



## War and Politics on Film

Political Science 222  
The College of Wooster

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Office Hours:  
MT 3:00-4:00 pm,  
or by appointment

### Course Description

“War” and “Politics” may be inextricably linked in international relations, and some experts believe that we cannot truly understand one without the other. This course is designed to explore classic and contemporary issues in international security through the media of film, literature, and scholarly works. We will address the moral and material complexities of conflict, as well as the implications of political violence and conflicts for contemporary security. Key sections of the class examine the origins of war, international terrorism, the soldier’s journey, civil-military relations, questions of heroism and glory, the global War on Terror, and security in the modern era. This course will employ different media to place theories in a meaningful context, and it will prompt us to examine our own assumptions about historical narratives of peace and security.

### Course Objectives

This is an advanced class. Students should have had prior coursework in the discipline or related areas of study. Educational objectives for this class include:

- to analyze prominent theories of international security and conflict studies;
- to explore critical questions regarding the root causes of war and peace;
- to critically examine filmic representations of war and peace, and to make connections between theories and depiction of themes in feature films, documentaries, and events;
- to understand how artists craft and use films to achieve objectives;
- to critically analyze how and why we memorialize wars;
- to strengthen research, writing, and analytical skills;

### Required Texts

- Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Ninth Edition, Pearson Publishers, 2015, ISBN: 978-0-321-96524-0
- Chris Hedges, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, Public Affairs (Perseus Book Group), 2014 [2002], ISBN: 978-1-61039-359-1
- Readings on Electronic Reserve:  
URL: [http://libguides.wooster.edu/er.php?course\\_id=12048](http://libguides.wooster.edu/er.php?course_id=12048)  
Password: warandpeace

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend class and participate actively in seminar discussions. They will complete a number of assignments, including response papers, group discussion exercises, a war and remembrance paper, a critical essay on heroism, a book review, and midterm and final examinations. Assignments will be weighted in the following manner:

Comprehensive Participation	15%	Response Papers	20%
Midterm Exam	15%	Essay on Heroism	15%
War and Remembrance Paper	15%	Take-Home Final Exam	20%

## Content Warning

A class on warfare forces us to confront intense and, at times, unsettling violence. Indeed, many modules in this class will deal with violence and a negative view of humanity. Film and literary content is designed for mature audiences; some may find this material uncomfortable. In addition, films may include objectionable and disturbing language, including bigotry and racism that might be associated with the period of focus. That said, please note that all material for this course has been carefully selected for its pedagogical and/or historical value. While I always try to forewarn students of filmic content, *please consider carefully whether this is the type of course material you are prepared for, and share any concerns or questions that you may have as soon as possible.*

## Comprehensive Participation and Professionalism

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, prepare course material in advance, and participate actively in class discussions. Indeed, a large portion of your participation and professionalism grade will be anchored in work *in class*. Readings must be completed by the class session for which they are assigned. Students should be prepared to take notes during film showings and are expected to make conceptual linkages between film content, theoretical frameworks, and class readings. This evaluation is also based on student engagement in *group discussions*, a regular feature of this class. Students who are engaged and employ a high degree of professionalism (i.e., balancing quantity *and* quality of engagement) will receive high marks for this portion of the total grade (15%). Simply attending the course regularly without active participation will result in a loss of participation points. *Because this class meets only one time a week, two or more absences may result in failure of the course.*

## Response Papers

Students will complete response papers that reflect on and critically analyze theoretical foundations, films, and readings. Typically, these papers will include a brief synopsis of a film clip viewed in class as well as a critical analysis of a topic related to class readings. Each paper should be 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages and apply careful and consistent source citation methods. Together, the response papers are worth 20% of the final grade, and more information on each assignment will be presented in class.

## War and Remembrance Paper

How we *remember* war and peace is vital for any nation's cultural narrative. This assignment tasks you to research a war or peace memorial that you find particularly compelling, and detail the history of the memorial and interpretive meanings. You must do two things for this paper: 1) Print out a color picture of the memorial and bring it with you to class; 2) Develop a paper that examines the following themes about the memorial: What is the memorial? What is the visual signature or design of the memorial? What conflict or peace event does it commemorate? What is the history of the development of the memorial (i.e., Who proposed it? Was it controversial? Were design issues a critical factor?). Finally, what is your interpretation of the memorial in relation to theories and cases we have reviewed in class (i.e., What themes or theories does it illustrate, struggles does it unveil, etc.). This paper should be 3-4 typed, double spaced pages, and should apply careful and consistent source citations methods. The assignment is worth 15% of the course grade.

