goals of this class are 1) to give students a thorough understanding of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln, one of our most beloved and important presidents, and 2) to help History majors significantly improve their writing skills through numerous analytical writing assignments. By the end of the semester, students should be able to: a) describe the major events in Lincoln’s career; b) demonstrate a mastery of the Lincoln historiography; c) understand the History discipline’s writing expectations in terms of organization, evidence, argument, clarity, succinctness, variety, and sophistication; and d) demonstrate full understanding of the basic citation standards of the history discipline.

REQUIREMENTS: There are no prerequisites for the class. Written work will consist of four five-page papers (maximum 1500 words). Because this class will be devoted almost entirely to discussion and will meet only once a week, it is vital that students come to each class meeting, do the reading, and participate in the discussions. Papers will be graded on the basis of 1) how well they are written and organized; 2) how well students document their theses with facts AND quotations (especially of primary sources); 3) the extent to which students devote the entire paper to answering the question; and 4) the sophistication of presentation and content. All paragraphs with quotations must have footnotes that make it clear from which book and on what page the quotations can be found. Papers MUST be typed and will be downgraded ONE FULL LETTER-GR DE if late, unless an extension has been granted BEFORE the day the paper is due. Please keep a copy of your paper and BACKUP your work as you go! Papers may not under any circumstances be submitted by e-mail or in any other electronic form unless so requested by the instructor. With one exception, do not use sources other than those assigned for this class for the papers without seeking my permission first. That exception is The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, a compilation of everything he ever wrote. It is available on-line at http://www.hti.umich.edu/l/lincoln. Another site of interest is http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/, which focuses on Lincoln’s pre-presidential years, but should not be used for papers without permission. Every assignment can be easily answered without using additional sources. The papers’ substance will be judged primarily based on how well you construct an argument with the resources at hand, not on how much information you find elsewhere. The key to a good paper is to arrive at a thesis and then combine facts with quotations in a logically organized manner to support that thesis.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING: One-fifth of the class grade will be based on the quality of each student’s contribution to the discussions. The remainder will be based on the papers. Missing classes will adversely affect one’s discussion grade unless the absence is for documented medical reasons or pre-approved religious observance. Also, changes to this syllabus may be announced in class at any time, and missing class does not excuse not knowing about such changes.

PLAGIARISM AND CITATION: Plagiarism is a serious violation of university rules that can be punished by suspension or expulsion. I prosecute all suspected cases of plagiarism. Borrowing someone else’s words without giving them credit is plagiarism. Closely paraphrasing someone else’s work without making substantive changes to the content or method of organization is plagiarism.
Handing in a paper written completely or in part by someone else or for another class is academic dishonesty. Using sources other than those specified for the assignment without permission is academic dishonesty as well. But these facts do not mean you should footnote every sentence of your paper. Well-known facts (for example, that Lincoln vetoed the Wade-Davis bill) do not need to be cited at all. Nor do you need to cite mundane facts that are not central to your thesis (that he delivered the House Divided Speech in Springfield, Ill. or that the speech commenced at 8 p.m.). But do provide citations if facts are not readily known (that Lincoln was paid the largest legal fee in antebellum U.S. history) or easily verifiable (that there are more books written about Lincoln than about any other man in history except perhaps Napoleon and Jesus). Use the books assigned for this class as a model for the number of footnotes needed per paragraph. The most sophisticated papers will have no more than one or two or, at the very most, three footnotes per paragraph. If you are unsure of the rules, see me before you hand in your papers.

