

War and American Society
HIST 370-001
Monday & Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:15 pm
Planetary 212

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History is often divided into neat compartments like military history or social history. This course seeks to complicate the separation of wars from the societies that prosecute them. Throughout the semester we will analyze primary and secondary sources, discuss how they affect perceptions of war in American society, and draw conclusions based on those sources.

Throughout the semester, we will be analyzing historical sources, including digital history sources, tools, and presentations. You will learn how to read primary sources for historical value, how to evaluate secondary sources for accuracy, objectivity, and utility, how to communicate the conclusions you draw from your analysis. You will learn how to write an academic paper and how to communicate complex ideas in a clear and concise manner.

Assigned readings will be selected from the following:

Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States*

The Internet History Sourcebook: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/index.asp>

Expectations: We have specific expectations of each other. I expect that you will come to class regularly and promptly, that you will complete all of the assigned readings by the date noted on the syllabus, that all assignments will be turned in as instructed and on time, and that you will contact me when you have questions or when you have difficulty with class or the material. You may expect the following of me: I will reply to all external communications within 24 hours, I will post grades, discussion questions, and project parameters in a timely fashion as noted in the syllabus, I will answer questions during class, I will tell you what I expect for all assignments and will clarify as much as you need, and I will hold our conversations outside of class confidential unless you tell me otherwise.

Technology Policy: Laptops, tablets, and smartphones are allowed and encouraged in class. I will, from time to time, ask that students with devices search for something on the Internet. Please silence all devices at the beginning of class. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. If you choose to use a laptop or tablet as a note-taking device, please be sure to charge it fully before class, as there is a limited number of outlets available in most classrooms on campus.

Academic Integrity Policy: The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information

from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using Chicago style or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Writing Center: Mason has a Writing Center that offers general workshops on writing improvement and individual tutoring for specific assignments. <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Disability Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) <https://www.nvcc.edu/current-students/disability-services/index.html> . All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS.

Trigger Warning: Several of the assigned sources, and many you will find in your own research, can be upsetting and disturbing. To a degree, this is the point of reading them – learning is an uncomfortable process. If you have specific triggers, please let me know and I will note assignments accordingly. If you have concerns about triggers while doing independent research, please see me as soon as possible. However, this will not release you from the assignments. The trigger warnings are to give you the tools you require to complete the assigned work.

Late policy: I accept late submissions of graded work with a penalty. You will lose 10 points for every week the assignment is late. I will not accept late assignments or schedule makeups after our last class meeting.

Class Week: For our purposes, the class week runs from Thursday to Wednesday.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

10% Discussion

I have created a discussion board for this class on Blackboard. Each student will post an original and substantive post to the discussion board and will comment on at least two other students' posts each week. I will post discussion prompts T on Thursday. You will post your responses no later than Wednesday of that week. For example, the questions for Week 3, meeting 14 and 16 September, will be posted by 10 September (the previous Thursday). You will post your Week 3 posts by midnight, 16 September.

You will also be expected to reference the readings as appropriate in class.

20%: Workshop Days

Throughout the semester, we will analyze different sources, both primary and secondary, during class. These sources are documentary and fictional. You will be expected to be engaged with your group and the rest of the class, and to work together. Workshop Groups will be randomly assigned via Blackboard by Monday, 16 September. Please be sure to get your groupmates' contact information, including email addresses and Twitter handles.

10%: Twitter

Create a unique Twitter handle for this class and follow @ProfBizri, and I will follow you back. You must follow all of your classmates, and tweet at least 3 times per digital week. All Twitter handles should be set and following by our second meeting, 2 September. Please include the hashtag #HIS370GMU in your tweets.

You can begin a conversation by posing a question or comment on one of the assigned readings or posting something interesting you found online. You can contribute to a conversation by replying to someone else's tweet. You may post questions that come up during class, livetweet lectures, or post a current news article that is relevant to class. This is more than a backchannel for questions during class; this is a way to engage with the material on your terms.

20%: Secondary Source Analysis (10% each)

One of the major ways war and American society interact is through entertainment and popular culture. Fiction provides a safe arena for people to process complex feelings or to address politically sensitive events. You will analyze movies and/or books as both historical sources of the subject, and as sources for the time it was created. Each paper will be 2-3 pages long.

For the first paper, due 7 October, you will select a movie or book from the list provided on Blackboard and analyze its depiction of the historical events it depicts. For example, a paper on *Cold Mountain* would discuss the events of the Civil War, and why certain facts were kept the same and others were changed.

For the second paper, due 18 November, you may select another movie or book from the list, or you may find your own. Your main analysis will be of the time period in which it was created, though you will need to note any glaring issues with the historical facts. For example, a paper on *M*A*S*H* would largely discuss also American perceptions of the Vietnam Conflict in the 1970s.

30%: Research Paper

You will write a paper based on primary and secondary research of a topic that is not a battle. You will explore the unique intersections of war and American society and how they influence each other with regards to your topic. Your paper should have a clear thesis statement based on your interpretation of the sources.

As intermediary checkpoints, you will submit a proposed topic and a proposed source list. Both may change after you submit them, as the research process can be convoluted. We will discuss topics, the research process, and the paper's structure in class throughout the semester.

Your topic must be approved by me by Wednesday, 30 September. You must submit a list of sources by Wednesday, 11 November. The paper is due Wednesday, 9 December.

Thesis: A conclusion you have drawn based on your interpretation of the readings.

Argument: The use of evidence to support your thesis.

Evidence: Excerpts, themes, and concepts from the readings that support your conclusion.

10%: Final Exam:

Please bring a blue book. For this exam, you will synthesize everything we have discussed over the semester and answer the following questions: How do warfare and society influence each other over the course of United States history? Why is it important to study war and American society?

Schedule

Week 1: 31 August – 2 September

2 September: Twitter account set up

Defense: p. 1-19

Week 2: 7-9 September

***No Class 7 September – Labor Day Observed**

Defense: p. 20-76

Week 3: 14-16 September

14 September: Workshop Day #1

Defense: 77-141

Week 4: 21-23 September

Defense: 142-217

Week 5: 28-30 September

28 September: Workshop Day #2

30 September: Research Topic due

Defense: 218-281

Week 6: 5-7 October

7 October: Secondary Source #1 due

Defense: p. 282-338

Week 7: 12-14 October

***No Class 12 October – Columbus Day Observed – Class meets 13 October**

Defense: p. 339-366

Week 8: 19-21 October

Defense: p. 367-403

Week 9: 26-28 October

19 October: Workshop Day #3

Defense: p. 404-439

Week 10: 2-4 November

Defense: p. 440-474

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Week 11: 9-11 November

11 November: Source List Due

Defense: p. 475-506

Week 12: 16-18 November

18 November: Secondary Source #2 due

Defense: p. 507-568

Week 13: 23-25 November

***No Class 25 November – University Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday**

Defense: p. 569-605

Week 14: 30 November – 2 December

30 November: Workshop Day #4

Defense: p. 606-632

Week 15: 7-9 December

Research Paper due 9 December

Defense: p. 633-680

Final Exam: Monday, 14 December, 2015, 10:30 am – 1:15 pm

****Please be advised, the syllabus may change. All changes will be posted to Blackboard.**