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**Soldiers’ Tales – Reading and Writing War**

War is a subject of fascination in our society, but it is an experience only truly understood by participants. War literature is one of the means of conveying the experiences of war to broader audiences. Writing is a way in which soldiers try to convey and contextualize their memories in print. This seminar is an opportunity for students to read and reflect upon some of the literature of modern war. In reading non-fiction and fiction recollections, by discussing the themes and contexts of war books, and through writing reflective and thoughtful papers, students will learn something of the history of modern war from the point of view of the participant. Students will learn history through literary memories and, it is hoped, will gain the methodological skills to approach literary and historical sources for analysis. For first year students, this seminar will introduce them to the methods of research writing in the humanities through reading about war.

**Goals for First Year Seminars:**

* Students should be able to understand and articulate the broad purpose of a liberal arts education and should be familiar with the Gettysburg Curriculum and its aim to educate students in this tradition.
* Students should be able to learn to read and listen carefully and critically and should be able to formulate astute questions as they encounter complex subjects and issues.
* Students should be able to understand the limitations of a single point-of-view and should be able to evaluate and integrate knowledge from different perspectives.
* Students should be able to formulate a valid argument that is based on evidence and should be able to present this argument both verbally and in writing.
* Students should be able to develop critical thinking and information literacy skills and should be able to apply them as citizens and scholars of Gettysburg College.
* Students should be able to develop a personal academic and co-curricular roadmap designed to help them maximize their college experience.

**Learning Goals Specific to all CWES Courses**

* Students will develop expertise in the study of the history of warfare and the American Civil War era.
* Students will learn to use primary sources and develop a sophisticated understanding of secondary literature within the field appropriate to their level of study.
* Students will gain global training in the study of war to better understand the American Civil War’s historical context.
* Students will develop an interdisciplinary understanding of war taking into account, amongst other things, the study of society, culture, and historical memory.

**Required Reading:**

Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale*

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*

Rifleman Harris, *The Recollections of Rifleman Harris*

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*

Mary Borden, *The Forbidden Zone*

Paul Fussell, *The Boy’s Crusade*

Sebastian Junger, *War*

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say I Say*

**Films**

*The Duellists*

*Glory  
Henry V*

*A Very Long Engagement*

*Fury*

*The Thin Red Line*

*Full Metal Jacket*

**Grade Distribution:**

Coursework:

Participation: 20%

Short Essays: 20% (4 @ 5% each)

Final Research Paper

Source Examination Paper: 15%

Literature Review: 15%

Final Research Paper: 30%

**Participation: 20%***Philosophy:* Participation is defined as the work you do for and within class. Your active participation is essential to this course, and I expect that you attend class eager for discussion. The relationship between instructor and student is symbiotic: I show up on time, prepared, and ready to teach. My requirement is that you show up on time and ready to discuss the assigned readings. I expect that you will be responsible, do the reading, and maintain courtesy in class discussion. This is a read and discuss class, so your ability to demonstrate you have done the work for the day is essential for you to receive credit for participation.

*Assessment:* Your contribution to class discussions will be noted and will be assessed on a graduated scale (A-F), akin to your paper grades, at the end of the semester. I am interested both that you participate in each class, which is expected, but also in the quality of that participation, which will be assessed throughout the term. I reserve the right to administer quizzes if it seems as though you are not doing the reading.

**Reflection Essays: 20% (4 @ 5% Each)**  
You are required to write four essays of 500+ words each. Details will be distributed in class.

**Final Paper: 60% (3 Parts)**

Overview

The most significant assignment, both in terms of your grade and also your intellectual development, is your final paper. You will do the work of a professional historian this semester and develop a final research paper telling the story of someone (or a group of people) who fought in a war. You will:

* Choose a research subject from our college archive.
* Thoroughly evaluate your research subject.
* Develop a research question.
* Conduct secondary research to understand how to contextualize your subject.
* Write a 3-4,000 word research paper based on your subject (including footnotes).

