

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

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## HIST 629: STUDIES IN WESTERN MILITARY HISTORY

### **1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Wars are among the most transformative events in any human society. In the United States, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, WWI, and WWII still loom large in public and private memory. Numerous western states are currently engaged in many larger and smaller conflicts around the world. Yet, in recent decades, few historians and academic institutions have focused their research and writing on warfare and violent conflict. One explanation for this unfortunate trend is the decisive turn in academia toward social and cultural history since the 1960s. An emphasis on frameworks such as race, class, and gender seemingly does not fit with military history and its focus on politics, organizations, and institutions. Particularly since the Vietnam War, at least in the United States, there is also a widespread concern that teaching and studying warfare entails its glorification. Excluding warfare when writing about human society, culture, and politics, however, leads to a woefully inadequate picture of our past. Moreover, military historians have recently adopted numerous new techniques and methodological frameworks that have propelled the field far ahead and away from the old 'drum-and-bugle' accounts of yesteryears.

This course aims to confront these and other developments in historiography by studying key topics such as the prehistoric warfare, medieval war and technology, the early modern military revolution, war-making in Colonial America, military theory and institutions, the U.S. Civil War, World War I, the Eastern Front in WWII, warfare and culture, Vietnam, and the current struggle in Afghanistan.

Most days, this course revolves around discussions of several readings. The format and content explored in this course will enable you to recognize historical arguments, become familiar with major interpretations of Western military history, know the most important people, ideas, and events in Western military history since the Middle Ages, understand their significance in today's world, find and analyze primary and secondary sources, and write a research paper. You will learn that warfare cannot be placed in a separate category of horrible human behavior or be seen simply as a terrible exception to otherwise peaceable human progress. Instead, warfare remains a common and central theme of even the world's most advanced societies.

### **2. ROOM AND TIME**

Time/Day: Monday, 4.30pm – 7.15pm

Room: Gottschalk Hall 304

### **3. OFFICE HOURS**

Wednesday, 10am – 12pm; or by appointment

#### **4. BLACKBOARD**

Check the course's Blackboard page frequently to download material, receive messages, and learn about changes.

#### **5. REQUIRED TEXTS**

Available for sale at the bookstore or two-hour Course Reserve in the Ekstrom Library. See the Weekly Schedule for the particular reading assignments.

- Lawrence Keeley, *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. Paperback (1997).
- Kelly DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology*. Paperback (2012).
- Clifford J. Rogers, ed. *The Military Revolution Debate. Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*. Paperback (1995).
- John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*. Paperback (2008).
- Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*. Paperback (2008).
- Michael Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History*. Paperback (2006).
- Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich*. Paperback (1992).
- John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*. Paperback (2003).
- H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam*. Paperback (1998).
- Sebastian Junger, *War*. Paperback (2011).

#### **6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

I. Research Paper	200
II. Topic	20
III. Annotated Bibliography	30
IV. Proposal	50
V. Outline	50
VI. Class Participation	100
<b>Total:</b>	<b>450</b>

## Grading:

Letter Grade:	Percentage:
A+	100 – 97
A	96 – 94
A-	93 – 90
B+	89 – 87
B	86 – 84
B-	83 – 80
C+	79 – 77
C	76 – 74
C-	73 – 70
D+	69 – 67
D	66 – 64
D-	63 – 60
F	<60

Plagiarism: Students must not plagiarize, which is the use of primary or secondary materials without proper citation in the footnotes, endnotes, or in the work. Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property and results in the immediate failure of the assignment and/or worse. For further discussion and definitions of plagiarism and its penalties, see <http://louisville.edu/a-s/history/plagiarism.html>. All students must consult these statements and are hereby given due notice of this History Department policy. If the instructor should find out about a case of plagiarism in this course, the student will always fail the entire course, not just the assignment and will also be reported to the Dean of the College. All students have the right to appeal these decisions.

Disability clause: All students with a disability who require special accommodations to participate in and complete this course must contact the Disability Resource center (852-6938) for verification of eligibility and for determination of specific accommodations.

Due dates: All papers/assignments are due on the dates given in the syllabus (see Weekly Schedule below). The instructor will not accept any late assignments without a valid reason (e.g. illness) and documentary proof (i.e. a note from the physician) presented within two workdays after the due date. If students anticipates problems with due dates, the will have to inform the instructor beforehand during office hours and discuss possible solutions.

## I. RESEARCH PAPER

All students will write a research paper:

- 15 – 20 pages
- double-spaced
- 12p Times New Roman
- 1" margins
- footnotes in 10p Times New Roman, single-spaced, Turabian/Chicago style

- no in-text citations or endnotes
- separate bibliography
- separate title page with name, paper title, course information, and name of revising classmate
- page numbers in lower right-hand corner
- paper stapled in upper left corner

For this paper, students will develop their own topic upon consultation with the instructor. This topic has to have a relation to one of the readings discussed in the course. Upon approval of their topics, students will conduct research among primary and secondary sources in the library or other archives, develop a research question and thesis, and put together an annotated bibliography.