FOOTNOTE STYLE: You must use footnotes (not endnotes) to explain where your information comes from. Use the following format for BOOKS:

1. Kerby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America (New York, 1985), 166-167. (first cite gives all information; note that these book titles are in italics!)
2. Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 179. (second cite is just last name, short title, and page #)

FOR JOURNAL ARTICLES:

3. Oliver MacDonagh, "The Irish Famine Emigration to the United States," Perspectives in American History 10 (1976): 370-371. (The journal title is in italics, but the article title is not.)
4. MacDonagh, "Irish Famine Emigration," 361-366. (short second cite)

BOOKS: The following books are required and are available for purchase at the bookstore:

- Michael P. Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War (first edition)
- David Donald, Lincoln
- Don Fehrenbacher, Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s
- Gary Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America
- Charles B. Strozier, Lincoln’s Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings
- James McPherson, Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief
- Eric Foner, The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery
- I also recommend Sean Wilentz, ed., The Best American History Essays on Lincoln.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

AUGUST 28: Introduction

SEPTEMBER 4: Young Abe (100)
- Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 1-29; Donald, Lincoln, chs. 1-3

SEPTEMBER 11: Lincoln the Lawyer (130)
- Donald, Lincoln, chs. 4-6; Foner, Fiery Trial, chs. 1-2

SEPTEMBER 18: Lincoln the Rising Politician (125)
- Donald, Lincoln, ch. 7; Fehrenbacher, Prelude to Greatness, chs. 1-2; Foner, Free Soil, ch. 4 (on electronic reserve on Blackboard)
SEPTEMBER 25: Lincoln in the 1850s
Donald, Lincoln, ch. 8; Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 37-69; Fehrenbacher, Prelude to Greatness, ch. 4; Foner, Fiery Trial, chs. 3-4
Group A Essay due February 11: How radical was the “House Divided” Speech?

OCTOBER 2: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates (295, but easy reading)
Fehrenbacher, Prelude to Greatness, chs. 5-6; Lincoln-Douglas Debates, pp. 37-285 (those doing this paper assignment may read more of the debates than I have assigned)
Group B Essay due: Did Lincoln really tailor his stance on slavery to suit the part of Illinois in which he was speaking, as Douglas charged at the beginning of the Galesburg debate?

OCTOBER 9: Lincoln the Public Speaker; the Presidential Nomination
Donald, Lincoln, ch. 9; Fehrenbacher, Prelude to Greatness, ch. 7; Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 80-95; Foner, Fiery Trial, ch. 5
Group A Essay due: What made Lincoln such a good public speaker? Consider both content and speaking style, but focus more on the content (by “content” I do not mean the substance of what he said but the rhetorical strategies he used). You may read ahead in the Johnson book to find additional speeches to substantiate your argument. You may also use any speeches by Lincoln in his “Collected Works,” which can be found online at http://www.hti.umich.edu/l/lincoln or in the stacks of Gelman at E 457.91 1953.

OCTOBER 16: Lincoln the Writer; The Secession Winter (105)
Donald, Lincoln, ch. 10; Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 96-126, Foner, Fiery Trial, ch. 6
Group B Essay due: What made Lincoln such a great writer? You may read ahead in the Johnson book to find additional letters to substantiate your argument. You may also use any writings by Lincoln in his “Collected Works,” which can be found online at http://www.hti.umich.edu/l/lincoln or in the stacks of Gelman at E 457.91 1953.

OCTOBER 23: Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief, Part One (185)
Donald, Lincoln, chs. 11-12; McPherson, Tried By War, chs. 1-5

OCTOBER 30: Lincoln and Emancipation (235)
Donald, Lincoln, chs. 13-16; Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 179-219; Foner, Fiery Trial, chs. 7-8
Group A Essay due: To what extent did Lincoln’s views on race and African Americans change from 1854 to the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation? Be sure to cite both his words and his actions in your answer.

NOVEMBER 6: Lincoln as Commander, Part Two (130)
McPherson, Tried By War, chs. 6-10
Group B Essay due: Rate Lincoln as a military leader.

NOVEMBER 13: The Gettysburg Address and Lincoln’s Re-election (155)
Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, pp. 19-175
NOVEMBER 20: A Psychohistory of Lincoln (230)
Strozier, *Lincoln’s Quest for Union*, pp. 3-233
Groups A and B Essays due: How useful is psychohistory for understanding the life of Abraham Lincoln?

DECEMBER 4: Lincoln’s Reconstruction Plans, End of the War, Assassination, Legacy (180)

**ELEMENTS OF STYLE FOR HISTORY PAPERS**

**TITLE PAGE:** Every paper should have a title and page numbers.

**INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION**
Be sure your introduction explain your thesis and its significance. The introduction should not give specific evidence to support your thesis. This section should NOT, in any form, say “this paper will....”

Be sure to have a conclusion that sums up your findings. It should NOT begin with “In conclusion,....” But the conclusion must do more than simply repeat the contents of the paper. It should also say something about the bigger picture to which the paper relates. So if the paper is about Grant and Lee, the conclusion should both remind the reader which one you think was the better general and why, but also make some observation about what this tells us more broadly about the Civil War or its outcome. Such broad conclusions make for a more satisfying and impressive ending for the reader. Also, the conclusion should not end abruptly—the last sentence should read like a last sentence.

**ORGANIZING YOUR PAPER**
There should be an organizational logic to all your papers.

Do not use subheadings for your paper. Students who use subheadings tend to put no effort into transitions, which are the hardest (yet most important) part of writing a history paper. You must come up with effective transitions from one part of the paper to the next and from paragraph to paragraph. Be sure there is a logic to the order of your paragraphs.

Do not write one or two sentence paragraphs. And you should rarely use three sentence paragraphs.

**EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS**
Check the original source whenever possible, especially on matters central to your topic; quote primary sources whenever possible. Quote other scholars very sparingly.

Be sophisticated, not simplistic.
Use precise phrasing, not colloquialisms.

**STYLE IMPERATIVES**
1) Vary word choice. Do not use the same important verbs or nouns more than once in a sentence or in consecutive sentences.
2) Vary sentence length and structure to make your writing more interesting
3) Use past tense in history papers. If you must switch between past and present tense, BE SURE TO BE CONSISTENT.
4) Do not connect what ought to be two sentences with a comma (known as “comma splices”) or with a comma followed by “however.”
5) Try to avoid writing “the fact that…”
6) Do not use “this” as a pronoun. “This” should always be followed by a noun or adjective. Be sure that your pronoun references: “it,” “they,” etc., are clear.
7) Do not use contractions (weren’t, can’t, don’t) in formal papers. Do not use abbreviations in formal papers. Exceptions can be made only for terms USUALLY abbreviated, such as NATO or U.N., which should be written out the first time they are used but can be abbreviated thereafter.
8) Ship names and the names of books and newspapers must be in italics, NOT quotation marks.
9) Semicolons and colons should be used VERY, VERY rarely.

QUOTATIONS
Try when possible to avoid using block quotations. Do not use block quotations unless the quotation is more than two sentences long. Single-space block quotations.

Only use ellipses (…) in the middle of a quotation, not at the beginning or the end.

Punctuation goes inside quotation marks and before footnote notations, even if there is not punctuation mark in the original source. This is correct: “I live in the United States.”¹ These are incorrect: “I live in the United States.”¹ Also incorrect: “I live in the United States’.¹

Make sure you have smooth transitions from your own words to quotations. You should almost never use a comma before a quotation, and almost never use a colon. Only use a comma before a quotation if it is necessary grammatically.

Correct:
“The landlady of Almacks's thrives,” Dickens declared, describing her as “a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

Dickens wrote that “the landlady of Almacks's thrives…. [She is] a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

Dickens wrote: “The landlady of Almack's thrives…. [She is] a buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours.”

The streets of the Lower East Side, Howe notes, were “lined with an endless array of pushcarts and peddlers selling every variety of product imaginable.”

Incorrect:
Dickens wrote, “the landlady of Almack's thrives…”

Dickens wrote “The landlady of Almack's thrives…”

Dickens wrote about Almack’s very vividly, “The landlady of Almack’s thrives…”

Howe says that Lower East Side streets were, “lined with an endless array of pushcarts and peddlers selling every variety of product imaginable.”