## Critical Essay on Heroism on Film

What is "heroism"? What does it mean for an actor or an action to be described as heroic? Develop a critical film essay in which you critically examine a film and its depiction of heroism. Be sure to ground your essay, in substantive terms, on themes in Allison and Goethals, *Heroes*, Chapter 1, "Heroes: Who They Are and What They Do," and structure the essay according to guidelines in Corrigan's *Short Guide to Writing About Film*, in which you examine a film and its depiction of heroism. Explore ways in which scenes do, or do not, exhibit heroism according to your definition. Your critical essay must include a thesis and supporting illustrations to develop it, as well as demonstrate that you have internalized Corrigan's interpretation of film analysis. Critical and creative applications to the topic are encouraged, but be sure to anchor your analysis in broader themes and literature from the class. *One caveat: the film selected may not be one viewed in its entirety in this class.* This paper should be 4-5 typed, double spaced pages, and should apply careful and consistent source citations methods. Worth 15% of the course grade.

## Resources

### *The Learning Center*

The Learning Center, which is located in APEX (Gault Library), offers a variety of academic support services, programs and 1:1 meetings available to all students. Popular areas of support include time management techniques, class preparation tips and test taking strategies. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment at the APEX front desk.

The Learning Center also coordinates accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students should contact Amber Larson, Director of the Learning Center (ext. 2595; [alarson@wooster.edu](mailto:alarson@wooster.edu)), to make arrangements for securing appropriate accommodations. Although the Learning Center will notify professors of students with documented disabilities and the approved accommodations, it is the responsibility of the students to speak with professors during the first week of each semester. If a student does not request accommodations or does not provide documentation well in advance of assignments or deadlines, instructors are under no obligation to provide accommodations.

## *The Writing Center*

The Writing Center, located in Andrews Library, is available for students who wish to have experienced writers and teachers of writing assist them with all facets of the writing process. Students can schedule appointments at the Center or seek assistance on a walk-in basis. The Center is staffed with professional consultants and trained peer tutors.

## **Academic Integrity**

This class will operate on a set of expectations consistent with the College's Code of Academic Integrity, The Wooster Ethic, and the Code of Social Responsibility, outlined in *The Scot's Key* and the *Handbook of Selected College Policies* (<https://www.wooster.edu/offices/dean-of-students/files/scotskey.pdf>). The Codes and guidelines form an essential part of the intellectual contract between the student and the College.

Cheating in any of your academic work is a serious breach of the Code of Academic Integrity and is grounds for an "F" for the entire course. Such violations include turning in another person's work as your own, copying or paraphrasing from any source without proper citation, fabricating excuses and lying in connection with your academic work. You will be held responsible for your own actions. If you are unsure as to what is permissible, always consult with your course instructor.

## **Grading Scale**

As stated in The College of Wooster *Catalogue*, letter grades are defined as:

"A range"	indicates an outstanding performance in which there has been distinguished achievement in all phases of the course;
"B range"	indicates a good performance in which there has been a high level of achievement in some phases of the course;
"C range"	indicates an adequate performance in which a basic understanding of the subject has been demonstrated;
"D range"	indicates a minimal performance in which despite recognizable deficiencies there is enough to merit credit;
"F or NC"	indicates unsatisfactory performance.

## **Course Expectations**

1. Please read the assigned materials before class meeting; they provide the basis for class discussions.
2. Turn off all cellphones and personal electronic devices before class as a courtesy to others. If you bring a laptop computer to class, it should be used for note-taking only.
3. Papers should be submitted in hard copy unless otherwise instructed.
4. Late papers lose half a grade level for each day they are late.

