

History 2980/HIS398: The History of Human Conflict
Senior Course (6 Credits)
Grande Prairie Regional College
Fall 1998-Winter 1999
Instructor: Duff Crerar, Ph.D.

OCT 15 1998

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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 feature of this course is its structured electives, allowing students to specialize in areas of conflict studies in which they have a special interest.

Texts:

Brian Bond, War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970
Dyer, Gwynne. War. Stoddart, 1992.
O'Connell, Robert. Of Arms and Men. Oxford, 1990.
Geoffrey Parker, The Military Revolution, 2nd Ed.
R.A.C. Parker, Struggle for Survival, Oxford, 1990.
Keegan, John. The Battle For History, Vintage, 1995.

Optional (Copies will also be on RESERVE in library):

Paret, Peter (ed.). Makers of Modern Strategy. Princeton, 1986.
Stoessinger, J. Why Nations Go To War. St. Martin's, 1993.

Term One Outline:

Week One -- Getting Started:

September 3 -Aggression and Violence
-Tactics and Strategy
-War and Societies

READ: O'Connell, Chapters 1-2

Week Two -- The Classical and Medieval Heritage

8 Sept: Greco-Roman Armies

READ: O'Connell, Chapters 3-5

10 Sept: Knight and Footman

READ: O'Connell, Chapter 6

- Week Three -- War in Early Modern Europe
15 Sept - Mercenaries and Militia
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 7
17 Sept - War and Society
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 8, also Paret, Chapter 1
- Week Four -- The Military Revolution
22 Sept - Strategy
READ: Paret, Chapter 2; Parker, Chapters 1,6
24 Sept - Society and Government
READ: Paret, Chapter 3; Parker, Chapter 2
- Week Five -- The Eighteenth Century
29 Sept - Dynastic Warfare
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 9; Parker, Chapter 5
1 Oct - Strategic Developments
READ: Paret, Chapter 4
- Week Six -- Revolutionary War
6 Oct -The Nation in Arms
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 10
8 Oct -The Napoleonic Revolution
READ: Paret, Chapter 5
- Week Seven -- Naval Warfare in the Age of Sail
13 Oct -Technologies and Techniques
READ: Parker, Chapter 3
15 Oct -Administration and Efficiency
READ: Duffy, Military Revolution, pp. 49-85 RESERVE
- Week Eight -- Revolutionary Legacies
20 Oct -Strategic Thought: Jomini
READ: Paret, Chapters 6
22 Oct -Clauswitz
READ: Paret, Chapter 7
- Week Nine -- North American Developments
27 Oct - 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)
29 Oct - The Civil War
READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts III-V, O'Connell, Chapter 11 up to page 202
- Week Ten -- European Experiments
3 Nov - Organizing War Genius
READ: Paret, Chapter 10; Bond, Chapter 1.
5 Nov - War Plans: Prussia and France
READ: Paret, Chapter 11; O'Connell, Chapter 11, pp. 203-211.

- Week Eleven -- Colonial Wars and Their Legacies
 10 Nov - The Military Revolution Conquers
 READ: Parker, Chapter 4
 12 Nov - The French and British Colonial Wars
 READ: Paret, Chapter 14
- Week Twelve -- Deadly Spirals
 17 Nov - Imaginary War and Military Theory
 READ: Paret, Chapter 18
 19 Nov - Militarism, Democracy and Nationalism
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 13; Bond, Chapter 2.
- Week Thirteen -- The Naval Arms Race
 24 Nov - The New Strategists
 READ: Paret, Chapter 16
 26 Nov - Dreadnought Mania
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 12
- Week Fourteen, December 1, 3: Computer Assisted Instruction Labs
 Christmas Exam - TBA

Term Two Outline:

- Week One, 1999 -- The Great War: At the Front
 7 Jan - Bloodbaths and Breakthroughs
 -Technologies
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 14; Bond, Chapter 4.
- Week Two -- World Power or Decline?
 12 Jan - International Crisis: 1914
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 1; Bond, Chapter 3
 14 Jan - War Aims and War Guilt
 READ: Koch, Origins of the First World War,
 Chapters 1, 8 (RESERVE)
- Week Three -- The Great War: Politicians and Generals
 19 Jan - The Allies
 READ: Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 481-491
 21 Jan - Germans and Austrians
- Week Four -- The Great War: Home Fronts
 26 Jan - Stress and Strain
 READ: Marwick, War and Social Change in the
 Twentieth Century, Chapters 1-3 (RESERVE)
 28 Jan - Collapse and Revolution

Week Five -- The Bitter Armistice

2 Feb - End of one War/Seeds of the Next
 READ: Bond, Chapter 5; Parker, Chapter 1
 4 Feb - Guns and Butter

NBB: Dyer and O'Connell essay due!

