

UNIVERSITY HONORS 121-012

Exploring the Roots of War: The Legacy of Struggle

Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30 - 1:45 pm / SHC #22

Instructor: Michael Thomas PhD.

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REQUIRED READING:

Aristophanes, Lysistrata

Homer, The Iliad (Lombardo Trans)

Kathleen Chamerlain, Victorio: Apache Warrior and Chief

Susan Sontag, On the Pain of Others

Chris Hedges, War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill

Dexter Filkins, The Forever War

Thomas Ricks, Fiasco, The American Military Adventure in Iraq

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Humans have an extraordinary propensity for violence against one another. This propensity, while not technically unique to humans, still sets us apart from our animal peers. The ubiquity and scale of human violence is something special. A visitor from another planet would certainly conclude that humans are obsessed with violence, torture, and murder. The societal expression of this capacity is war. This seminar is a preliminary inquiry into the roots of war.

EMPHASIS: The class is a reading/discussion class. Objectives of the class include development of the following skills: 1) Writing, 2) Leadership and facilitative behavior in groups, 3) Reflective thinking, 4) Global thinking, 5) Critical Thinking. 6) Professionalism

ACTIVITIES: The class will consist of discussions and an occasional instructor "lecturette." All students are expected to participate in discussions.

REQUIREMENTS/GRADES: Grades are based on evaluations of Six one page reaction papers (5 x 5= 25 points), a five page essay (15 points/due Oct.6), and an eight page research paper (20 points/due Dec. 1) Ten minute presentation (15 points), attendance at three lectures or similar events (10 points – all or none, see below), plus an assessment of participation (15 points).

A - 85-100, **Cr** - 55-84, **Ncr** - 54 points or less.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: This is a discussion class. Students are expected to attend all sessions and to participate in the discussions. Students who miss class *for any reason* will lose participation points. A student who does not attend a particular session cannot contribute to the discourse. This is true whether the student is ill, grieving, or acting on a whim. There is no way to "make up" for missed classes and no way for students who are not present to participate¹. Students will, therefore lose 5 points per absence up to 25 points. If a student misses more than six times, I will use the instructor drop option. Again, an absence is an absence. I² will *assume* that any student unfortunate enough to miss class has a good reason.

¹ Although students cannot makeup missed classes, extra credit opportunities will allow students to bolster their point totals or recoup, to some extent, points lost to missed classes or low scores on assignments

² In this syllabus, "I" refers to the instructor, Dr. Thomas. "You" refers to the individual student in the class.

READING/REACTION PAPER SCHEDULE:

Homer selections: Week 2

Dead Birds (film) Week 3

Chamberlain: Week 4

Sontag: Week 6

Hedges: Week 7

Ricks: Week 9

Filkins: Week 12

Reaction papers will be due on the first day (generally Tuesday) that we discuss a given assignment. Students can hand in extra reaction papers for extra credit.

OUTCOMES/GOALS:

On successful completion of this seminar, students should be able to critically examine readings, and discourse on the topics of war and its place in human evolution, psychology, society, and history. Students should be able to write effective, defensible essays and engage in informed discourse on these topics. They should also be able to apply the methods of scholarly research to produce thoroughly researched formally sound research papers addressing specific issues that emerge from consideration of the general topics noted above. They should be able to present effective oral reports based on class assignments and/or their research. Their expressive skills (writing, speaking, discussing) should improve and they should be able to see connections across disciplinary lines and examine opinions and political rationales critically. Likewise they should increase their capabilities in collaborating effectively with others. They should end the seminar with a more profound understanding of the existence and impact of war in human society.

NOTES:

1) All Legacy students are required to attend three lectures. The UHP sponsors a number of lectures that will meet this requirement. These include, the Carruthers Chair Lecture, The UHP Renowned Scholar Lecture, A UHP Faculty on Campus Lecture, and lectures for other UHP seminars that are open to the public. UHP will sponsor at least three lectures each semester. There are, of course, lecture programs in other UNM departments and in the community at large. Students may use any UHP sponsored lecture to meet this requirement. Ask the instructor about other lectures or events like dramatic performances, poetry readings, showings of topical films, etc. that may meet this requirement. To complete this assignment, students must turn in a one page reaction paper. These papers will not be graded. Students in this seminar will earn ten points for attending three lectures. These are all or none points. Students attending one or two lectures will earn no points. Students can earn 1.5 extra credit points for lectures or sanctioned event they attend beyond the three required.

