History 706: Readings in Transnational War & Society

Fall 2025
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison
Wednesdays, 1:20 – 3:15 PM
5257 Mosse Humanities Bldg.
1-3 credit hours
50% Graduate Coursework Requirement

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Office hours: M, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

1) COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES. This course introduces students to the field of "War & Society." Within the broader field of military history, War & Society Studies ask how and why societies organize and deploy violence on their collective behalf and question the reciprocal effects of these choices upon societies over time. Reflecting the broad scope of Wisconsin's War in Society & Culture Program (WISC) — for which this is the core graduate seminar — this course encompasses cases from antiquity to the present day and from around the world. By the conclusion of the course, students will:
   a) Understand core concepts and historiographic debates within War & Society Studies as well as the subfield's place within the historical development of military history more generally.
   b) Explore seminal and recent scholarship that represents the state of the field.
   c) Critically evaluate and contextualize these works of scholarship through oral and written forms of evaluation, including an academic review article.
   d) Apply critical course concepts to an extended written project that furthers their scholarly interests.
   e) Be prepared to apply the knowledge acquired to more focused studies within the War in Society and Culture Program.

2) 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. Participation will be evaluated for quality and consistency.

c) Students will select one recent, historiographically significant book-length work in the field of war & society war that furthers 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 Canvas to Prof. Hall no later than noon, Monday, 15 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 via Canvas at the beginning of the week 5 class meeting, and the completed project is due via Canvas at the beginning of the week 14 class meeting.

3) COURSE SCHEDULE/READINGS.

Week 1, 3 September	**Introduction**

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, 2026.

Hagemann, Karen. "Introduction: Gender and the History of War—the Development of the Research." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600*, edited by Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink and Sonya O. Rose. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Week 2, 10 September	**War in Human History**

MacMillan, Margaret. *War: How Conflict Shaped Us.* New York: Random House, 2020.

Gat, Azar. "Is War in Our Nature? What Is Right and What Is Wrong About the Seville Statement on Violence." *Human Nature* 30, no. 2 (2019): 149-54.

Week 3, 17 September	**Ancient Greece**

*****Book review selections due via Canvas at noon, Monday, 15 September*****

Hanson, Victor Davis. *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*. 2nd ed. Berkley: University of California Press, 1989.

González García, Francisco Javier, and Pedro López Barja de Quiroga. "Neocon Greece: V. D. Hanson's War on History." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 19, no. 3 (2012): 129–51.

Week 4, 24 September	**Medieval Mediterranean**

Fancy, Hussein Anwar. *The Mercenary Mediterranean: Sovereignty, Religion, and Violence in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Caferro, William. "Petrarch's War: Florentine Wages and the Black Death." *Speculum* 88, no. 1 (2013): 144–65.

Week 5, 1 October	**(Anglo) Cross-cultural Violence in War**

*****Project proposal due via Canvas before the start of class*****

Lee, Wayne E. *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500-1865.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Karr, Ronald Dale. "'Why Should You Be So Furious?': The Violence of the Pequot War." *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 876-909.

Week 6, 8 October	**The Fiscal-Military State ("The West")**

Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. Revised paperback edition ed. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992.

Edling, Max M. "The US Fiscal-Military State and the Conquest of a Continent, 1783–1900." In *The Cambridge History of America and the World*, edited by Kristin Hoganson and Jay Sexton, 221-45. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Week 7, 15 October	**Soldier Motivation (Early Modern Europe)**

Berkovich, Ilya. *Motivation in War: The Experience of Common Soldiers in Old-Regime Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Parker, Geoffrey. "Mutiny and Discontent in the Spanish Army of Flanders 1572-1607." *Past & Present*, no. 58 (1973): 38–52.

Week 8, 22 October	**Wars of De/Re-Colonization**

NB: Prof. Peterson will visit campus this week. In lieu of a standard seminar, students will (as their schedules allow) students will participate in a luncheon event with him and attend his 4 PM lecture in Curti Lounge on 22 October.

Peterson, Terrence G. *Revolutionary Warfare: How the Algerian War Made Modern Counterinsurgency*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2024.

Satia, Priya. "Strategies of Anti-Imperial Resistance: Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, and Fanon." In *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, edited by Hal Brands, 440-68. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023.

Week 9, 29 October	**Technology / The "Military Revolution" (Asia)**

Andrade, Tonio. *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Smithee, Alan Wilson. "'A Man of Particular Ability': A Jewish-Genoese Military Contractor in the Fiscal-Military System." Oxford University. Nd.

Week 10, 5 November	**Total War I (Age of Revolutions)**

Bell, David A. *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007.

Haynes, Christine. "The New 'New' Military History: Recent Work on War in the Age of Revolutions." *Journal of Modern History* 95, no. 2 (2023): 385-415.

Week 11, 12 November	**Women in a at World at War (USSR)**

Aleksievich, Svetlana. *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II.* New York: Random House, 2017.

Hagemann, Karen, and Sonya O. Rose. "War and Gender: The Age of the World Wars and Its Aftermath—an Overview." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, War, and the Western World since 1600,* edited by Karen Hagemann, Stefan Dudink and Sonya O. Rose. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Week 12, 19 November	**Total War II (Airpower & "Ways of War")**

Sherry, Michael S. *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Echevarria, Antulio J. "American Ways of War: Turns in Interpretation." In *Reconsidering the American Way of War: US Military Practice from the Revolution to Afghanistan*, 9–31. Georgetown University Press, 2014.

Week 13, 26 November	**Labor & Military History**

Labor roundtable (publication data TBP).

NB: the assigned readings will also be the subject of a War in Society & Culture Program colloquium, to be scheduled in late November or early December. Students without schedule conflicts are expected to participate in the colloquium in lieu of standard seminar attendance.

Week 14, 3 December	**Militarism / Post-colonial Africa**

Project due via Canvas before the start of class*

Daly, Samuel Fury Childs. *Soldier's Paradise: Militarism in Africa after Empire*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2024.

Gusterson, Hugh, and Catherine Besteman. "Cultures of Militarism: An Introduction to Supplement 19." *Current Anthropology* 60, no. S19 (February 2019): S3-S14.

Week 15, 26 April	**The End of War?**

Gat, Azar. *The Causes of War and the Spread of Peace: But Will War Rebound?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Morgan, Michael Cotey. "Kant, Paine, and Strategies of Liberal Transformation." In *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, edited by Hal Brands, 193-217. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023.