In the process of researching you will:

* Learn new skills of archival research: how to interrogate and cross-reference your sources.
* Learn how to look for secondary sources using databases.
* Learn how to ‘frame’ a paper based on limited knowledge of material.
* Learn how to have dialogue with each other in a professional scholarly community.
* Learn how to deal with research setbacks, writing agonies, and critical feedback.
* Finally, you will feel a sense of accomplishment from doing original research – you will write a soldier story of your own.

Source Evaluation Paper: 15%

At the start of the semester we will go to Special Collections where you will be introduced to our college archive. For some/many of you this will be your first experience in an archive. Over the course of the semester, you will get to know our archive well and will become comfortable with research there.

You will be given a list of source materials to work from and you will pick a collection and begin research on it. In your source evaluation paper you are to do three things: 1) read the collection and originally summarize what is in it; 2) describe what you see as the strengths and limitations of the collection; 3) formulate a research question (or a series of questions) and explain what you think you can do with the collection at this stage.

Due: 10/12

Literature Review: 15%

In a literature review you 1) define your research question and thesis to date; 2) you show that you have done substantial secondary source research on the general topic of the question and understand how this material relates to your subject; 3) explain the limitations of your research and what work you have to do to write the final paper. What makes the literature review especially difficult is that it cannot be done at the last minute. You have to make time to read your sources and understand their arguments and how they relate to one another. This means that you should begin secondary research at the moment that you finish (or while working through ideally) your primary source collection. For an essay of this type, you should be using at least 10 quality sources (academic books and peer-reviewed articles – so no general web articles, Wikipedia, etc.)

One way to think of this assignment is as a “research audit” (or an intellectual assessment of your work to date) where you will discuss the research you have done to date and what needs to be done for the rest of the semester. Successful proposals demonstrate an advanced level of research.

Due: 11/14

Final Papers: 30%

3-4,000 words telling the story of a person affected by war based on original documents and using at least 10 quality secondary sources. You will be asking questions about the paper all semester, so I will keep this brief.

Due: 12/10 at 9AM.

**Writing Expectations:**  
The best essays answer a particular question. They do so in a sophisticated way using a variety of sources. Enjoyable essays are lively and free of grammatical and spelling errors, which are, for the most part, unacceptable in college level assignments.

Each of your essays will be assessed according to the following criteria: your ability to answer the question/address your topic, your analysis of that question (or of your theme), your sources and how you use them, the mechanics and style of the essay, and its organization. All essays must conform to the CMS/Turabian method and use footnotes where appropriate. I have high standards for your research writing and expect you to demonstrate independence and creativity in your work. Please know that Iavailable for individual consultations and that I am committed to helping you become successful college researchers and writers. What I expect is that you demonstrate thoughtfulness and initiative in your research and writing.

All written work must be handed in (hardcopy) on time, which means at the start of class the day it is due. You should have no trouble meeting the word/page counts, so please, no reformatting of your papers to achieve the proper length. Late papers will be docked one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late (i.e. a B+ paper becomes a C+ after one day of being late). The late paper clock begins when I say “hand in your essays” in class.

**Additional Academic Policies:**

* This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion. Students will receive advance notification of any changes if they are made.
* Attendance in this class is expected. If you miss more than three classes, for whatever reason, you will be penalized for each subsequent absence (2.5% off your total end of the semester grade for each additional absence).
* Please do not expect an instant response to e-mail. I will make every effort to respond to your query within 24 hours. Please take advantage of my office hours and know that I would much rather speak to you in person than have an email conversation.
* Academic integrity is an important facet of scholarship. Please familiarize yourself with the college Honor Code. If there is any suspicion of plagiarism, your paper will be handed over to the Honor Commission without hesitation. If you have any questions about your research please come to me directly.
* Please turn off your phones and place them in your bags upon entry into the classroom. Texting in class is rude.
* Please do not leave class while it is in session. It is inconsiderate to do so.
* Please let me know if you have an educational accommodation so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Class Outline**

