

## HIS 428 – The American Military Experience Since 1899

MWF – 9:55-10:45, Humanities 1651, 4 credits

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UW-Madison

Syllabus Spring 2020

\*subject to change\*

Dr. Cook's Office Hours: Monday 11-12 or by appointment

Humanities Building 5265

This 4-credit course meets as a group for 4 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each 50-minute class counts as one hour). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

**Course description:** This course is designed to enhance students' knowledge of the Military Experience in the US since 1899. 1899 is a pivotal year, since it marks the beginning of the US empire, when the nation acquired foreign territories such as Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. As the US became more active in the world in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it relied upon the military to advance and defend its global interests. We will read and discuss topics related to the military experience both domestically and abroad, paying particular attention to the political, cultural, and personal effects of US military expansion.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be challenged to think critically about the US military in US history, politics, and culture. Because of the diversity inherent in the broad topic of the military experience, we will examine a variety of sources, including standard histories, memoirs, primary documents, and a novel, which students will examine and analyze with historical thinking and questioning. Short writing assignments that compare and contrast documents as well as a group film analysis project will develop critical thinking skills, documents analysis, reading and writing skills, argumentative essay construction, and public speaking.

### Required Books: (3)

Jeremy Black, *The Age of Total War* (2010) (also available online through the UW library)

John C. Stevens III, *Court-Martialed at Parris Island* (1999)

Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk*, novel, (2012)

**Assignments:**

Essay Exam 1 – 15% -  
Film Analysis Presentation – 20% -  
Essay Exam 2 – 15% -  
Op-Ed Review of Drone Warfare – 15% -  
Essay Final Exam – 15% -  
Participation/Discussion Grade – 20 % -

**Due:**

Feb. 26  
due date is group specific  
March 25  
April 17  
May 1  
ongoing

**Assignment Descriptions:**

Essay Exams 1, 2, and Final: a take-home essay consisting of five paragraphs, citing readings with footnotes. The exam question will be distributed a few days prior to due date.

Op-Ed Review Exercise: Students are required to write an essay comparing and contrasting three op-ed pieces, provided by instructor. Analyze the authors' viewpoints on the issue of drone warfare and answer the following questions: How do the authors approach the topic in different ways? Do you support or challenge the authors' arguments? Which author is most convincing? Your analysis should be 3-3.5 pages. Must use **ALL 3** in essay (op-eds available on Canvas)

Film analysis: This is a group project. Each individual will sign up for a specific film to review and analyze, and choices will form the groups. Films are listed throughout the semester, and the film date they choose will be the date of their presentation. Students in each group will meet on their own time to prepare a presentation, including a summary of the film and an analysis of its historical significance. Groups should discuss the film in the context of the time period in which it was released and interpret themes that are relevant to the spirit of the times, culture, and political climate of the time period. Each student must prepare a written paper (3-4 paragraphs) of the group's work, including an assessment of how each individual in the group contributed to the project and what you learned about history from the screening and analysis of the film (graded by the instructor). During the 15-20 minute presentation to the class, students should use PowerPoint/Google Docs and clips from the film to highlight your points.

Participation: Students should come to class prepared to ask questions and answer questions about the readings and other materials. Participation is based upon the quantity and quality of engagement and interaction with the members of the class. Special opportunities will be available for analyzing the weekly readings. Attendance is also considered as part of the grade.

**Grading Structure: (gaps indicate + or – range)**

94-100% A

83-87% B

73-77% C

67-70% D

0-66.9% F

- Note: Earning an A for any assignment in this class requires excellent writing and organizational skills as well as creativity and a demonstration of knowledge of course material. Therefore, As will be awarded sparingly. Please refer below for guidelines.

Grading standards for written work.

a. Organization:

- (1) Does the essay begin with an effective introduction that (a) engages the reader, (b) identifies the 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 appropriate use of the *best available* sources?
- (3) Does the student effectively use evidence from these sources to further his or her argument?
- (4) Does the student make excessive or inappropriate use of direct quotations?

c. Critical Thinking:

- (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?

d. Style and Polish:

(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?

### **Guidelines for Written Assignments:**

Unless otherwise instructed, students should assume that all written assignments are typed, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins or less, with Chicago Manual of Style footnote/endnote citations, no separate title page needed, titled at the top of the first numbered page, and submitted as hardcopy on or before the due date. Problems with printers or other technical issues is the sole responsibility of the student and will not be accepted as an excuse for late work. You must refer to readings and use footnotes in your work.

**Classroom Policies:** Arrive to class on-time; do not get up and leave class during lecture or presentations; do not talk during lecture or presentations; do not check your phones; laptops are permitted in class and encouraged during group work. However, if you are caught browsing your phone or laptop, you will be warned once. If it happens again, you will be asked to surrender your device to me for the remainder of class, and your device privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the semester. Late papers or assignments will not be accepted, and there are no extra credit options.

