

**AMST 340 War and Media (3 credits)**  
**E and W focus**  
**Study Abroad London Spring 2024**

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**Course Description**

What is the relationship between material violence and its cultural representation, between the waging and the imaging of war? How do popular media shape collective understandings and experiences of war? What are the ethical implications of consuming images of war and suffering as part of our daily lives; or, alternately, what are the ethical implications of refusing to look at such images?

In this course we will explore these and other questions through examination of a variety of war media—including print and photojournalism, documentaries, blockbuster films, television newscasts, videogames, and social media—as they have shaped popular representations of war from the Battle of Waterloo in 1812 to the twenty-first century “war on terror” and the Russian invasion of Ukraine today. Taking advantage of our location in London, we’ll make use of the exhibits and collections housed at the Imperial War Museum, which will provide the foundation for individual student research projects due at the end of the semester. Among the issues we’ll consider are the historical relationship between technologies of representation and technologies of destruction and the role these representations play in soliciting popular support for war. Across the semester, we’ll consider questions specific to the British histories of war and its representation alongside broader questions of the status of war as spectacle; the emergence of the military-entertainment complex and the shifting roles of the citizen and the soldier within it; and the ethical implications of consuming images of war and suffering at a remove from the material impacts of violence.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

This course fulfills student learning outcomes of the UHM Study Abroad Center and the American Studies Department, and carries both an Ethics and a Writing Intensive focus designation.

By the end of the semester, students will have developed the ability to:

- Formulate ethical questions and engage in ethical deliberation regarding the function of war images in our everyday lives.
- Identify and interpret differences and commonalities between representations of war in British and American history and culture.
- Analyze the historical and ongoing relationship between war and its cultural representation, between technologies of media and technologies of war, and between militarism and the practices of everyday life.
- Interpret a range of cultural artifacts including print and social media, film, television, and videogames, using skills in close reading and critical analysis.
- Pinpoint central arguments in assigned readings and craft effective discussion questions to highlight and explore these arguments.

- Generate strong topic sentences and coherent paragraphs and transitions to develop and support clear, central arguments in their written work.
- Undertake independent research through engagement with primary materials housed at the Imperial War Museum.

### **Course Materials**

Required texts:

Jonna Eagle, *War Games*

Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*

Both required texts are available as ebooks through the UHM library site. All other required readings will be available on Laulima.

Required films:

*They Shall Not Grow Old* (Jackson 2018)

*Why We Fight: The Battle of Britain* (Capra 1943)

*Memphis Belle* (Wyler 1944)

*Dunkirk* (Nolan 2017)

*Three Kings* (Russell 1999)

*Black Hawk Down* (Scott 2001)

*Through the Crosshairs: Reading the Weaponized Gaze* (Stahl 2018)

### **Course Expectations and Assignments**

#### **Class Participation (20%)**

Regular attendance and active engagement with course readings and screenings are central requirements of this course. You are expected to come to class on time and prepared to contribute, having completed the assigned readings, viewed any assigned film, and read through the day's discussion blog. Class participation is a crucial component of your performance in the course and will be evaluated based on your regular attendance, engaged listening, and active contributions to class discussions.

#### *Attendance Policy*

You cannot do well in this course if you don't attend regularly. Frequent absences from class will impact your participation grade and your ability to keep up with course material. More than one absence will lower your class participation grade by one full grade per additional absence. More than two absences will also lower your overall course grade by one half grade. More than three absences will result in a F for the course. If you know in advance you need to miss class, please see me beforehand. In the event of illness or emergency, please contact me ASAP to make arrangements.

#### *Classroom Etiquette*

Phones must be silenced and put away for the duration of class. Laptops are allowed only if used for note-taking purposes exclusively. If extracurricular laptop use becomes a problem, we will have to institute a laptop-free classroom, so please be courteous to your instructors and fellow classmates and don't abuse this policy.

### Critical Response Posts (25%)

Each course participant is required to post to our class discussion board each week a 300-400 word critical response to the weekly course readings, with the exception of the week you serve as facilitator. Posts are due at least two hours prior to class. These responses are your opportunity to highlight and explore issues of particular interest or concern to you, while identifying the overarching questions or themes of each week's materials. The critical response posts will allow for your written engagement with course materials across the semester and will provide a basis for our class discussions.

