

History 2980: The History of Human Conflict
 Senior Course (6 Credits)
 Grande Prairie Regional College
 Fall 1995-Winter 1996

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Introduction:

This course introduces students to the history of humanity's least attractive but one of its most persistent and consequential activities. Through lectures and media presentations, the class will trace the conduct of war from early days to the present. Interwoven with these topics will be special studies of the legacy of the Second World War, the effects of war on the societies involved, the rise of revolutionary warfare, and the growth of terrorism and low-intensity conflict as a way of life at the end of the twentieth century. Students will write two brief critical essays and a Christmas test, a brief research paper in the winter term and the final examination. A new feature of this course is its structured electives, allowing students to specialize in one area of conflict studies in which they have a special interest.

Texts:

Dyer, Gwynne. War. Stoddart, 1992.
 Annual Editions. Violence and Terrorism. Annual Editions, 1993.
 O'Connell, Robert. Of Arms and Men. Oxford, 1990.
 R.A.C. Parker, Struggle for Survival, Oxford, 1990.
 Stoessinger, J. Why Nations Go To War. St. Martin's, 1993.
 Keegan, John. The Battle For History, Vintage, 1995.
 Keegan, John. A History of Warfare, Vintage, 1994.
 Bercuson and Wise, The Valour and the Horror Revisited. McGill-Queen's, 1994.
 Paret, Peter (ed.). Makers of Modern Strategy. Princeton, 1986.

Optional:

Jones, Archer. The Art of War in the Western World. Oxford, 1989.

Term One Outline:

Week One -- Getting Started:

September 7 -Aggression and Violence
 -Tactics and Strategy
 -War and Societies
 READ: O'Connell, Chapters 1-2

Week Two -- The Classical and Medieval Heritage

Sept 12 Greco-Roman traditions
 READ: O'Connell, Chapters 3-5
 Sept 14: Knight and Infantry
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 6

- Week Three -- War in Early Modern Europe
Sept 19 - Mercenaries and Militia
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 7
Sept 21 - War and Society
READ: Paret, Chapter 1; O'Connell, Chapter 8
- Week Four -- The Military Revolution
Sept 26 - Strategy
READ: Paret, Chapter 2
Sept 28 - Society and Government
READ: Paret, Chapter 3
- Week Five -- The Eighteenth Century
Oct 3 - Dynastic Warfare
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 9
Oct 5 - Strategic Developments
READ: Paret, Chapter 4
- Week Six -- Revolutionary War
Oct 10 -The Nation in Arms
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 10
Oct 13 -The Napoleonic Revolution
READ: Paret, Chapter 5
- Week Seven -- Naval Warfare in the Age of Sail
Oct 17 -Technologies and Techniques
Oct 19 -Administration and Efficiency
- Week Eight -- Revolutionary Legacies
Oct 24 -Strategic Thought: Jomini
READ: Paret, Chapters 6
Oct 26 -Clauswitz
READ: Paret, Chapter 7
- Week Nine -- North American Developments
Oct 31 - Guerillas or Grenadiers
READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts I-II and Martin Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage" in Canadian Historical Review, March, 1989 (PERIODICALS -also xerox on RESERVE)
Nov 2 - The Civil War
READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts III-V, O'Connell, Chapter 11 up to page 202
- Week Ten -- European Experiments
Nov 7 - Organizing War Genius
READ: Paret, Chapter 10
Nov 9 - War Plans: Prussia and France
READ: Paret, Chapter 11; O'Connell, Chapter 11, pp. 203-211.

- Week Eleven -- Colonial Wars and Their Legacies
 - Nov 14 - The French Colonial Wars
 - READ: Paret, Chapter 14
 - Nov 16 - British Small Wars

- Week Twelve -- Deadly Spirals
 - Nov 22 -Imaginary War and Military Theory
 - READ: Paret, Chapter 18
 - Nov 24 - Militarism, Democracy and Nationalism
 - READ: O'Connell, Chapter 13

- Week Thirteen -- The Naval Arms Race
 - Nov 28 -The New Strategists
 - READ: Paret, Chapter 16
 - Nov 30 -Dreadnought Mania
 - READ: O'Connell, Chapter 12

- Week Fourteen, December 5, 7: Computer Assisted Instruction Labs
 NBB: 1st Essay Due!!

