
HISTORY 221: EXPLORATIONS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The American Military Experience Since 1899

Spring 2011
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison
Class Meetings: MWF, 2:25 PM - 3:15 PM
Humanities 2650

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1. Course description.

History 221 surveys the American military experience from the dawn of the 20th century to the present day. This course adopts a very broad view of military history, examining the influence of warfare on all aspects of American society. We will not omit the traditional mainstays of the field—the study of battles and leaders—but we will consider them within the broader context of the American experience. Ultimately, this course will provide an appreciation of how war has shaped America and, in many regards, defined its interaction with the world.

2. Course Objectives. Students will understand:

- a. How the United States has attempted to use military power to advance its interests and ideals around the world—and to what effect.
- b. How and why American military policies, establishments, and practices evolved over time—and the role of technology in this evolution.
- c. How concepts of identity (to include race, ethnicity, kinship, gender, and religion) influence the character of war and how war can, in turn, influence identity.
- d. Warfare as a human experience endured on the battlefield, at sea, in the air, on the homefront, at desolate outposts, and in councils of government.
- e. How to analyze, synthesize, and interpret historical process and events.

3. Course format.

This course consists of three complementary, core components: lectures, seminar discussions, and readings. To master the course objectives, students must afford each component sufficient attention. Lectures will address the broad themes, important events, and significant issues in American military history. Readings from Murray and Millet, *For the Common Defense*, will generally align with lecture topics and provide a context for discussion. These readings lack the breadth and depth of the lectures, however, and will not suffice as a substitute for attending class. Moreover, several lectures will address topics covered only fleetingly—if at all—in the assigned reading. Your other course texts provide more thorough treatment of selected topics in American military history and represent various forms of historical writing. These readings, each focused on a different aspect of the American military experience, will provide the basis for weekly seminar discussions. These sessions provide students opportunities to interactively engage the materials

and each other. To improve group discussions, students must complete all assigned readings prior to each seminar discussion.

4. Graded requirements. All students will be graded on a 1000-point scale.
 - a. Seminar discussion contributions (written and oral).

The quality of seminar discussions is entirely dependent upon student contributions, which will account for 130 points of each student's grade (10 points for each discussion session). Teaching Assistants (TAs) will assign this grade on the basis of *quality and consistency* over the course of the semester. An unexcused absence from any seminar discussion will result in 10-point penalty.

In preparation for seminar discussions, students will write essays in response to a question posed by the TA in the previous seminar meeting. These essays will enable students to practice their expository and argumentative writing skills, provide several opportunities for constructive feedback, and "seed" our discourse with considered positions on the issues at hand. These essays will consist of a single paragraph (not to exceed 300 words). They will not be graded, but failure to submit an acceptable essay will result in the forfeiture of 10 participation points with that discussion. (In other words, you must submit the essay to be eligible for class participation points). Essays are due via Learn@UW no later the deadline stipulated by your TA.

- b. Mid-term examination.

Students will receive a take-home, mid-term examination in class on 7 March. The examination will consist of two questions and will account for 220 points (110 points per question). Students will answer each question in an essay of 900 to 1,100 words. Essays must present a compelling thesis substantiated by specific historical evidence and demonstrate a mastery of the material covered in lectures, readings, and discussions. Poor writing, grammatical errors, and ineffective organization will result in grade deductions. Students may discuss the questions with one another outside of class, but the essays must be entirely their own work. **Completed examinations are due at the beginning of lecture, 11 March.**

- c. Writing requirement.

Students will write a 6-8 page essay based on an oral history interview that they conduct. Students may interview any person whose personal experiences offers insights on the American military experience in the 20th or 21st centuries. The most common subjects for such interviews are veterans of American wars, but students may elect to interview anyone with a valuable perspective regarding the influence of war on American society. Potential interview

subjects also include “gold star mothers,” mental health care professionals who have treated veterans suffering from PTSD, defense policy-makers, or organizers of anti-war activities. Students should take great care in selecting someone with a suitable depth of relevant experience and must always treat their interview subject with respect. Under no circumstance will students solicit an interview with adversarial intentions. Essays must relate the individual’s experiences to the broader themes of this course—an endeavor that will require additional research and citation. This writing requirement will account for 300 points. **Essays are due at the beginning of the 1 April class meeting.**

d. Final examination.

