

History 2980/HIS398: The History of Human Conflict
Senior Course (6 Credits)
Grande Prairie Regional College
Fall 1999-Winter 2000
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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 one brief critical essay in the fall and a Christmas test, in winter a brief research paper 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.
Michael Lyons, World War II: A Short History, Prentice-Hall, 1999.
Stoessinger, J. Why Nations Go To War. St. Martin's, 1998.
Optional (Copy will also be on RESERVE in library):
Paret, Peter (ed.). Makers of Modern Strategy. Princeton, 1986.
(This is especially important if you select Strategy as an elective).

Term One Outline:

Week One -- Getting Started:

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

Week Two -- The Classical and Medieval Heritage

16 Sept: Greco-Roman Armies
READ: O'Connell, Chapters 3-5
Knight and Footman
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 6

Week Three -- War in Early Modern Europe

23 Sept: Mercenaries and Militia
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 7
War and Society
READ: O'Connell, Chapter 8, also Paret, Chapter 1

- Week Four -- The Military Revolution
 30 Sept: Strategy
 READ: Paret, Chapter 2; Parker, Chapters 1, 6
 Society and Government
 READ: Paret, Chapter 3; Parker, Chapter 2
- Week Five -- The Eighteenth Century
 7 Oct: Dynastic Warfare
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 9; Parker, Chapter 5
 Strategic Developments
 READ: Paret, Chapter 4
- Week Six -- Revolutionary War
 14 Oct: 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
 21 Oct: Technologies and Techniques
 READ: Parker, Chapter 3
 Administration and Efficiency
 READ: Duffy, Military Revolution, pp. 49-85 RESERVE
- Week Eight -- Revolutionary Legacies
 28 Oct: Strategic Thought: Jomini
 READ: Paret, Chapters 6
 Clausewitz
 READ: Paret, Chapter 7
- Week Nine -- North American Developments
 4 Nov: Guerillas or Grenadiers
 READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts I-II and Martin
 Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage" and Stacey
 "War of 1812 in Canadian History", xerox on RESERVE)
 The Civil War
 READ: Paret, Chapter 15, parts III-V, O'Connell,
 Chapter 11 up to page 202
- Week Ten -- November 11: Remembrance Day
 [have you got your essay done yet?]
- Week Eleven -- European Experiments
 18 Nov: Organizing War Genius
 READ: Paret, Chapter 10; Bond, Chapter 1.
 War Plans: Prussia and France
 READ: Paret, Chapter 11; O'Connell, Chapter 11, pp.
 203-211.
- NBBBBBBB: Dyer and O'Connell essay due!

- Week Twelve -- Colonial Wars and Their Legacies
 25 Nov: The Military Revolution Conquers
 READ: Parker, Chapter 4
 The French and British Colonial Wars
 READ: Paret, Chapter 14
- Week Thirteen -- Deadly Spirals
 2 Dec - Imaginary War and Military Theory
 READ: Paret, Chapter 18
 Militarism, Democracy and Nationalism
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 13; Bond, Chapter 2.
- Week Fourteen -- The Naval Arms Race
 9 Dec: The New Strategists
 READ: Paret, Chapter 16, and Schurman, "Mahan Revisited"
 also "The Man Who Invented Limited War", MHQ (xerox
 RESERVE)
 Dreadnought Mania
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 12
- Christmas Exam - TBA
- Term Two Outline:
- Week One, 1999 -- The Great War: At the Front
 7 Jan - Bloodbaths and Breakthroughs
 READ: O'Connell, Chapter 14; Bond, Chapter 4.
- Week Two -- World Power or Decline?
 14 Jan - International Crisis: 1914
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 1; Bond, Chapter 3
 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
 21 Jan - Strategy: Too Serious for Soldiers
 READ: Paret, Chapter 17, pp. 481-491; Chapter 19, pp.
 527-554.
- Week Four -- The Great War: Home Fronts
 3 Feb - Stress and Strain - and Collapse
 READ: Marwick, War and Social Change in the
 Twentieth Century, Chapters 1-3 (RESERVE)
- Week Five -- The Bitter Armistice
 10 Feb - Harvest of one War -- Seeds of the Next
 READ: Bond, Chapter 5; Lyons, Chapters 1-4; Paret,
 Chapter 19, pp. 554-572

Week Six -- New Technologies - New Theories

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

February 21-25: Reading Week: Write that essay!

Week Seven -- The Second World War: German Strategy

2 March - Hitler's War
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 2, and Paret, Chapter
 17, pp. 491-497 and Chapter 19, pp. 572-597
Blitzkrieg: What was it?
 READ: Bond, Chapter 6; Lyons, Chapters 5-10, 15

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

9 Mar - Co-ordinating Allied Strategy
 READ: Paret, Chapters 17, pp. 497-509, and 23.
 Sea Power and Combined Operations
 READ: Paret Chapter 24, Lyons, Chapters 12-14, 16-18, 22

Week Nine -- Reaping the Whirlwind: The Ordeal of Total War

16 March: War to the Knife
 READ: Lyons, Chapters 11, 19-21, 23 to end; O'Connell,
 Chapter 15.
 Under Occupation
 READ: Marwick, Chapters 4 and 6 (RESERVE)

Week Ten -- Nuclear Strategy and the Cold War

23 March: the Bomb -- Theory and Speculation
 READ: Paret, Chapter 25 also O'Connell, Chapter 16
 Armed Peace and its Discontents
 READ: Paret, Chapter 26; Stoessinger, Chapt. 3
 Bond, Chapter 7

Week Eleven -- Empire and Revolution

30 March: Revolutionary Warfare
 READ: Paret, Chapter 27
 The Vietnamese Experience
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapter 4.

Week Twelve -- Low Intensity Conflict?

6 April: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism
 Recent Wars: towards extinction or proliferation?
 READ: Stoessinger, Chapt. 5-8, Paret, Chapter 28.

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 only traditional strategy and tactics) can now be employed. This course will introduce some of these new approaches, and encourage you to experiment with and sample them 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 interest 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!

The Essays Explained:

The First term critical essay is a study of important books on the phenomenon of war itself. You are asked to read two: 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 soon as you can - and review it when we get to the class on nuclear strategy in the winter term!. Give a week or two over to writing your essay for submission on the due date. 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.

Your Research essay is a straightforward, twelve-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, 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" [or even worse "because of his insanity..."]). 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!

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| Critical Essay | (ten pages) | 10 |
| Christmas Test | | 20 |
| Research Essay (twelve pages) | | 20 |
| Attendance and Participation | | 20 |
| Examination | | 30 |
| ----- | | |
| | | 100 |