

HL 215: War in Literature and Film (course guide subject to change)

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Office hours: Mondays, 9:30-11:30, or by appointment

Course Description

How does literature and film shape our understanding of war? In this course, through an examination of twentieth century literature and film, we will study the various ways in which a number of writers, directors and theorists have approached the subject of war. The ‘texts’ covered on the course include cinematic endorsements of war, black comedies, absurdist satires, philosophical considerations as well as harrowing condemnations of armed conflict. By considering these texts together we will discover the myriad ways artists have tackled this vital aspect of human existence, and examine how literature/film investigates the ‘idea’ of war as well as the actual experience of war.

Class Guidelines

Each seminar is divided into two sections: a lecture followed by student discussion and student presentations. All students are required to give a presentation on a relevant topic of their choosing. Students are also expected to (a) read the assigned texts/critical reading in advance of each week’s class, (b) to view the films – which are reserved at the Business/Media Library – in advance of class; and (c) participate fully in class discussions and writing exercises.

Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Introductions; Presentations assigned
2	Selections from <i>Oxford Book of War Poetry</i> (provided by instructor as pdf) Jaroslav Hašek, <i>The Good Soldier Švejk</i> (excerpts provided)
3	Ernest Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>
4	Ernest Hemingway, <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>
5	Joseph Heller, <i>Catch-22</i>
6	RECESS
7	Stanley Kubrick, <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> (film); Paul Virilio, <i>War and Cinema</i> (excerpts as pdf) (essay due in this week)
8	Tim O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i>
9	Francis Ford Coppola <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (film)
10	Stanley Kubrick, <i>Paths of Glory</i> and <i>Full Metal Jacket</i> (film)
11	Jean Baudrillard, <i>The Gulf War Did Not Take Place</i> (excerpts as pdf)
12	Terrence Malick, <i>The Thin Red Line</i> (film)

Assessment

Class Participation (including presentations):	20%
Essay:	30%
Final Exam:	50%

Essay

There will be a 2,500-word essay assignment. We will discuss essay guidelines in class.

Deadline to be announced later.