Students will receive a take-home, final examination in class on 6 May. The examination will consist of three essay questions, two requiring short answers of 400 to 500 words and one requiring an essay of 1500 to 2000 words. The final examination will cover all materials presented in the course and is worth 350 points (75 points per short answer and 200 points for the long essay). Each answer should present a compelling thesis substantiated by specific historical evidence and demonstrate a mastery of the material covered in lectures, readings, and discussions. Poor writing, grammatical errors, and ineffective organization will result in grade deductions. Students may discuss the questions with one another outside of class, but the essays must be entirely their own work. **Completed examinations are due at your TA’s office no later than 4:45 p.m. on 12 May.**

e. Grading summary.

Discussion participation:	130 points	13%
Mid-term examination:	220 points	22%
Writing requirement	300 points	30%
Final examination	350 points	35%

f. Grading scheme.

92-100%	A
87-91.9%	AB
82-86.9%	B
77-81.9%	BC
72-76.9%	C
67-71.9%	D
0-69.9%	F

5. Grading standards for written work.

a. Organization:

(1) Does the essay begin with an effective introduction that (a) engages the reader, (b) identifies historical problem under consideration, and (c) posits the student's thesis?

(2) Do paragraphs comprise discrete ideas defined by identifiable topic sentences?

(3) Does the student make effective use of transitions (especially between paragraphs)?

(4) Does the student arrange his or her paragraphs (ideas) in a logical sequence that furthers the argument while maintaining a coherent, chronological narrative?

(5) Does the student conclude with a summary of the paper's most salient findings and (if appropriate) an allusion to their broader significance?

b. Use of sources:

(1) Is the student's research adequate?

(2) Does the student make significant / sufficient use of primary sources?*

(3) Does the student over-rely on select secondary sources or non-scholarly sources?

(4) Does the student make appropriate use of the *best available* sources?

(5) Does the student effectively use evidence from these sources to further his or her argument?

(6) Does the student understand the historiography of his or her topic?*

(7) Does the student make excessive or inappropriate use of direct quotations?

c. Overall:

(1) Does the student present an original, compelling argument substantiated by appropriate historical evidence? Would a general, educated reader find the argument compelling?

(2) Does the student demonstrate mastery of the subject matter?

(3) Is the essay well written? Would a general, educated reader understand it and enjoy reading it?

(4) Is the essay properly formatted and free of errors?

6. How to succeed in this course.

a. Do the reading.

b. Attend all class meetings (lectures and seminar discussions).

(1) Be seated and prepared to take notes at 2:25 p.m.

(2) Turn off cell phones in class. Prof. Hall or the TAs will answer phones that ring; repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

(3) Coordinate anticipated absences, late arrivals, and early departures ahead of time.

(4) Prof. Hall expects personal explanations for unanticipated tardiness immediately following class.

c. Contribute to discussions.

d. Take notes—in class and while reading. Laptops are permitted in class for note-taking and referencing purposes only. Prof. Hall reserves the right to revoke laptop privileges for those who abuse them.

e. Work ahead on all graded requirements and submit them on time. **Late submissions will be penalized 10% for every 24-hour period they are late.**

* Research paper only.

f. Do your own work. Doing otherwise defeats the purpose of taking the course. Prof. Hall will investigate and punish suspected cases of plagiarism in accordance with Chapter 14 of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code.

g. Seek assistance from the professor or TA if you are struggling or do not understand the expectations.

7. Course texts. Students are responsible for acquiring the following texts:

Herrington, Stuart A. *Stalking the Vietcong: Inside Operation Phoenix: A Personal Account*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.

Filkins, Dexter. *The Forever War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Michener, James A. *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*. New York: Fawcett Books, 1953.

Millett, Allan R., and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*. Revised and expanded ed. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.

Schmidt, Hans. *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987.

Slotkin, Richard. *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005.