- Christmas Exam - TBA

Term Two Outline:

- Week One, 1995 -- World Power or Decline?
 - Jan 4 -International Crisis: 1914
 - War Aims and War Guilt
 - READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 1, H.W. Koch, Origins of the First World War, Chapters 1, 8 (RESERVE)

- Week Two -- The Great War: At the Front
 - Jan 9 -Bloodbaths and Breakthroughs
 - Jan 11 -Technologies
 - READ: O'Connell, Chapter 14.

- Week Three -- The Great War: Politicians and Generals
 - Jan 16 -The Allies
 - READ: Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 481-491
 - Jan 18 -Germans and Austrians

- Week Four -- The Great War: Home Fronts
 - Jan 23 - Stress and Strain
 - READ: Marwick, War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century, Chapters 1-3 (RESERVE)
 - Jan 25 - Collapse and Revolution

- Week Five -- The Bitter Armistice
 - Jan 30 - The end of the War
 - Feb 1 - Seeds of the Next
 - READ: Parker, Chapter 1

Week Six -- New Technologies - New Theories

Feb 6 - Armour

READ: Paret, Chapters 20

Feb 8 - Victory Through Air Power

READ: Paret, Chapter 21

Week Seven -- The Second World War: Strategy

Feb 13 - Hitler's War

READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 2, and Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 491-497

Feb 15 - Blitzkrieg

READ: Parker, Chapters 2,3,4

Week Eight -- The Second World War: Land and Sea

Feb 20 - Co-ordinating Allied Strategy

READ: Paret, Chapters 17, pp. 497-509, and 23.

Feb 22 - Sea Power and Combined Operations

READ: Paret Chapter 24, Parker, Chapters 5-8, 12-13

February 26-March 1 -- Winter Break

Week Nine -- Special Classes: Terror From the Air

March 5

READ: Parker, Chapter 10-11; O'Connell, Chapter 15.

March 7

Week Ten -- The Ordeal of Total War

March 12 - War to the Knife

READ: Parker, Chapters 9, 17-18.

March 14 - Under Occupation

READ: Marwick, Chapters 4 and 6 (RESERVE)

Week Eleven -- Nuclear Strategy and The Cold War

March 19 - Using the Bomb: Theory and Speculation

READ: Parker, Chapters 14-16; Paret, Chapter 25
also O'Connell, Chapter 16

March 21 - Armed Peace and its Discontents

READ: Paret, Chapter 26

NOTE: Second Critical Essay Due!

Week Twelve -- Empire and Revolution

March 26 - Revolutionary Warfare

READ: Paret, Chapter 27

March 28 - The Vietnamese Experience

READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 4.

Week Thirteen -- Low-Intensity Conflict

April 2 - Terrorism and Ethnic Resistance

READ: Violence and Terrorism, Chapters 1, 5-7, 11-12, 18, 20, 27-28; 33-34.

April 4 - Counter-Terrorism

READ: Violence, Chaps. 35-38, 44-45, 47, 52-54, 56-58

Week Fourteen -- Conflict at Century's End

April 9 - Future Strategy

READ: Paret, Chapter 28

April 11 - Retrospects and Assessment

READ: Stoessinger, Chapters 6-8.