2) All students should have an e-mail account and **UNM e-mail address** (available free through CIRT) by the second class meeting. I will be addressing all of my e-mail to your UNM addresses. Please use your UNM account in communicating with me and your fellow class members. I will NOT be sending e-mail postings to gmail, yahoo, msn, aol, hotmail, or any other e-mail address. I have had students change addresses as many as five times in a semester. Again, I will post e-mail to UNM addresses and no others.

3) Students should sign up for the UHP listserve. That way the UHP can pass along useful information and announcements. To sign up: 1) Address an e-mail to listserv@unm.edu 2) Leave the subject line blank. 3) The body of the message should be one line that reads: subscribe uhon-L first name last name 4) send it.

Example: subscribe uhon-L michael thomas

4) Unless I tell you otherwise, you should silence your cell phones and put them away during class. No text messaging during class³. Unless special arrangements are made, laptops, palm-tops, etc. should be turned off and properly secured during class. All students should show courtesy and consideration to their student peers and the instructor.

5) Read the Assignment Guidelines. Every year I am amazed to find students making errors and losing points because they do assignments without reading the assignment guidelines. All professional writing involves guidelines. Editors encountering submissions that do not follow the pertinent guidelines do not read them..

6) This is the first paragraph of the UNM Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

“Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action up to and including dismissal against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question.” *Pathfinder, The UNM Student Handbook* p. 58

Notes:

³ Text messaging in class involves unseemly manual manipulations in one's lap. Modesty forbids such displays, however engrossing the activity may be.

REACTION/REVIEW PAPER: GUIDELINES

Six reaction/review papers are required of all students. These should be ***no more than one page*** (12 point font, 1" margins). The reports should focus on the assigned readings/films. These reports should ***not*** be synopses or content summaries. They should, rather, focus on particular sections, subsections, scenes, themes, or characters and address ***one or more*** of the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of this work?
2. How does the author or artist use to make his or her points?
3. How effective is the work?
4. What was your reaction to the particular points the author addressed?
5. How does the author or artist deal with a particular issue or employ specific stylistic devise?
6. What can the reader learn about effective writing from this work.

The report can be personal and address issues from your point of view. Thus you can present your reactions using the first person and referring, perhaps, to your experiences. The report could, however, deal with the issues and ideas from a more detached "objective" viewpoint. Such an approach would be most effectively rendered in third person.

Tip: In so short a paper, you are more likely to be successful if you limit your focus to a particular point or very few points and address that point(s) with great specificity.

Evaluation will focus on clarity in addressing the ideas you endeavor to convey and explore in the report.

EVALUATION: REACTION/RESPONSE PAPER

M. Thomas, Instructor

Student: _____

Paper title or subject _____

Dimensions of Evaluation - (0 = unacceptably flawed, 1 = major and minor flaws limit success,
2 = one major or numerous minor flaws, 3 = perfection spoiled by minor flaws, 4 = superb

1) Presentation (titling, mechanics, and cosmetics)

2) Structure, sentence/paragraph level/Continuity

3) Insight

4) Support (logic, documentary references)

Overall, in Sum _____ (5 points possible)

Narrative Response:

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES⁴

Presentations will have three components, 1) The presentation itself, 2) Facilitation of class discussion of the presentation, and 3) A written outline or synopsis of the presentation.

I. Presentation

Presentations should be reflective and exploratory. They should use the readings or topics from class discussion as a taking-off point. You can also use the presentation to share with the class knowledge you have gained by further reading or research into an aspect of the reading/discussions that's intrigued you. You will be evaluated as to the *enthusiasm* you have for your topic, the *clarity* of your presentation, the *coherence* of organization, and the skill with which you *summarize* and *relate* your presentation to the continuing "themes" or interests that have developed in class. In this class I particularly encourage *cooperative* presentations involving two or more students. Tip: time your presentation and make sure it doesn't go over the ten minute limit.