Week Six -- New Technologies - New Theories

9 Feb - Armour
 READ: Paret, Chapters 20
 11 Feb - Victory Through Air Power
 READ: Paret, Chapter 21

Week Seven -- The Second World War: Strategy

16 Feb - Hitler's War
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 2, and Paret, Chapter
 17, pp. 491-497
 18 Feb - Blitzkrieg
 READ: Bond, Chapter 6; Parker, Chapters 2,3,4

February 22-27 -- Winter Break (READ Keegan: Battle for History)

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

2 Mar - Co-ordinating Allied Strategy
 READ: Paret, Chapters 17, pp. 497-509, and 23.
 4 Mar - Sea Power and Combined Operations
 READ: Paret Chapter 24, Parker, Chapters 5-
 8, 12-13

Week Nine -- Special Classes: Terror From the Air

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

Week Ten -- The Ordeal of Total War

16 March - War to the Knife
 READ: Parker, Chapters 9, 17-18.
 18 March - Under Occupation
 READ: Marwick, Chapters 4 and 6 (RESERVE)

Week Eleven -- Nuclear Strategy and The Cold War

23 March - Using the Bomb: Theory and Speculation
 READ: Parker, Chapters 14-16; Paret, Chapter 25
 also O'Connell, Chapter 16
 25 March - Armed Peace and its Discontents
 READ: Paret, Chapter 26; Stoessinger, pp.
 Bond, Chapter 7

NBB: Keegan Review Due!

- Week Twelve -- Empire and Revolution
 30 March - Revolutionary Warfare
 READ: Paret, Chapter 27
 1 April - The Vietnamese Experience
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 4.
- Week Thirteen -- Low-Intensity Conflict
 6 April - Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism?
 8 April - Recent Wars in the East
 READ: Stoessinger, 6-8
- Week Fourteen -- Conflict at Century's End
 13 April - Present wars: limited and otherwise
 READ: Paret, Chapter 28,
 15 April - Does War have a future?
- 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 539-5787. 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. On the final exam, students will have the option to prepare for and answer questions in only two of these three areas, thus cutting down on their study load.

A special focus emphasizes 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 Second term critical essays are studies of important books on the phenomenon of war itself. For the first, 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 after Christmas. Give a week or two over to writing your essay for submission on the due date above. Remember that this is not a narrative or research essay: that is, you must criticize and analyze the thesis each writer advances, try to explain why their thesis reflects the concerns of their times, and evaluate 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 other critical essay is based on 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 made 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 everything went wrong"...). If you detect any bias in your sources or conflicting interpretations with others, analyze it. Again, please see me to discuss sources and proposals before you write, so that I can assist in finding you sources, etc. Remember, this essay can be handed in at any time during the course: so don't wait until March! Discuss your interests at any time with me and I can point you to the wide variety of sources we have available here and on loan! Canadian content essays are welcome!

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

Grande Prairie Regional College
Department of Arts, Ed. and Commerce
HI2980: Human Conflict: Video Reference List
NB: View Critically, However!

Classical and Medieval:

Henry V (Branagh or Olivier versions should be compared)
Spartacus (brilliant illustration of the society that gave us the Roman legionary)
Masada (Peter Strauss and Peter O'Toole)
Ben Hur (Roman Galley scenes, esp.)
Braveheart (wanna see what edged weapons can do?)

Mercenary through Seventeenth Century:

Cromwell (Alec Guinness and Richard Harris)
Eighteenth Century, Napoleonic and Naval:
Barry Lyndon (Stanley Kubrick, director; the first cassette is especially helpful for this course.)
Damn the Defiant! (Guinness and Dirk Bogarde)
Waterloo (Rod Steiger and Christopher Plummer)

North America:

The Blue and the Gray (great battle scenes, skip the soap opera)
Civil War Documentary by Ken Burns (1990) (classic)
Last of the Mohegans, 1992 (read I. Steele's Betrayals)
Glory (male bonding film, but accurate)
Son of the Morning Star (best reconstruction of Little Big Horn)
1776 (Al Pacino and what's-her-name)

Colonial Wars, etc.:

Breaker Morant (controversy among historians over this one!)
Zulu (watch Michael Caine!)
March or Die, Beau Geste (well, why not?)
55 Days at Peking (pure propaganda, but some good scenes of Boxer revolt)

Great War:

All Quiet on the Western Front (1920s Lew Ayres version a must!)
Blue Max (excellent portrayal of the ace system)
Paths of Glory (Kirk Douglas, directed by Kubrick - classic!)
For King and Country (Dirk Bogarde in a controversial role)
The Wars (hard to get hold of, for some reason!)
The Lighthorsemen or Gallipoli (ANZAC's finer moments)
Lawrence of Arabia (well worth the long sit!)

World War II:

Tora, Tora, Tora! (Quite good, Japanese model work at its best)
Battle of Britain (brilliant overview, excellent air sequences)
A Bridge Too Far (excellent, but harrowing)
Saving Private Ryan (see above!)

Korea:

Bridges at Toko-Ri (propaganda, but excellent flight sequences)

Vietnam:

Deerhunter (a first attempt to portray the war's effect)
Apocalypse Now (a classic Conrad tale set in Vietnam - Why?)
Full Metal Jacket (Basic training turned into Kubrick nightmare)
Platoon (classic, intense, and controversial)
8&CharlieMopic (little-known now, but worthy)

Gulf:

Courage Under Fire (brave attempt to tackle hot issues)