
History 958: American Military History

Fall 2024

Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison

Wednesdays, 1:20 – 3:15 PM

5257 Mosse Humanities Bldg.

1-3 credit hours

50% Graduate Coursework Requirement

Prof. John W. Hall

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(845) 662-1911

Office: 5133 Humanities

Office hours: M, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

- 1) **OVERVIEW.** This course provides a broad introduction to recent and significant works in American military history as well as the “state of the field.” It will familiarize students with the paramount historiographical issue within the field—American “ways of war”—as well as recent works in substantive subfield of “war and society,” thereby fulfilling one of the curricular requirements for the War in Society and Culture Program. Students may also fulfill temporal requirements for the U.S. field by arranging for concentrated readings in the desired century/centuries.
- 2) **COURSE OBJECTIVES.**
 - a) Students will acquire a foundational knowledge of the major events and historiographical themes in American military history.
 - b) Students will critically evaluate and contextualize signal and notable recent scholarship in the field, communicating their evaluations orally and in the form of an academic review article.
 - c) Students will synthesize course materials in a manner that furthers their own scholarship.
- 3) **EXPECTATIONS / REQUIREMENTS.**
 - a) Students may take this course for 1-3 credits. The credit standard for the course is met by an expectation of at least 45 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities for each credit (1 credit = at least 45 hours; 2 credits = at least 90 hours; 3 credits = at least 135 hours). For all students, these activities will include group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week. Other course activities and assignments (dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, etc.) will vary depending on the number of credits for which a student is enrolled.
 - i) Students enrolled for 1 credit are only required to meet expectation/requirement 2b.
 - ii) Students enrolled for 2 credits will meet expectations/requirements 2b and 2c.
 - iii) Students enrolled for 3 credits will meet all expectations/requirements of this paragraph.
 - b) Students must read all assigned readings (see “Course Texts/Schedule,” below), attend all meetings of the seminar and participate actively in discussion. In coordination with the professor, students may (a) substitute books from the “American Military History Readings” shared EndNote library for the common reading for any particular week and (b)

- nominate books for inclusion in this library. Participation will be evaluated for quality and consistency.
- c) Students will select and review one recent, historiographically significant book-length work on American military history that supports their individual research agenda. All reviews should be critical, analytical, and thoughtful. Assess the book as a work of individual scholarship and locate it in the larger body of literature. Consider and address at least three published, scholarly reviews in your own. At a minimum, reviews should provide:
- i) Information on the author and his or her qualifications.
 - ii) A brief, *general* description of the organization and contents of the book.
 - iii) A statement of the purpose of the book and its thesis.
 - iv) Your critical evaluation of how successful the author is in achieving his or her goals and in persuading you of the thesis. The emphasis in each review should be on **critical** reading and evaluation. No book is perfect and none is worthless. The objective is to discern the strengths and weaknesses in the books you read and to place them in the context of the kinds of literature being done in the field and approaches to the various topics.
 - v) **Students must submit standard bibliographical information on the book they propose to review via email to Prof. Hall no later than noon, Monday, 16 September.**
 - vi) **The book review will not exceed 800 words and is due via email to the entire class at least 24 hours before the class meeting in which the book most appropriately falls. Students will briefly summarize the book and answer questions from fellow students during that class session.**
- d) Students will prepare *either* a 4,000-word research paper *or* a mock dissertation prospectus on a subject of their own choosing, contingent on instructor approval. Projects should be conceived to further a student's progress toward degree completion. In either case, a two-page project proposal is due at the beginning of the week 5 class meeting and the completed project is due at the beginning of the week 13 class meeting. Students may schedule individual meetings with Prof. Hall during week 8.

4) COURSE TEXTS/SCHEDULE.

Week 1, 4 September	Introduction to the Field
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Biddle, Tami Davis, and Robert M. Citino. *The Role of Military History in the Contemporary Academy*. Lexington, VA: Society for Military History, 2014.

Bailey, Beth L., Christopher Capozzola, Kara Dixon Vuic, Lesley J. Gordon, John W. Hall, Andrew J. Huebner, Jennifer Keene, Adriane Lenz-Smith, and Susannah J. Ural. "What Is War and Society? A Roundtable Discussion." In *Cambridge History of War and Society in America*, edited by Andrew J. Huebner and Jennifer Keene. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Lee, Wayne E. "Mind and Matter—Cultural Analysis in American Military History: A Look at the State of the Field." *Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (Mar. 2007): 1116-42.

Week 2, 11 September	"Ways of War"
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Linn, Brian M., and Russell F. Weigley. "The American Way of War Revisited." *The Journal of Military History* 66, no. 2 (2002): 501-33.

Grenier, John. [*The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Week 3, 18 September	Contact and Conflict
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Book review selections due

Silverman, David J. [*Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America*](#). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016.

Week 4, 25 September	War for American Independence
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Hall, John W. "An Irregular Reconsideration of George Washington and the American Military Tradition." *The Journal of Military History* 78, no. 3 (July 2014): 961-93.

Ruddiman, John A. [*Becoming Men of Some Consequence: Youth and Military Service in the Revolutionary War*](#). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

Week 5, 2 October	Young Republic
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Proposals due

Carp, E. Wayne. "The Problem of National Defense in the Early Republic." In *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits*, edited by Jack P. Greene, 14-50. New York: New York University Press, 1987.

Herrera, Ricardo A. [*For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861*](#). New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Week 6, 9 October	Antebellum Era
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Greenberg, Amy S. *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012

Hall, John W. "American Military History During the Early Republic, 1784-1860." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Military History*, edited by Samuel Watson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2025.

Week 7, 16 October	Civil War
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Zander, Cecily N. [*The Army under Fire: The Politics of Antimilitarism in the Civil War Era*](#). Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2024.

Week 8, 23 October	Individual Meetings
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Appointments (as required) to be scheduled online.

Week 9, 30 October	Toward Empire
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Capozzola, Christopher. *Bound by War: How the United States and the Philippines Built America's First Pacific Century*. New York: Basic Books, 2020.

Week 10, 6 November	The Great War
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Keene, Jennifer D. *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America*. War, Society, Culture. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Week 11, 13 November	World War II
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Roberts, Mary Louise. [*Sheer Misery: Soldiers in Battle in WWII*](#). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Week 12, 20 November	Cold War
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Rutenberg, Amy J. [*Rough Draft: Cold War Military Manpower Policy and the Origins of Vietnam-Era Draft Resistance*](#). Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 2019.

Week 13, 27 November	Papers Due
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No common assigned reading. Students will summarize their work in 5-minute verbal presentations

Week 14, 4 December	Vietnam
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Daddis, Gregory A. [*Pulp Vietnam: War and Gender in Cold War Men's Adventure Magazines*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Week 15, 11 December	New American Empire
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Aune, Stefan. [*Indian Wars Everywhere: Colonial Violence and the Shadow Doctrines of Empire*](#). Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023.