

History 2980: The History of Human Conflict  
 Senior Course (6 Credits)  
 Grande Prairie Regional College  
 Fall 1996-Winter 1997  
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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.  
 Bercuson and Wise, The Valour and the Horror Revisited. McGill-Queen's, 1994.

Optional:

Paret, Peter (ed.). Makers of Modern Strategy. Princeton, 1986.

Term One Outline:

Week One -- Getting Started:

September 11 -Aggression and Violence  
 -Tactics and Strategy  
 -War and Societies

READ: O'Connell, Chapters 1-2

Week Two -- The Classical and Medieval Heritage

Sept 18 Greco-Roman traditions  
 READ: O'Connell, Chapters 3-5  
 Knight and Infantry

READ: O'Connell, Chapter 6

Week Three -- War in Early Modern Europe

Sept 25 - Mercenaries and Militia  
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 7  
 War and Society

READ: Paret, Chapter 1; O'Connell, Chapter 8

- Week Four -- The Military Revolution  
 Oct 2 - Strategy  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 2  
       Society and Government  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 3
- Week Five -- The Eighteenth Century  
 Oct 9 - Dynastic Warfare  
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 9  
       Strategic Developments  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 4
- Week Six -- Revolutionary War  
 Oct 16 -The Nation in Arms  
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 10  
       The Napoleonic Revolution  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 5
- Week Seven -- Naval Warfare in the Age of Sail  
 Oct 23 -Technologies and Techniques  
       -Administration and Efficiency
- Week Eight -- Revolutionary Legacies  
 Oct 30 -Strategic Thought: Jomini  
 READ: Paret, Chapters 6  
       Clauswitz  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 7
- Week Nine -- North American Developments  
 Nov 6 - 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)  
       The Civil War  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts III-V, O'Connell,  
 Chapter 11 up to page 202
- Week Ten -- European Experiments  
 Nov 13 - Organizing War Genius  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 10  
       War Plans: Prussia and France  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 11; O'Connell, Chapter 11, pp.  
 203-211.
- Week Eleven -- Colonial Wars and Their Legacies  
 Nov 20 - The French Colonial Wars  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 14  
       British Small Wars
- NBB: First Essay Due!

Week Twelve -- Deadly Spirals

Nov 27 -Imaginary War and Military Theory

READ: Paret, Chapter 18

Militarism, Democracy and Nationalism

READ: O'Connell, Chapter 13

Week Thirteen -- The Naval Arms Race

Dec 4 -The New Strategists

READ: Paret, Chapter 16

Dreadnought Mania

READ: O'Connell, Chapter 12

Computer Assisted Instruction Labs TBA

Christmas Exam - TBA

Term Two Outline:

Week One, 1997 -- The Great War: At the Front

Jan 8 -Bloodbaths and Breakthroughs

-Technologies

READ: O'Connell, Chapter 14.

Week Two -- World Power or Decline?

Jan 15 -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 Three -- The Great War: Politicians and Generals

Jan 22 -The Allies

READ: Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 481-491

Germans and Austrians

Week Four -- The Great War: Home Fronts

Jan 29 - Stress and Strain

READ: Marwick, War and Social Change in the

Twentieth Century, Chapters 1-3 (RESERVE)

Collapse and Revolution

Week Five -- The Bitter Armistice

Feb 5 - The end of the War

- 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 12 - Hitler's War  
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 2, and Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 491-497  
 - Blitzkrieg  
 READ: Parker, Chapters 2,3,4
- Week Eight -- The Second World War: Land and Sea  
 Feb 19 - Co-ordinating Allied Strategy  
 READ: Paret, Chapters 17, pp. 497-509, and 23.  
 - Sea Power and Combined Operations  
 READ: Paret Chapter 24, Parker, Chapters 5-8, 12-13
- February 26 -- Winter Break
- Week Nine -- Special Classes: Terror From the Air  
 March 5  
 READ: Parker, Chapter 10-11; O'Connell, Chapter 15.
- Week Ten -- The Ordeal of Total War  
 March 12 - War to the Knife  
 READ: Parker, Chapters 9, 17-18.  
 - Under Occupation  
 READ: Marwick, Chapters 4 and 6 (RESERVE)
- NOTE: Second Essay Due!
- 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  
 - Armed Peace and its Discontents  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 26; Stoessinger, Chaps 3,6.
- Week Twelve -- Empire and Revolution  
 March 26 - Revolutionary Warfare  
 READ: Paret, Chapter 27  
 - 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.  
 - 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  
 - Retrospects and Assessment  
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapters 6-8.

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 books (Of Arms and Men, and War), 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 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.

Marking Scheme:

Critical Essay I	(ten pages)	10
Critical Essay II		10
Christmas Test	(in class)	20
Research Essay	(twelve pages)	20
Attendance and Participation		10
Examination		30
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		100