## Course Outline

### Week 1. War, Peace, and Politics (Tuesday, January 14)

Chris Hedges, "Introduction," *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, 2002, pp.1-17

Stephen M. Walt, "Is America Addicted to War?" *Foreign Policy*, April 2014, pp.all (e-reserve)

Timothy Corrigan, "Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing," Chapters 1-2, in *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Ninth Edition, 2015, pp.1-37

\* *Films and Film Clips: Three Kings (1999); CNN Coverage: "President Trump Announces ISIS Leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is Dead" (2019); Patton (1970)*

### Week 2. War Film Boot Camp: International Relations and Film Study (January 21)

Chris Hedges, Chapter 1, "The Myth of War," *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, 2002, pp.19-42

Timothy Corrigan, "Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing," Chapter 3, pp.38-85

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Political Realism in International Relations," April 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/realism-intl-relations>, pp.1-21 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Martin Scorsese NEH Jefferson Lecture (2013); Green Berets (1968); The Dark Knight (2008); 1917 (2019)*

\* *Response Paper 1: America and War, Due in Class, January 21, 7:00 pm*

### Week 3. Why War? Classic Explanations of the Origins of International Conflict (January 28)

Joseph S. Nye and David A. Welch, "Explaining Conflict and Cooperation: Tools and Techniques of the Trade," Chapter 2 in *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*, Ninth Edition, 2017, pp.39-80 (e-reserve)

Michael Sheehan, "The Evolution of Modern Warfare," Chapter 2 in *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, edited by John Baylis, James Wirtz, Colin S. Gray, and Eliot Cohen, 2014, pp.43-65 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: 300 (2006); Marx Brothers' Duck Soup (1933); Canadian Bacon (1995); Henry V (1989); Why We Fight, Series (1943)*

**Week 4: Critical Remembrance: How We Memorialize War (February 4)**

Paul A. Shackel, Introduction and Chapter 7: “The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial: Redefining the Role of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry,” in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, 2001, pp.1-13 and 141-157

Jerome DeGroot, “Monuments to the Past,” *History Today*, August 17, 2017, pp.all (e-reserve)

Taylor Dolven, “The College Named for Robert E. Lee Has No Plans to Change It,” *ViceNews.com*, August 22, 2017, pp.all (e-reserve)

*Films and Film Clips: Glory (1989); Charlottesville Clashes over Robert E. Lee Statue (2017)*

**Week 5. The Evolution of Modern Warfare (February 11)**

Timothy Corrigan, “Style and Structure in Writing,” Chapter 5, pp.112-130

Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, 1994, Select chapters, pp.19-26, 166-177, and 196-224 (e-reserve)

Ernest Giglio, “Picturing Vietnam on Film,” Chapter 9 in *Here’s Looking at You: Hollywood, Film, and Politics*, 2007, pp.201-220 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Saving Private Ryan (1998); Band of Brothers, Ep. #2 (2001); Vietnam War: A Day in Vietnam (1967); The Tet Offensive (1968); The Day the 1960s Died (2015)*

\* *War and Remembrance Paper, Due in Class, Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 pm*

## **Week 6. Who Goes to War, and Why? (February 18)**

Chris Hedges, Chapter 4, “The Seduction of Battle and the Perversion of War,” pp.83-121

Amy Lutz, Who Joins the Military?: A Look at Race, Class, and Immigration Status,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, vol.36, no.2 (2008), pp.167-188 (e-reserve)

Structured Debate Packet: Adrian R. Lewis, “Conscription, the Republic, and America’s Future,” *Army Records Review*, 2009; William L. Houser and Jerome Slater, “The Call-Up: Conscription, Again,” Glenn P. Hastedt, ed., *Annual Editions: American Foreign Policy 2013/2014*, pp.126-129 (e-reserve)

National Committee on Selective Service: Interim Report—Military, National, and Public Service, January 2019, pp.1-3 (e-reserve)

\* *Film and Film Clips: Where Soldiers Come From (2011); Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004)*

\* *Structured Debate: Do We Need a Military Draft?*

## **Week 7. Eros and Thanatos? Idealism versus Realism (February 25)**

Chris Hedges, Chapter 5, “The Hijacking and Recovery of Memory,” pp.122-141

Thomas Hobbes, “The State of Nature and the State of War,” in Richard K. Betts, ed., *Conflict After the Cold War*, 2008, pp.66-69 (e-reserve)

J. Ann Tickner, “Men, Women, and War,” Chapter 2 in *Gender and International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*, 1992, pp.252-263 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: The Hunger Games (2012); Pray the Devil Back to Hell: Women, War, and Peace Documentary (2011)*