Please note:

- Your aim in these posts is to provide a clear, concise discussion of the main argument(s) of the week's readings and to identify the primary methods and materials employed to support these arguments.
- In addition, you may use the posts to explore what in the readings strikes you as particularly interesting or relevant, in general or in relation to other materials we've covered in class.
- Each post should conclude with at least one discussion question you'd like to see us take up in our weekly meeting.
- **As with all your coursework, the words and ideas reflected in these critical response posts must be your own;** if you quote directly from the assigned texts or borrow from any other sources (including online sources), you must provide appropriate citations for this material (page numbers if a course reading and full citations if you've drawn material from somewhere else). Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

### Class Facilitation (5%)

Each student will serve as a facilitator once during the semester. As facilitator, it will be your responsibility to generate a set of five discussion questions to help guide our class meeting. Your goal in generating these discussion questions is three-fold:

- to identify and explore the major arguments or themes of the week's reading;
- to suggest what seems most useful or interesting in this material; and,
- to encourage meaningful connections between this week's material and issues we've covered in any previous weeks.

In addition to preparing discussion questions, as facilitator you are asked to bring one show-and-tell item (image, clip, or other resource) to share with the class. The item should be one you think raises interesting questions or provides useful insights into the week's assigned readings. Please be prepared to share your item and talk briefly about its interest or significance.

### Midterm Paper (4-5 pages) (20%)

The midterm exam will consist of one essay question, focusing on central issues and arguments raised in course readings, films, and discussions up to Week 5 on the Course Schedule. A specific prompt will be handed out two weeks prior to the midterm's due date. A hard copy of the essay is due Week 6 at the beginning of class. Essays will be evaluated based on the clarity of their writing and the quality of their engagement with course materials. Please remember to cite all your sources!

### Final Project (30%)

In the final paper, students will explore the issue of war and media through primary evidence housed at the Imperial War Museums. Students will have a wide berth in selecting a topic and are encouraged to come talk with me about ideas at any point during the semester. Papers might focus on a specific conflict, an individual text or group of texts (e.g. photographs, films, videogames, etc.), a comparison between British and American war representation, or any other topic broadly related to our course theme of war and media, and researchable through the Imperial War Museums' holdings or exhibits. A prospectus and annotated bibliography for the paper will be due in class in Week 8 on the Course Schedule. The prospectus should run 2-3 pages and include an overview of your topic and the central questions that will guide your research. The annotated bibliography should include at least five sources in addition to any relevant course materials, and must briefly outline the significance of each of these materials to your research. Final papers of approximately 6-8 pages will be due in hard copy on the last day of class. In addition, at the end of the semester, students will deliver brief presentations on their projects, highlighting central insights and arguments and suggesting the relationship of their topic to the issues and histories we've traced across the semester. Evaluation of the final projects will include successful completion of the prospectus and bibliography, delivery of the final presentation, and the clarity, organization and level of engagement with both primary materials and course concerns as reflected in the final paper.

### *Citing Sources*

Learning how to properly cite your sources is an important aspect of scholarly writing. There are many excellent resources available, including Purdue University's Online Writing Lab at: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html). This site includes citation guidelines for MLA and other styles, alongside many other helpful writing tips. If after consulting this site you still have questions about how and when to cite a source, please ask.

### *Academic Integrity*

You're welcome to draw upon outside sources in developing your ideas and insights but **all submitted work must be your own. The words and ideas of others must be fully and properly cited in all types of writing** (and this includes ideas drawn from online sources like Wikipedia). Failure to cite the words and ideas of others constitutes plagiarism and will be dealt with accordingly. As outlined by UHM policy, academic dishonesty—including handing in work that is not your own—is punishable by grade reduction, course failure, or in serious cases, expulsion. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code at [http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct\\_code/](http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/) for more information.