II. Discussion

The presentation should be no more than minutes in length and followed by a discussion of equal duration. Cooperative presentations should be proportionately longer. You are responsible for seeing that neither the presentation nor the discussion is excessively lengthy. You will be evaluated as to your *skill and poise* in facilitating discussion. Here are a few techniques that may be helpful:

A. Ways to start the discussion

- (1) Ask someone to summarize in their terms what you've stated in your presentation.
- (2) Ask if there is an aspect of your presentation or performance that needs explanation.
- (3) Ask if anyone has a comment on the presentation or performance.
- (4) Appoint a commentator (or two) to listen carefully and briefly respond. After their commentary, ask if someone else has a point.
- (5) Formulate a question based on your presentation or performance and ask the group to jot down a brief answer. Then ask individuals what they've written.

B. Ways to nurture and guide the discussion

- (1) Ask people to clarify or expand their statements.
- (2) Restate what people have said, and ask if your restatement is accurate.
- (3) Ask people for examples relevant to statements they've made.
- (4) Give pithy examples of your own points.
- (5) Restate what someone has said in an exaggerated or distorted way and ask if that is what they meant.
- (6) Summarize lengthy and possibly irrelevant statements and relate them back to the topic
- (7) Have a handout (perhaps the outline, perhaps a set of questions) to give to the class.

C. To conclude successfully :

- (1) Note that the time to end the discussion is drawing near.
- (2) Summarize the major points of the discussion (jotted down, perhaps).
- (3) Relate the discussion to the presentation and the presentation to the class as a whole
- (4) Thank the class and instructor for their interest and participation/

D. TIP: NEVER, EVER APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR WORK

E. The outline or synopsis should not exceed one typed page

⁴ Depending on class size, we may be having presentations as early as mid-September. We will certainly begin the process of scheduling presentations by Sept. 22

EVALUATION: PRESENTATION

Michael Thomas

Student (s): _____

Presentation title or subject _____

Dimensions of Evaluation (4 - very well done, no problems, 3 - flawed in minor ways, 2 - flawed in numerous minor ways or one major way, 1- flawed in more than one major way, 0 - pervasive flaws seriously undermine the presentation).

Content:

- 1) Enthusiasm, involvement
- 2) Explicit connection to seminar issues
- 3) Thoroughness/level of analysis
- 4) Insight, thoughtfulness

Presentation

- 5) Structure, internal integration, pace
- 6) Connection to audience
- 7) Poise

Overall, in Sum _____ Peer Assessment _____

Points awarded (15 possible) _____

Narrative Response:

GUIDELINES: ANALYTIC ESSAYS⁵

An essay paper is required of all students. These papers should be about five pages (12 point font, 1" margins). Conventionally, an essay states a reasoned, supported opinion. An analytic essay is an exploration of a work in term of what the author has illuminated. In such an essay you indicate your assessment of the author's achievement and then explain the reasoning behind your assessment.

For this assignment you should address something the author has accomplished. Using analysis, reason, examples, informed authority, and/or personal experience, you should explore that accomplishment and evaluate it using standards you chose. Make a case for or against the author as a thinker whose work explains the phenomenon of war or one of its components. The paper should show your reader the consideration of clarity, easy readability, and proper reference to sources you've used.

Evaluation will be on the basis of:

- (1) The energy and enthusiasm you are able to convey for the subject you address.
- (2) The effectiveness of the paper in making a convincing analysis.
- (3) The logic or reasonableness of your argument.
- (4) The clarity of your writing.

The essay is a very standard and key form for structuring ideas in a clear communicable form. It has conventions in terms of the structure that are articulated in all freshman composition courses. If you don't know the formal conventions of the essay, you need to learn at once. See us ASAP.

⁵ This assignment will be due October 6.

EVALUATION: ANALYTIC ESSAY

Student: _____

Paper title or subject: _____

Dimensions of Evaluation - (0 = unacceptably flawed, 1 = major and minor flaws limit success, 2 = one major or numerous minor flaws, 3 = perfection spoiled by minor flaws, 4 = superb)

1) Presentation (includes titling, cosmetics, and mechanics)

2) Structure

Sentence

Paragraph

Architecture

3) Insight and analysis

4) Credibility (support, logic, etc.)

Overall, in Sum _____ (15 points possible)

Narrative Response:

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES⁶

A final research paper, is required of all students. This paper should reflect a proportionately greater expenditure of effort than the earlier papers. It should be a "crescendo" and incorporate perspectives attained in the course.