### **Week 8. Rebellions and Civil Wars (March 3)**

Chris Hedges, Chapter 2, "The Plague of Nationalism," pp.43-61

Karl DeRouen, Jr., *An Introduction to Civil Wars*, Sage/CQ Press, 2016, Chapter 1, pp.1-29 (e-reserve)

Michael A. Allen, "Understanding Civil War through Star Wars," in Michael A. Allen and Justin S. Vaughn, eds., *Poli Sci Fi*, Routledge, 2016, pp.184-195 (e-reserve)

Max Fisher, "Straightforward Answers to Basic Questions about Syria's War," *New York Times*, September 18, 2016, pp.1-8 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Battle of Algiers (1966); Star Wars: A New Hope (1977); The Arab Awakening: End of a Dictator (2011); White Helmets (2016);*

\* *Take-Home Midterm Exam Distributed; Due Back on Wednesday, March 25th*

### **Spring Break+**

\* *No class Tuesday, March 24; Professor Lantis is out of town for a professional conference.*

### **Week 9. Extremism in the Defense of Liberty? (March 31)**

Timothy Corrigan, "Researching the Movies," Chapter 6, pp.131-160

Cynthia C. Combs, "Criminals or Crusaders? Profile of a Terrorist," Chapter 4 in Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, 2013, pp.54-83 (e-reserve)

"Can Terrorism Ever Be Justified?" Structured Debate, in Stuart Gottlieb, ed., *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Conflicting Perspectives on Causes, Contexts, and Responses*, 2010, pp.67-99 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Waltz with Bashir (2008); Paradise Now (2005); Munich (2006)*



## **Week 10. Hold Still! An Exploration of War Photography and Meaning (April 7)**

Hedges, Chapter 7, “Eros and Thanatos,” pp.157-185

Michael Griffin, “Media Images of War,” *Media, War & Conflict* 3:1 (2010), pp.7-41 (e-reserve)

Michael Kamber and Tim Arango, “4,000 U.S. Deaths, and a Handful of Images,” *New York Times*, July 26, 2008, p.A1 (e-reserve)

Michael Kimmelman, “How the World Closed Its Eyes to Syria’s Horror,” *New York Times*, December 14, 2016, p.A1 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Nanook of the North (1922); Documentary: Which Way is the Front Line from Here? (2013)*

\* *Response Paper 2: Extremism in Defense of Liberty? Due in Class, Tuesday, April 7, at 7:00 pm*

## **Week 11. September 11, 2001 (April 14)**

Stephen Prince, Chapter 2 “Shadows Once Removed” in *Firestorm: American Film in the Age of Terrorism*, 2009, pp.71-123 (e-reserve)

Scott Allison and George R. Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do and Why We Need Them*, 2011, Chapter 1, pp.21-52 (e-reserve)

Dave Saunders, Chapter 1: The ‘D’ Word: Definitions, Obligations, and Functions” in *Documentary: Routledge Film Guidebooks Series*, 2010, pp.11-32 (e-reserve)

*Films and Film Clips: 9/11 (2002); PBS Frontline: Campaign Against Terror (2002)*

\* *Response Paper 3: War Photography, Due in Class, Tuesday, April 14, at 7:00 pm*

**Week 12. Coming Home: Assessing the Costs of Modern War (April 21)**

Hannah Fischer, “A Guide to U.S. Military Casualty Statistics” for Contemporary Operations, *Congressional Research Service Report RS22452*, August 7, 2015, pp.1-7 (e-reserve)

Nancy Sherman, “Body and Body Parts,” Chapter 8 in *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of our Soldiers*, 2010, pp.195-212 (e-reserve)

Sebastian Junger, “How PTSD Became a Problem Far Beyond the Battlefield,” *Vanity Fair*, May 7, 2015, pp.1-11 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: Alive Day Memories (2007); Wartorn: 1861-2010 (2010)*

**Week 13. The End of War? Recovery and the Future of Peace and Security (April 28)**

Susan L. Carruthers, “No One’s Looking: The Disappearing Audience for War,” *Media, War & Conflict*, vol.1, no.1 (2008), pp.70-76 (e-reserve)

Sebastian Junger, “Why Would Anyone Miss War?” *New York Times*, July 16, 2011, pp.1-3 (e-reserve)

\* *Films and Film Clips: The Hurt Locker (2009); American Sniper (2014); 1917 (2019)*

\* *Critical Essay on Heroism and Film, Due in Class, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm*

\* *Take-Home Final Examination*