### **Course Evaluation**

Class Participation: 20%

Critical Response Posts: 25%

Seminar Facilitation: 5%

Midterm Paper: 20%

Final Research Project: 30%

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 MODERN MEDIA AND THE SPECTACLE OF WAR

- Jan Mieskowski, "Introduction: Watching War," 1-16
- Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War," 71-89
- Susan Moeller, "The Photographers: The New Profession"
- Kenneth O. Morgan, "The Boer War and the Media"

View in class: Crimean War and Civil War photographs, early moving pictures

### WEEK 2 FILM AND THE GREAT WAR

- Robin Andersen, "The Great War and the Fight between Good and Evil"
- Hammond and Williams, "Goodbye to All That or Business as Usual?"
- Dixon and Porter, "How Shall We Look Again?"
- Adam Gopnik, "A Few Thoughts..."

Screening: *They Shall Not Grow Old* (Jackson 2018)

### WEEK 3 FIELD TRIP TO THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

- Peter Thwaites, "Formation of Military Museums" and "The Representation of War" from *Presenting Arms*
- Debbie Lisle, "Sublime Lessons: Education and Ambivalence in War Exhibitions"

**Midterm Prompt Distributed**

### WEEK 4 TECHNOLOGIES OF PERCEPTION AND DESTRUCTION

- Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema* (excerpts)
- Jordan Crandall, "On Warfare and Representation"
- Patricia Zimmerman, "Cameras and Guns: 1941-1949"
- Kevin McSorley, "Helmetcams, Militarized Sensation and 'Somatic War'"

### WEEK 5 REALISM, PROPAGANDA, AND WORLD WAR TWO

- Robert Murphy, Introduction, *British Cinema and the Second World War*
- Jeremy Havardi, "Our Obsession with 1940" and "Projecting Britain in the Early Documentaries," from *Projecting Britain at War*
- Daniel Marcus, "William Wyler's World War II Films"

View in class: *London Can Take It* (1940), *The Battle of Britain* (Capra 1943), *Memphis Belle* (Wyler 1944)

**Midterm Essay Due in Class**

**WEEK 6 REVISIONING WORLD WAR TWO IN BRITAIN TODAY**

- Darren Mooney, “*Dunkirk*”
- David Bordwell, “The Art Film as Event Movie”
- Sunny Singh, “Why the lack of Indian and African faces in *Dunkirk* matters”
- Samuel Earle, “The Toxic Nostalgia of Brexit”

Screening: *Dunkirk* (Nolan 2017)

**WEEK 7 MEDIATED VIOLENCE AND VIETNAM**

- Robin Anderson, “Vietnam: Shattered Illusions”
- Marita Sturken, “Reenactment and the Making of History”
- Christina Schwenkel, “Exhibiting War, Reconciling Pasts”

Screening: *Platoon* (Stone 1986)

View during class: television news coverage of Vietnam

**WEEK 8 POSTMODERN WAR AND “TOTAL TELEVISION”**

- Baudrillard, “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place”
- Robert Stam, “Mobilizing Fictions”
- John Taylor, “The Body Vanishes in the Gulf War”

Screening: *Three Kings* (Russell 1999)

View during class: television news coverage of the Persian Gulf War

**Final paper prospectus and annotated bibliography due**

**WEEK 9 THE MILITARY ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX**

- Patrick Crogan, “From the Military-Industrial to the Military-Entertainment Complex”
- Roger Stahl, *Militainment, Inc.*, Introduction and Chapters 1
- Jonna Eagle, *War Games*, Chapters 1-2

Screening: *Black Hawk Down* (Scott 2001)

**WEEK 10 VIDEOGAMES AND THE VIRTUAL CITIZEN SOLDIER**

- Jonna Eagle, *War Games*, Chapter 3
- Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, “The Convergence of the Pentagon and Hollywood”
- Matthew Thomas Payne, “The First-Person Shooter”
- Irene Chien, “Playing Against the Grain”

**WEEK 11      WAR AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

- P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, "The War Begins"
- Chad Elias, "Emergency Cinema and the Dignified Image"
- Additional readings TBA

**WEEK 12      THE ETHICS OF THE IMAGE**

- Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*
- Judith Butler, "Photography, War, Outrage"

**Final Presentations and Final Paper Due Date TBA**