

ANG 2322 War, Literature, and the Arts (Hiver 2012)

Instructor: Professor Heike Härting

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Class: Thursday 1 pm to 4 pm

Office Hours: Thursday 12 noon to 1 pm

Wednesday 12 noon to 1 pm

or by appointment

Course Description:

This course examines the aesthetics and politics of representing war in fiction, drama, and film. We will explore the various contradictions that reside in the representation and cultural consumption of violence and war. This course will introduce students to a number of theories of war, including primordialist explanations of war, just war theories, psychoanalytical, anti-colonial, and humanitarian conceptions of war. We will pay specific attention to the ways in which narratives and images of war legitimize war and are embedded in larger discourses of national sovereignty, patriotism, authenticity, courage, and sacrifice. At the same time, literary and cinematic narratives of war are not always steeped in propaganda but may also develop pacifist and 'de-legitimizing' representations of war. In this context, we will look at both gender specific and ethnically or politically marginalized accounts of war and occupation. This course then examines a wide range of literary and non-literary texts to understand the role culture plays in legitimizing and de-legitimizing popular narratives of war, ranging from Shakespeare's *Henry V* to Michael Winterbottom's docu-fiction *The Road to Guantanamo Bay*. Students will learn to recognize particular patterns of representing war, including the preponderance of authenticity, immediacy, truth, and experience, and question their cultural and ideological effect and value. We will ask to what extent cultural representations of war may help to intervene into war, rewrite its traumatic effects, and help us construct a sense of self that both takes account of the continuities between physical and symbolic violence and questions its claim to individual sovereignty. This course relies on the students' willingness and ability to engage in close readings, undertake research at the library, and study theoretical texts in conjunction with literary and cinematic explorations.

Texts:

Shakespeare, William. *Henry V* (1599).

Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895).

West, Rebecca. *The Return of the Soldier*. (1918).

Boyden, Joseph. *Three Day Road*. (2005).

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. (1947)

Dongala, Emmanuel *Johnny Mad Dog* (2005)

Films:

Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*. 1989

Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. (1959)

Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*. (1965)

Werner Herzog's *Lessons from Darkness* (1992)

Michael Winterbottom's *The Road to Guantanamo Bay* (2006)

Course Reader (Available ON RESERVE at the library):

Includes critical essays and Hannah Arendt, Thomas Hobbes, Rosa Luxemburg, Zygmunt Bauman, Sigmund Freud, Claire Bishop, Carl von Clausewitz, Walter Benjamin, Jacques Rancière, Jane Gaines, Thomas Hobbes, Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman, Frantz Fanon, Paul Gilroy, June Jordan, Susan Buck-Morss, and Evelyn Cobley.

Assignments:

A. Short Essay – Critical Report (3-4 pages, double-spaced, Times 12)	15%
B. Long Essay (6-8 pages, double-spaced, Times 12)	30%
C. Midterm Exam	20%
D. Final Exam	35%

Essays

In this class you are required to write two short essays. The first essay can be a critical analysis of contemporary war reportage or any text or film of your choice. The second essay has to deal with novel and film we discussed in class and use some of the assigned critical material to frame your argument. In addition, you need to undertake research and add at least 7 sources of your own choice (five of them need to be printed sources). You will be given topics for your second essay. Your arguments will be most effective if they are organized around the discussion of a few key passages, images, or aspects of a character. Your discussion should foreground the relevance of your chosen key passages and suggest how and to what end these passages engage in particular politics of representing war. Make sure that the thematic foci of your essays address the relationship between literature and war, or the ways in which literary and/or cinematic representations of war construct, criticize, and reimagine the various effects of war.

Your finished essays will be graded on structure, grammar, spelling, logic of argument and presentation, and writing style. All essays must stay within the limits of the prescribed length of the assignment. They must be double-spaced, printed in Times 12, include a Works Cited list, and adhere to the MLA documentation style.

Exams

For your exams you will have to write two short essays and answer brief questions about the concepts and materials we discussed in class. More information will be given in class.

Important Policies

Policy on Late Assignments: If students hand in assignments late, they have to see Mme St-Onge to fill out a form and present documentation explaining why an assignment was handed in late.

Plagiarism will result in an F (0 %) for the plagiarized assignment. Moreover, a report on the student who committed plagiarism will be sent to the Dean. Instructions to avoid

plagiarism will be handed out at the beginning of class.

Tentative Reading Schedule*

05.01. Introduction

12.01. How to Stage a War: Movie: Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, Claus von Clausewitz, Jacques Rancière (**Course Reader**)

19.01. The Visible and the Invisible: War Propaganda and Problems of Representation in Shakespeare's *Henry V*

26.01. War and Nation Formation: Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

Reading: Evelyn Cobley, Rosa Luxemburg (**Course Reader**)

02.02. The Psychology of War: Class, Shell Shock, and Imperialism

Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*

Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontent* (excerpts) (**Course Reader**)

09.02. Anti-colonial Wars, Violence, Realism and Trauma

Gillo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers*

Reading: Frantz Fanon's "Concerning Violence" (**Course Reader**)

16.02. Indigenous Recalibrations: World War I and the Windigo Spirit

Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*

Reading: Hannah Arendt (**Course Reader**)

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY I

23.02. Authenticity and the Uncertainty of Genre—Fiction, Propaganda, or Documentary?

Excerpts from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1934) and Werner Herzog's *Lessons in Darkness* (1992)

Reading: Jane Gaines, Walter Benjamin (**Course Reader**)

01.03. Midterm Exam

08.03. Reading Break

15.03. War, Holocaust, Survivor Narratives

Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*

Reading: Zygmunt Bauman (**Course Reader**)

22.03. Levi Continued: Trauma and Testimony

Renais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour*

Reading: Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman (**Course Reader**)

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY II

29.03. **Armoured Cosmopolitanism or Humane Warfare**

Emmanuel Dongala's *Johnny Mad Dog*

Reading: Paul Gilroy (**Course Reader**)

06. 04. **The War Against Terror or the Terror of Representation: Docu-Fiction**

Michael Winterbottom's *The Road to Guantanamo Bay*

Reading: June Jordan; Bishop, Claire. "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." *October* 110 (2004): 51-79; Buck-Morss, Susan. "Visual Studies and Global Imagination." *Papers of Surrealism 2* (2004): 1-29. (**Course Reader**)

13.04. Final Exam

*The Tentative Reading Schedule is subject to change according to students' participation in and pace of the class. We will finalize our reading schedule during the first week of the term.