### **Semester Schedule**

Week 1 – Reading: Jeremy Black, *The Age of Total War, 1860-1945*, Ch. 1/Introduction

Wed, January 22 - Introduction and Syllabus

Friday, January 24 - The Military and US Empire Building

Week 2 – Reading: Jeremy Black, *The Age of Total War*, Chapters 2 & 3

Monday, January 27 - The War of 1898 – “the Splendid Little War”

Wednesday, January 29 – Teddy Roosevelt and American Masculinity

Friday, January 31 - Primary documents: Alfred Thayer Mahan, “The Importance of Sea Power,” William McKinley, “Decision to Keep the Philippines,” etc.

Week 3 – Reading: Black, *The Age of Total War*, Chapter 4

Monday, Feb. 3 - Film Group Sign-Ups and Film Analysis

Wed., Feb. 5 – Progressives in Navy Blue

Friday, Feb. 7 – Banana Republics

Week 4 – Reading: Black, *The Age of Total War*, Chapter 5

Monday, Feb. 10 - The Preparedness Movement and the ROTC National Defense Act

Wed., Feb. 12 – The Military Experience during WWI + General Mitchell and the Air Force

Friday, Feb. 14 - Primary documents: W. E. B. Du Bois, “Returning Soldier,” John Dos Passos,  
Writing Tips from the Instructor, Exam Prep

Week 5 – Reading: Black, *The Age of Total War*, Chapter 6

Monday, February 17 – The US in Nicaragua

Wed. February 19 – Mobilizing for World War II

Friday, Feb. 21 – Civil-Military Conflict on the WWII Homefront

Week 6 – Reading: Black, *The Age of Total War*, Chapter 7 & 8

Monday, Feb. 24 – the US in the Philippines – Bataan Death March

Wednesday, Feb. 26 - Diversity in Service (Race, Gender, & Sexuality) & Double V Visions

**Essay Exam 1 Due in Class**

Friday, Feb. 28 - Visit to the WI Veteran’s Museum (Meet there, State St. on the square)

Week 7 – Reading: Selections from Michael D. Gambone, *The Greatest Generation Comes Home*, CANVAS

Monday, March 2 - The “Greatest Generation” Comes Home, The GI Bill

Film Group Presentation 1 – *The Best Years of Our Lives*

Wed., March 4 - NSC-68 and Communist Containment

Friday, March 6 - Primary documents: NSC-68, George Kennan Memos etc.

Week 8 – Reading: Selections from Melvin Leffler, *The Specter of Communism*, CANVAS

Monday, March 9 - The Red Scare and Army-McCarthy Hearings

Film Group Presentation 2 – *Dr. Strangelove*

Wed. March 11 – Primary Documents on Conscientious Objectors and Moral Injury

Friday, March 13 – No Class, Spring Break

Week 9 – Reading: Selections from David Maraniss, *They Marched Into Sunlight*, CANVAS

Monday, March 23 – Advisors and The Vietnam War

Film Group Presentation 3 – *The Green Berets*

Wed., March 25 – The Vietnam War Experience

**Essay Exam 2 Due Today**

Friday, March 27 - Anti-War Activism in the 1960s

Film Group Presentation 4 – *Apocalypse Now*

Week 10 – Reading: John C. Stevens III, *Court-Martial at Parris Island: Ribbon Creek Incident*, pp. ix-78

Monday, March 30 - The Global Cold War

Film Group Presentation 5 – *Full Metal Jacket*

Wed., April 1 - Crises of American Power

Film Group Presentation 6 – *Taxi Driver*

Friday, April 3 – History of the WI National Guard

Week 11 – Reading: Stevens, *Court-Martial at Parris Island*, pp. 79-177

Monday, April 6 - Reagan and the Remaking of American Power

Film Group Presentation 7 – *Rambo*

Wed. April 8 - The Iran-Contra Scandal and the Marine Corps.

Film Group Presentation 8 – *Heartbreak Ridge*

Friday, April 10 – No Class, Holiday Break

Week 12 – Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk*, first third of book.

Monday, April 13 - Recruitment and Boot Camp

Film Group Presentation 9 – *Top Gun*

Wed., April 15 – Lockheed Martin and the US Military-Industrial Complex

Friday, April 17 – TBD

**Op-Ed Review Essay, Due Today**

Week 13 – Reading: Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk*, second third of book.

Monday, April 20 - Small Wars and Peacekeeping in the 1990s

Film Group Presentation 10 – *Black Hawk Down*

Wed. April 22 - Primary Documents: Garrett M. Graff, *The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11*, in-class reading and discussion

Friday, April 24 – “Thank You for Your Service,” in-class reading and discussion

Film Group Presentation 11 - *American Sniper*

Week 14 – Reading: *Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk*, final third of book.

Monday, April 27 – PTSD and US Veterans

Wednesday, April 29 – Modern Mercenaries

Friday, May 1 – **Final Exam Due Today**