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Reading/Assignment** |
| 8/27 | Syllabus Discussion | The Syllabus |
| 8/29 | Methods: Research and Writing Expectations | Reading: Zinsser – “Simplicity” and “Clutter” from *On Writing Well*. (Both on Moodle); *They Say, I Say*, Chapters 1-3. |
| 8/30 | Common Hour |  |
| 9/3 | What is war? What is war writing? | First reflection essay due. Hynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale*, Prologue and Chapter 1; Yuval Harari, “Armchairs, Coffee, and Authority: Eye-witnesses and Flesh-witnesses Speak about War, 1100-2000,” Journal of Military History 74:1 (2010), 53-78 (moodle); *They Say, I Say*, Chapters 4-5. |
| 9/5 | Library Research Session |  |
| 9/6 | No Common Hour |  |
| 9/10 | Reading the Common Soldier | *Recollections of Rifleman Harris* (all) |
| 9/12 | Reading the Common Soldier | *They Say, I Say*, Chapters 6-7. Film: *The Duellist* |
| 9/13 | Common Hour | Research Topic Selection. Class in Special Collections |
| 9/17 | Fighting the Civil War | Second reflection due. Earl Hess, “The Nature of Battle” from *The Union Soldier in Battle*; Gerald Linderman, “Courage at the Core” from *Embattled Courage*; Ambrose Bierce, “What I saw at Shiloh” (moodle) Film: *Glory* |
| 9/19 | Case Study: Gettysburg | Battlefield Tour (Start reading Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*.) |
| 9/20 | Common Hour | The Vietnam War: A Personal Perspective |
| 9/24 | Representing a War for Freedom | Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (begin). |
| 9/26 | Representing a War for Freedom | Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (finish) |
| 9/27 | Common Hour | Common Read |
| 10/1 | Approaching the Great War | Third reflection essay due.  Hynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale*, Chapters 2-3 |
| 10/3 | The Great War: Fighting | Denis Winter, “Trench Life” from *Death’s Men* |
| 10/4 | Common Hour | Special Collections: WWI Exhibit |
| 10/8 | Reading Day | Do your reading and work on your source evaluation papers |
| 10/10 | The Great War: Suffering | Mary Borden, *The Forbidden Zone* (all – it’s really short). |
| 10/11 | Common Hour | Special Collections |
| 10/12 | Source Evaluation Essays Due | Due at noon via either email or hardcopy to my mailbox in the History Department. |
| 10/15 | The Great War: Remembering | Film: *A Very Long Engagement*. Assorted war writing (moodle). |
| 10/17 | George Orwell: An introduction | Essays: “A Hanging”, “Shooting an Elephant”, and “Politics and the English Language” (moodle) |
| 10/18 | Common Hour |  |
| 10/22 | The Spanish CW: Reporting and Fighting | Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (begin) |
| 10/24 | The Spanish CW: Reporting and Fighting | Orwell, *Homage*, (finish) |
| 10/25 | Common Hour: St Crispin’s Day (aka what Shakespeare wrote about war) | *Henry V (Film)* |
| 10/29 | The Second Great War: Everybody’s War | Fourth reflection essay due. Hynes, *The Soldiers’ Tale*, Chapter 4 |
| 10/31 | The Second Great War: Experiences | Fussell, *The Boy’s Crusade*, pp. 1-64 |
| 11/1 | Common Hour |  |
| 11/5 | The Second Great War: Experiences | Fussell, *The Boy’s Crusade* (finish) |
| 11/7 | Field Trip to National Cemetery |  |
| 11/8 | Common Hour |  |
| 11/12 | The Second Great War: Films | *The Thin Red Line Fury* |
| 11/14 | Vietnam: Experience | Literature Reviews Due  Hynes, The Soldiers’ Tale, Chapter 5; Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried” (moodle). |
| 11/15 | Common Hour |  |
| 11/20 | Vietnam: Syndrome | Film: *Full Metal Jacket* |
| 11/22 | No Class | Thanksgiving (also, start reading Junger, *War*) |
| 11/26 | Wars of Terror | Junger, *War* (begin) |
| 11/28 | Wars of Terror | Junger, *War* (finish) |
| 11/29 | Common Hour |  |
| 12/3 | Presentations |  |
| 12/5 | Presentations |  |
| 12/6 | Presentations |  |
| 12/10 | Final Papers Due | 9:00 Am. |