

## **POLS 4890/4990: Combat and Popular Culture - Fall 2017**

Main 318 Wednesdays 2:30 – 5:20

### **Dr. Veronica Ward**

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Office: Main 324E

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30 – 4:30, Fridays 3:00 – 4:00, and by appointment.

### **Steve Sharp**

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Main 326A

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00 – 4:30, and by appointment

### **Course Description:**

How do writers/artists reflect and/or influence public perceptions of the meaning of war and support for warfare? Is war the greatest of human tragedies or the driving force of progress? Absurd, illogical, and pointless -- or the supreme test of an individual's (and nation's) character?

### **Schedule of Readings/Films:**

Aug 30: introduction – *Sands of Iwo Jima*

Sep 6: *Iliad* selections (on Canvas)

Sep 13: *Killer Angels* (novel about US Civil War)

Sep 20: *Shoot Like a Girl* (memoir)

Sep 27: *Fear* (autobiographical novel about WWI) and film

Oct 4: *Flags of Our Fathers* (film about WW II)

Oct 11: Vietnam experience from the American perspective (excerpts on Canvas)

Oct 18: *The Sorrow of War* (autobiographical novel from North Vietnamese perspective)

Oct 25: *Catch 22* (selections on Canvas)

Nov 1: *Dr. Strangelove* (nuclear war satire)

Nov 8: *River Runs Salt, Runs Sweet* (memoir about civilians in Yugoslavian Civil War)

Nov 15: *The Watch* (novel about Afghanistan) & *Antigone* (play by Sophocles)

Nov 22: no class (Thanksgiving)

Nov 29: TBA

### **Participation/Attendance**

Attendance and participation in class discussion is required.

### **Basis of Course Grade:**

#### **4890:**

participation/presentation: 33%

weekly essays: 33%

final essay: 34%

#### **4990:**

participation/presentation: 25%

weekly essays: 25%

final paper: 50%

### **Weekly Short Essays**

To prepare for class discussion, you will submit a short essay (500 words or less) responding to the assigned reading. On some occasions, we may ask you to respond to particular questions, but we don't wish to be too prescriptive; your paper may be a summary of the major themes of the work, a closer examination of a particular theme, or a personal reflection on its meaning to you. The paper will be due by 5:00 the Tuesday before class. Essays should be submitted on Canvas, but can also be submitted in person.

On the weeks we view a film, no paper will be required, but you may wish to consult film summaries or reviews on the internet to familiarize yourself with the film's plot and themes.

**Class Presentation:** You will be assigned a partner and present one of the assigned works to the rest of the class and lead the discussion.

### **Final Essay**

**4890:** At the end of the semester, you will present your conclusions about the topic in a 5-7 page essay. Half of your course grade is based on this essay, so it should be the product of careful reading of the texts and serious thought over the course of the semester. Again, we do not wish to be overly prescriptive. Here are some possible approaches.

- A. You may cover the theme of the course broadly, e.g. What is the meaning and impact of war on humanity (as illustrated in the works we have covered)?
- B. You may consider a work not covered in the course and relate it to the themes and works covered in the course. The work may provide a contrasting view or further illustrate a course theme. You must get instructors' approval in advance for the work you choose.
- C. You may relate personal or family experience with the effects of war to one or more of the works covered in the course.
- D. You may report insights from the social sciences to the topic of war and relate it to the works studied.

**4990:** You will be required to submit a major research paper (15 – 20 pages) dealing with some aspect of the semester's topic. You will be expected to incorporate at least three works from the course and at least ten additional sources not covered during the semester. These may be other writings on war, or they may be scholarly articles or books that deal with the question of war and its impact on individuals and/or societies. You must receive approval of your topic from Professor Ward by October 18.

**Avoiding Plagiarism:** According to the USU code "Plagiarism includes knowingly representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials."

It is not enough to simply change a few words or change the order of sentences to be original. You need to put aside the source and write from your own understanding. It helps to write your answers from notes you have taken instead of trying to paraphrase directly from the

source. Appropriate attribution (see above) needs to be given whenever you quote something *or when you draw significant ideas from the work of another author.*

**Grade scale:**

A	=	94-100%	C	=	74-76%
A-	=	90-93%	C-	=	70-73%
B+	=	87-89%	D+	=	67-69%
B	=	84-86%	D	=	60-66%
B-	=	80-83%	F	=	0-59%
C+	=	77-79%			

**Late Submissions:** Except in the case of documented emergencies, due dates are enforced. Late work is subject to an automatic 30% reduction, so **the best you can expect on a late assignment or quiz is a C-**. You may complete assignments early to avoid last minute problems.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:** Special accommodation can be made for students with documented disability. Please discuss your needs with me early (preferably during the first week of class). See [www.usu.edu/drc](http://www.usu.edu/drc) for details on USU's accommodation policy and procedures.