Topic:

Research involves inquiry into the unknown. A research paper summarizes and documents that inquiry. Many topics, many issues have arisen in class readings and discussions. You have, doubtless, found some of these topics interesting, profound, important, offensive, or in some other way, intriguing. Pick a topic that engages your interest and curiosity. Use the assignment to learn something of genuine interest and intrigue. You may be curious about the life of one of the authors. You may want to know more about the social or historical background of a particular work. You may want to find detailed information about a topic that was lightly touched on in class discussion. There are many options. Do follow your own interests. Don't write a paper on a topic you think I will find fascinating. Write on a topic you find fascinating.

Purpose:

There is some overlap between essays and research papers. Essays are designed to persuade, and often use research to bolster credibility. Research papers, while not value free, are more slanted towards the presentation of discovered information than persuasion to a given viewpoint. Choice of a topic is always based in one's values, but the primary purpose of research papers is to inform, analyze, and classify rather than persuade.

Primary Research and Scholarly Research:

As I indicated above, research involves inquiry. Direct inquiry is primary research. In "hard" scientific fields primary research involves experimentation. In fields where experimentation is impossible or unethical (such as the social sciences) primary research involves methods such as observation, interview, questionnaire, etc. Primary research involves implementation of a well thought through research design. Research procedure produce data that will by design answer the question the investigator wants answered. Indirect inquiry is the path most of you will take. Indirect inquiry is scholarly research, exploration of an issue by reading what's been written about it. To undertake scholarly research, you use the resources of a library or appropriate data base.

Essential Elements:

The paper you write will simply (1) Summarize what you have learned in your research. (2) Document either your direct methods (research design) or your scholarly sources. The paper should be about 8 pages (including bibliography) using a 12 point font and 1" margins.

Structure:

In structure, the paper should first identify the topic and discuss its importance or interest. Second, the paper should present several major points or issues you've discovered in your inquiries. Third, the paper should conclude with an extended statement of the perspective(s) that are attained through the research you've completed. Finally, you need to document your methods or sources. This can be accomplished within the text in the form of footnotes, in a bibliography which lists the sources you've used, or in an appendix describing research methods.

Style and Style Manuals:

⁶ This assignment will be due December 1.

The research paper is the primary form of professional communication for scientists and scholars. For that reason, style and form are important and often rigidly specified. Professional journals reject papers that are not written according to very strict guidelines and these guidelines differ greatly. This provides job security for the writers of style manuals. For this paper, consistency is the chief requirement. If you know what your major field of study is going to be, use the standard style manual for professional writing in that field. Otherwise use one of the following: Note the style manual you use on the title page of your paper.

Turbian, Kate - A MANUAL FOR WRITERS

Achtert & Gibaldi - THE MLA STYLE MANUAL

Univ. of Chicago Press - THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

Lester & Lester - THE RESEARCH PAPER HANDBOOK

WEBSTERS STANDARD STYLE MANUAL

Howell, John - STYLE MANUALS OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD

Every Page Perfect:

In terms of mechanics and grammar, every page should be perfect.

Alternative Format:

You can present your research as a fictitious autobiography. To complete this option, you'd do research on the circumstances faced by people contemporary to one of the authors assigned for this seminar. You would then imagine a character (either a historical character or a completely fictitious character) and write a memoir segment. You must thoroughly research your work.. You must document every detail of the memoir to demonstrate historical accuracy. The memoir segment, like the paper should be no more than eight pages including bibliography. Document details via footnotes.

EVALUATION: RESEARCH PAPER

Student: _____

Paper title or subject _____

Dimensions of Evaluation - (0 = unacceptably flawed, 1 = major and minor flaws limit success, 2 = one major or numerous minor flaws, 3 = perfection marred by minor flaws, 4 = superb)

- 1) Engagement, dynamism
- 2) Research source (quality, utilization)
- 3) Research contextualization (relevance to larger issues, class topics)
- 4) Structure (sentence structure, paragraph structure, overall architecture) continuity)
- 5) Documentation, citation
- 6) Presentation, (cosmetics, mechanics, titling, word choice)

Overall, in Sum _____ (20 points possible)

Narrative response: