

SYLLABUS: THE LINCOLN ASSASSINATION
FALL SEMESTER 2022

NO	DATE	SUBJECT MATTER
1		Why Was Lincoln Assassinated? The Dahlgren Raid of 1864 and the plot to assassinate Jefferson Davis. Col Ulric Dahlgren was part of Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick's cavalry raid on Richmond. Dahlgren, son of Admiral John Dahlgren was killed in action and papers recovered from his body and published in the Richmond newspapers detailed a plot to kill Jefferson Davis. The Orthodox story of the conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln: <i>The Hunt for John Wilkes Booth</i> a 2007 History Channel special relates the orthodox story of the conspiracy to kill Lincoln, Vice President Johnson and Secretary Seward.
2		The Plots to Kidnap President Lincoln. The orthodox story fails to tell a complete story of the significant plots to kidnap or to kill President Lincoln, involving two different groups of conspirators, the Booth group and another group generally unknown today. A plot contemporaneous with the Booth assassination plot was orchestrated from Richmond. A demolition expert was to be smuggled into Washington to blow up the East Room of the White House when the President and the cabinet were attending a reception. At the last minute, the plot was foiled. Did that failure precipitate Booth's assassination plot? <i>Unsolved Mysteries Part I</i> special on the Assassination Plots
3		The strange story of David George a/k/a John St. Helen a/k/a Booth An elderly man named David George committed suicide in a hotel room in Enid, Oklahoma in 1903. A quarter century earlier in Granbury, Texas, a man named John St. Helen had confessed that he was John Wilkes Booth. His confession was heard by Finis L. Bates, who eventually became the Attorney General of Tennessee. Bates took the train to Enid and identified David George as one and the same person as John St. Helen. Was the deceased really John Wilkes Booth? <i>David George & Enid Oklahoma Video</i> .
4		Booth's accomplices: The back story of David Herold, Lewis Powell a/k/a Lewis Paine, George Atzerodt, Mary Surratt, John Surratt, Samuel Arnold and Michael McLaughlin.
5		Conspiracy Theorists: Otto Eisenschimmel. In 1938 chemist Eisenschimmel published <i>Why was Lincoln Shot?</i> This book put forth a controversial theory

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that Lincoln's assassination involved Secretary of War Stanton and the members of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. The Eisenschimmel theory led to the production of a 1977 movie painting Stanton as a monster. Does the Eisenschimmel theory hold water? Why does it not go away? *The Lincoln Conspiracy*

- 6 Innocence Theorists: The Judicial Murder of Mary Surratt. Was Mary Surratt one of the conspirators? Why did the conspirators meet at her boarding house? What did she know about the kidnap plot and the assassination plot? Was she guilty of murder?
- 7 The Strange Case of Dr. Samuel Mudd. Samuel Mudd protested that he was not involved in the assassination plot. Mudd knew Booth but told authorities he did not recognize the stranger who appeared at his door at 4 A.M. the morning after the assassination, even though Mudd had met Booth on three different occasions and Booth had stayed overnight at Mudd's house.
- 8 The Other Conspirators: Louis Weichmann was a government witness, was he also one of the conspirators? Thomas Jones published his memoirs in 1877 implicating himself and four other pro-Confederates as accessories after the fact. John Singleton Mosby furnished Lewis Powell to the Booth conspiracy and his men escorted the demolition expert to the outskirts of Washington--and what about John Surratt?
- 9 The Trial of the Conspirators by Military Commission: Some of the conspirators and the men who aided and abetted Booth's escape were tried by a military commission in May-June 1865. Were the conspirators given a fair trial? Why were four conspirators executed within a few days after the commission announced its verdict? Did President Johnson see the plea for clemency for Mary Surratt?
- 10 *The Conspirator* Part I. The best movie on the assassination and the trial of the conspirators. The movie focuses on Mary Surratt and her defense team, Frederick Aiken and Reverdy Johnson.
- 11 *The Conspirator* Part II Continuation of the movie followed by discussion of the assassination plots and why the truth about the assassination of Lincoln is important to today's world.