

Department: History

Course No: 1206 [126]

Credits: 3

Title: Living Through War in World History

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Diversity: CA4 International

Catalog Copy: HIST 1206. Living Through War in World History. Either semester. Three credits. No prerequisites. Lecture and discussion. Focuses on understanding in broad terms societies around the world that have found themselves involved in different kinds of wars over the past 500 years, looking at how those wars happened and how both military and civilian participants on both sides saw the war and their roles in it.

Course Information: a. Course Objectives: This new course targets a frequently-articulated interest of undergraduates that is also of major importance in our contemporary society - war - and treats it in a student-friendly yet culturally sensitive and historically rigorous way. It combines large lectures using a variety of technology media with weekly small discussions centered on primary sources of individual experience to expose students to the varied nature of past conflicts throughout the world, teaching them to think and communicate critically about the past as well as the present.

b. Course Requirements: Midterm examination and cumulative final, focusing on short-answer and essay questions. Four short papers (2-3 pp.) based on the assigned reading for the course. Weekly readings for discussion of approximately 25 pp. per week.

c. Major themes, issues, and topics: This course will examine the context of different world conflicts in order to examine how individuals on multiple sides saw themselves as well as their opponents. Specific conflicts may vary with instructor, but may

include: "discovery" of the Americas; European Reformation and Wars of Religion; Austro-Ottoman War; Portuguese-African Wars; French Revolution; Slave revolt of Saint-Domingue (Haiti); Wars of 1848; U.S. Civil War; late 19th century wars of imperialism; Boxer Rebellion; Anglo-Boer War; First World War; Second World War; Decolonization (including Indochina/Vietnam and Algeria); modern genocide (e.g., Yugoslavia, Rwanda/Burundi, Sudan); Arab-Israeli conflict; wars on terrorism.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: How the course meets the goals of General Education: This course meets many of the goals for General Education courses. 1. With its emphasis on both verbal and written analysis, it will help students become more articulate, learning how to construct and support an effective argument based on critical readings of sources. 2. Students will acquire intellectual breadth and versatility through their exposure to conflict in many different areas of the world and at many different times, most of which will be previously unfamiliar to them. Their horizons will be significantly broadened, making them more aware and flexible citizens of both this country and the world. 3. Critical judgment is essential to the work being done in this course, as students learn to read, write, and speak critically about the sources and their contexts. They will learn to think about similar themes in different contexts, greatly strengthening their abilities in critical comparison. 4. Moral sensitivity is one of the key components of the course, and is why conflicts will be investigated using sources from multiple sides. Students will learn to see that war is never a case of black and white, and learn to be far more nuanced in their reactions to situations involving diverse groups of peoples. 5. Because several of the topics focus on the modern period, students will gain a new understanding of their era and the global society in which the United States participates. This will give them a broader worldview to employ both at home and abroad. 6. Because of its focus on conflicts throughout the world, in a variety of cultures with different ethnic perceptions and practicing different religions, it will enhance their awareness of the diversity of human culture and experience. 7. The skills they learn in reading, speaking, and writing, particularly in the areas of evaluating evidence and making critical arguments, will continue to serve them in their future acquisition and use of knowledge.

CA1 Criteria: This course meets the specific criteria for the Arts and Humanities content area in the following ways: 1. The historical and critical investigation of human experience by examining conflicts throughout the world in the last 500 years, focusing particularly on context and on individual experience. 2. Some of the topics addressed (French Revolution, Wars of 1848, Wars of Imperialism, etc) will focus on the relations between political theory, public perception, and public action. 3. Some of the sources employed - posters, paintings, song lyrics - will enable students to learn the skills of investigating modes of symbolic representation.

CA4 Criteria: An appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism is essential to this course, as it is meant to complicate the often over-simplified stories of wars throughout the world. Wars are often portrayed as stories of good and evil or right and wrong; by focusing on multiple participants in specific contextualized conflicts, students will be able to appreciate the differences as well as commonalities among diverse groups. 1. The course will by its structure emphasize the varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and values, examining varied wars from different perspectives. 2. The examination of these different perceptions of conflicts - erasing the simplifications of "right" and "wrong" - will take students through the analytic process of recognizing that interpretive systems and social structures are cultural creations - if both sides think they are "right," then "right" must itself be a product of their own cultural constructs. 3. Similarities as well as differences will be emphasized, in order to help students perceive common humanity as well as to respect cultural differences. 4. Though migration is not a primary focus on this course, the discussion of human rights is frequently inseparable from the topics we will cover, whether it is the political discussion of the nature of rights of citizenship, the rights of religious freedom, the rights of non-discrimination, or the issues surrounding genocide. 5. War is always a product of the dynamics of social, political, and economic power; its close analysis will facilitate students' understanding of these complex interrelations.

International: This course targets as one of its primary goals teaching students about diversity and multiculturalism in areas outside the United States. All Muslims fighting in all wars are not the same and do not do so for the same reasons, for example, neither do all Europeans, all Christians, all Asians, all Imperial powers, etc. Historicizing past conflicts is an important tool in teaching students how to critically examine their own world. The course also covers a considerable time span (500 years) in consciously comparative manner and so is clearly also examining cultural continuities and transformations over time and place.

Role of Grad Students: Graduate students assistants will lead most of the small group discussion sections, in close conjunction with the instructor of record. All history graduate students complete a departmental teaching training program. All graduate instructors will meet on a weekly basis with the faculty instructor, who will help prepare them for the discussions. The faculty member will be responsible for the lectures, and will supervise the graduate students.

Supplemental Information: This development of this course is currently being supported by the Provost's General Education Course Development Grant Competition (Prof. Janet Watson, who will inaugurate the course).