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

8. Course schedule.

LSN	Date	Topic	Reading
1	1/19	Introduction	None
<i>American Identity & Interventionism</i>			
2	1/21	Review & Summary: American Military History to 1899	Schmidt, 1-37
3	1/24	An Imperial Constabulary	Schmidt, 38-95; M&M, 334-38
S1	1/25-26	Seminar Discussion 1	~
4	1/26	Modernizing the Military Establishment, 1899-1914	Slotkin, 1-29; M&M, 316-34
5	1/28	Identity & Preparedness	All: M&M, 338-42; Slotkin, 29-34 Group A: Slotkin, 35-71 Group B: Slotkin, 72-111
<i>The Great War</i>			
6	1/31	Girding a Nation for War	M&M, 346-60; Slotkin, 112-51
S2	2/1-2	Seminar Discussion 2	~
7	2/2	The Amalgamation Debate	M&M, 360-72; Slotkin, 153-212
8	2/4	Race and Conflict	Slotkin, 213-39; Schmidt, 96-109
9	2/7	Meuse-Argonne	M&M, 372-76; Slotkin, 241-74
S3	2/8-9	Seminar Discussion 3	Group A: Slotkin, 275-303 Group B: Slotkin, 305-63
10	2/9	Lost Battalions/Writing Clinic	~
11	2/11	German Defeat, American Disappointment	Slotkin, 395-461
<i>The Interwar Years</i>			
12	2/14	Military Policy between the Wars	M&M, 380-407; Overy, xii-24
S4	2/15-16	Seminar Discussion 4	Schmidt, 202-51
<i>World War II</i>			
13	2/16	Germany First...?	M&M, 413-27, Overy, 25-44
14	2/18	Conducting Oral History	TBA
15	2/21	Economies at War	M&M, 427-35; Overy, 180-244
S5	2/22-23	Seminar Discussion 5	~
16	2/23	Battle of the Atlantic	M&M, 435-46; Overy, 44-62
17	2/25	The Soviet Contribution	Overy, 63-100
18	2/28	The Promise of Airpower	M&M, 450-66, 474-78; Overy, 101-33
S6	3/1-2	Seminar Discussion 6	~
19	3/2	The Invasion of Normandy	M&M, 466-74; Overy, 134-79
20	3/4	Strategic Leadership	M&M, 478-86; Overy, 245-81
21	3/7	Why <i>did</i> the Allies win? Mid-Term Review & distribution of take-home exam questions	Overy, 282-330
22	3/10	Evening Lecture at Wisconsin Veteran's Museum: Prof. William Meadows,	

	(T)	Native American Code-Talkers in WWII	
Colonialism, Revolution, & the Origins of the Cold War			
23	3/11	The Truman Doctrine	M&M, 494-507; Westad, 8-38 Submit exams
24	3/21	Mid-term discussion	Westad, 39-72; Start Michener
S7	3/22-23	Seminar Discussion 7	-
25	3/23	The Korean War: KMAG & TF Smith	M&M, 508-27; Continue Michener
26	3/25	Korea: Limited War	Finish Michener
27	3/28	The New Look: Nuclear Deterrence & Revolution	M&M, 531-52; Westad, 73-109
S8	3/29-30	Seminar Discussion 8	-
28	3/30	Creating the Third World	Westad, 110-57
29	4/1	The Flexible Response: Intervention in the '60s	M&M, 553-63; Westad, 158-180 Submit writing requirement
The Vietnam War			
30	4/4	Roots of Conflict	M&M, 570-89; Westad, 180-194
S9	4/5-6	Seminar Discussion 9	-
31	4/6	<i>Dau Tranh</i> —the People's War	Herrington, ix-53
32	4/8	Westy's War	Herrington, 54-106
33	4/11	Tet & the War at Home	Herrington, 107-65
S10	4/12-13	Seminar Discussion 10	-
34	4/13	"A Better War" Considered	M&M, 589-93; Herrington, 166-223
35	4/15	The Helicopter War (special presentation by Rick Berry)	M&M, 593-601; Westad, 194-206
36	4/18	Legacies, Foreign & Domestic	Herrington, 224-72
S11	4/19-20	Seminar Discussion 11	-
From Cold War to GWOT			
37	4/20	The Cold War in Iran & Afghanistan	M&M, 607-14; Westad, 288-330
38	4/22	The Reagan Offensive	M&M, 614-28; Westad, 331-63
39	4/25	Apparent Victory: Collapse of the Soviet Union & the Gulf War	M&M, 628-42; Westad, 364-95
S12	4/26-27	Seminar Discussion 12	-
40	4/27	A World of Our Making?	Westad, 396-407; Filkins, 3-9, 71-135
41	4/29	"Peacekeeping": The 1990s	Filkins, 136-88
42	5/2	Preventative War: Afghanistan & Iraq	Filkins, 189-244
S13	5/3-4	Seminar Discussion 13	-
43	5/4	Panel Discussion: Modern War	Filkins, 244-95
44	5/6	Review & distribution of take-home examination questions	Filkins, 295-346
	5/12	Examination essays due at TA's office no later than 4:45 PM	