

---

11-18-2021

## Battlefield Lessons Bring Civil War to Life

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news\\_releases](https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/news_releases)



Part of the [Organizational Communication Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

---

This News Release is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@cedarville.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@cedarville.edu).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 18, 2021**

**CONTACT:** Mark D. Weinstein  
Executive Director of Public Relations  
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)  
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)  
[Mweinstein@cedarville.edu](mailto:Mweinstein@cedarville.edu)  
[@cedarvilleneews](#)

## **Battlefield Lessons Bring Civil War to Life**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- “Now turn and walk up this sunken road and imagine never setting foot on the ground because of how many of your comrades’ bodies had fallen.” Dr. Kevin Sims, senior professor of political science at Cedarville University, shared the scene from a different era as he directed his students along the infamous Sunken Road that was part of the Battle of Antietam in Maryland.

The experience was sobering and chilling. “It was a ‘whoa’ moment for my students,” Sims explained. “You feel overwhelmed with emotion as you realize that Americans died here in droves, killing each other wholesale.”

“I’m never going to forget this place,” a student told him on their way back to the van.

This moment, among many other noteworthy ones, came as a product of Sims’ field trip to historic battlefields with his Civil War and Reconstruction class. Together, Sims and nine students traveled between Maryland and Pennsylvania in late October.

Sims and his students first stopped in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, visiting the national cemetery where Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg Address and touring the cemetery with an expert ranger. Additionally, they traveled to Maryland to view key sights from the Battle of Antietam, often referred to as the bloodiest single day in American history.

“My students really appreciated being on the battlefield because it gave them perspective,” Sims said. “Rather than just talking about Gettysburg and saying, ‘They marched across a big field,’ my students saw the long wheat field that Confederates charged across. They looked up at the stone wall where the Union soldiers were shooting from.”

This is the first year that Sims has taken his students on a trip to the battlefields, though he’s taught his Civil War and Reconstruction course for more than 3 1/2 decades.

“I’ve been to dozens of battlefields with my wife, Cheryl, and I’ve always wanted to take my students to see the locations we’re learning about,” Sims said. “This year, I finally decided to, and they haven’t stopped talking about it.”

As they return to the classroom, Sims is grateful for how the field trip experience will inform and engage students in lectures.

“We hadn’t talked about Antietam or Gettysburg before the trip, so I’m excited to get to begin those lectures with, ‘as you recall ...’” Sims noted. “I think about the Sunken Road — how so many wagons made it a natural depression, how it was an ideal defensive position for the Confederates — and am grateful that my students were actually able to see and understand its role in Antietam.”

Sims plans to continue the trip every fall semester of odd years when his Civil War and Reconstruction course is offered.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit [cedarville.edu](https://cedarville.edu).

Written by Heidie Raine