Over the course of their studies, students will have to revise their thesis, reformulate their research questions, or even change their topics entirely. Once all students have settled on a specific topic and thesis, they will conduct further research and start organizing their thoughts into a paper proposal. Next, they will formulate a paper outline for their ideas, theses, arguments, and evidence. Finally, students will write their papers and revise it before submitting it to the instructor. To that end, each paper has to be proofread by at least one classmate (to be listed by name on the title page). Students cannot submit a final paper without having received full points on II. Topic and IV. Proposal.

A study and writing week toward the end of the semester as well as research and writing guides on Blackboard and class sessions on conducting historical research will help students in this process (see Weekly Schedule below). Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor frequently to discuss their paper and research.

## II. TOPIC

Students will submit a one-page (double-spaced; 12p Times New Roman; 1" margins) description of their topic and preliminary thesis, incl. a list of current/planned primary/secondary sources.

## III. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students will collect primary sources and secondary literature pertinent to their project. In order to decide which items are important, they will have to skim everything. This means, for instance, that they look closely at the table of content, the introduction, and conclusion of a book in order to determine whether it is important for their project or not. For this assignment, they will list at least ten items according to bibliographical standards of this course (*Turabian/Chicago*) and describe them and their importance in a brief paragraph.

## IV. PROPOSAL

This assignment requires students to write a two- to three-page proposal (double-spaced; 12p Times New Roman; 1" margins; no foot- or endnotes) of their research topic for the final paper. It should contain information introducing the reader to the topic and the overall thesis (*What*) as well as the major questions or problems to be discussed (*So What*). The proposal then needs to say something about sources and methodology (*How*).

## V. OUTLINE

Students will write a one-page outline of their final paper. A mass of facts and opinions concerning a subject does not constitute a historical study. The main goal in writing a paper in history, whether it is based on original research or secondary literature, is to arrange the material so that it supports a thesis. An outline gives students the overall plan for writing their paper and helps to decide the order in which evidence and arguments will be presented. An outline structures each section of a paper and leads to the final conclusion sustaining the thesis. To that end, students will consult the online guide to writing outlines to decide over the style of outline best suited to their topic and research.

## VI. Class Participation

Students will be asked to be present and participate in all classes, prepare the course readings, and contribute to course discussions and activities. In other words, simply sitting in class passively and raising their hand sometimes will not earn students full points in this category. Students are expected to be on time and conduct themselves with decorum and courtesy in the classroom. The instructor does not tolerate sleeping, chatting, texting, and wearing hats/hoods. Cell phones, pagers, etc. must be turned off during class and stored away. Surfing the internet or watching movies on your laptop/iPad, or other electronic devices, during class will not be tolerated.

In addition:

- for each week with assigned readings, one student will present three related topics or questions to be debated in class
- for each week with assigned readings, one student will present to the class the historiographical background of the assigned reading
- each student will give a 5-10 minute presentation on his/her research paper (see Weekly Schedule)

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus and give additional, unannounced quizzes when necessary.

## **7. RESEARCH AND WRITING GUIDES**

Further guides on writing a research paper, listening to lectures, note taking, effective reading, citing, and other topics will also be available online. Be advised that all writings in this course will also be graded for grammatical errors, style, word choice, composition, etc. Good writing is essential for convincing your reader about your arguments.

## **8. WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Week 1: 01/06

Class cancelled

Week 2: 01/13

Introduction & War before Civilization: Persistent Myths                      Keeley, entire

Week 3: 01/20

**No class (MLK day)**

Week 4: 01/27

Medieval Warfare: Technology

**Topic due**

DeVries, entire

Week 5: 02/03

The Military Revolution: Modern Warfare

Rogers, Intro, Ch 1,2,4 (Library Course Reserve)

Week 6: 02/10

Weaponry, Tactics, and Operations in the Early Modern Era

Lynn, Intro & Ch. 4,6

Week 7: 02/17

Colonial America: Ways of War

**Annotated Bibliography due**

Grenier, entire

Week 8: 02/24

Historical Research and Writing

No Readings

Week 9: 03/03

U.S. Civil War: Memory

**Proposal due**

Reardon, Prologue & Ch. 1-3, 5, 7

Week 10: 03/10 – 03/14

**No class (Spring Break)**

Week 11: 03/17

World War I: Global Conflict

Neiberg, entire

Week 12: 03/24

World War II: Ideology

**Outline due**

Bartov, entire

Week 13: 03/31

World War II: Cultures of War

Lynn, Ch. 7

Week 14: 04/07

The War in Vietnam: Politics & Strategy

McMaster, entire

Week 15: 04/14

The Long War in Afghanistan: Soldiers

Junger, entire

Week 16: 04/21

**Paper presentations & Paper due**

No Readings

## **9. IMPORTANT DATES**

Classes start: Jan. 6

Last day to drop/add: Jan. 10

Martin Luther King holiday: Jan. 20

Last day to withdraw: March 6

Spring break: March 10-14

Last day of classes: April 21

## **10. HELPFUL LITERATURE AND RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH**

Check with the Instructor about additional readings and resources for research such as bibliographies or historiographic essays.