Final Exam: TBA

Course Format and Philosophy: The course consists of two lecture-discussions each week. The lectures will identify and discuss the most significant events and issues of the week and also serve as guides to the text readings. Discussions with the class will cover the approaches taken by historians to the topics as well as the issues raised by the events covered in each class session. The Christmas test will be short answer in nature, while the examination will include both short answer and essay-type questions. An attendance and participation mark will be given, which measures class appearance and contribution to discussions. ALL essay topics must be approved by me before final submission. Late assignments will be penalized 20% each day they are overdue, UNLESS special permission is secured from me in advance. Any students having difficulty with their assignments or with the course in general are encouraged to see me as soon as possible -- after class, by contacting me in the office or calling me at home (between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. please!) at 539-7764. I am always willing to help in any way I can.

Course Options and Marking Scheme:

The history of human conflict has often been a drum-and-trumpet narrative of great leaders and decisive battles. In the last two generations, however, scholars have adopted a new and wider approach, which sees human conflict as "total history". Thus any and all approaches (from anthropology to film studies) and topics (not just strategy and tactics) can now be employed. This course will introduce some of these new approaches, and encourage you to experiment with and sample the new approaches in conflict history.

Therefore, each student in HI2980 has some choices to make: especially on which aspects of conflict study: Strategic Thought, War and Society, or Operational Studies, they would like to focus their work. Students with a social sciences or arts interests may wish to specialize in War and Society; military history buffs may choose Operational Studies; and philosophically-inclined might wish to pursue Strategic Thought topics. At the beginning of the course, no one should rush to choose until they have taken a few classes and sampled all the texts, including those listed as optional, but in second term, these types of interests are especially helpful for each student to identify for themselves when the research essays come round!

Another special focus this year will include an emphasis on the Second World War from the perspective of one half-century. John Keegan and others have pointed out how the history of World War II is now being entirely refought by scholars and veterans, and the recent controversy in Canada over the CBC series "The Valour and the Horror" shows how wartime conduct controversies are far from over. How much of our history of the war is patriotic myth, and how much of our new interest in the war is unhistorical and even irresponsible sensationalism? How should the history of the most convulsive war in world history be written today? These are all questions which will come up repeatedly in the second term! After reading Keegan's little book on the literature of the war, students will have a chance to assess his criteria for choosing the "best" books and historians on these issues (in an 8-10 page critical paper).

The Essays Explained:

The First term essay is a critical study of three important books on the phenomenon of war itself. You are asked to read the three books (Of Arms and Men, War, and A History of Warfare), assessing their merits and weaknesses as studies of human conflict. As you can see from the outline, Of Arms and Men is to be read throughout the year along with the topics we are studying. I would recommend that you read Gwynne Dyer's War as quickly as you can, finished about the last week of October. Give November over to reading Keegan and writing your essay for submission on the last class of the term. Remember that this is not a narrative or research essay; that is, you must criticize and analyze the books, the thesis each writer advances, and their use of evidence, clarity and power to convince. Therefore, keep notes AS YOU READ! I will give plenty of advice on this paper as the term proceeds.

The Second term critical essay is based on David Bercuson and S. Wise's Valour and Horror..., and Keegan's Battle for History. Here you must critically comment on the problem of how we look back on war, using the studies of World War II made by both world and Canadian historians. Problems of national interpretation, truth and falsehood, propaganda, and historical bias in how conflicts are remembered and taught must be identified and commented on by each student in their paper. Which issues or topics cause the most controversy, and why? If Truth is the first casualty of war itself, what about in writing its history?

Your Research essay is a straightforward, ten-page study of a topic of your own choice, in strategy, operations or war and society. After reading a few articles and books on that topic, the student writes their study of the topic, making their own judgements and interpretations, based on what they learn from the

sources. Nevertheless, such an essay should still have a thesis (for example, Hitler lost the Battle of Britain because he did not make a strategic blunder in bombing London, used the wrong type of airplanes, OR because the British had radar and he did not, etc., rather than a vague "Hitler lost the battle because all these things went wrong"...). Again, please see me to discuss sources and proposals before you write, so that I can assist in finding you sources, etc.

Critical Essay I (eight pages)	10
Critical Essay II	10
Christmas Test (in class)	20
Research Essay (ten pages)	20
Attendance and Participation	10
Examination	30

	100