

**History 626/628:
Readings in Global and Comparative History/Social and Economic History**

War, Society, and Culture

Rick Fogarty
Fall 2014

Class time: Wed 2:45-5:35
Location: SLG024
Office Hours: W, 10:00-12:00, 5:30-6:30, and by appointment
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Course Description

This course will take as its starting point and touchstone the following observation by Michael Howard:

But to abstract war from the environment in which it is fought and study its technique as one would those of a game is to ignore a dimension essential to understanding, not simply of the wars themselves but of the societies which fought them. The historian who studies war, not to develop norms for action but to enlarge his understanding of the past, cannot be simply a 'military historian,' for there is literally no branch of human activity which is not to a greater or lesser extent relevant to his subject. He has to study war not only, as Hans Delbrück put it, in the framework of political history, but in the framework economic, social and cultural history as well. War has been part of a totality of human experience, the parts of which can be understood only in relation to one another. One cannot adequately describe how wars were fought without giving some idea of what they were fought about. (*War in European History*, pp. ix-x)

Accordingly, we will examine war in its widest social and cultural context, treating equally the profound effects of warfare upon the societies that wage it, and the many ways that particular societies and cultures affect the nature of the wars they wage. Readings will begin by investigating the origins of war and violence among early humans, but will then focus more squarely on the modern period. We will explore the changes in warfare that have multiplied and accelerated since 1789, branching out from the conventional focus on European and Western experiences to consider developments in cultures of war across the globe. Along the way, we will pause to consider various aspects of the relationship between modern society and modern war, such as the role of women in war, the effect of gender on war, war crimes, "shell shock" (or post-traumatic stress disorder), war journalism, war and artistic expression, and other topics. By the end of the term, we will have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the transformative power of modern war, both on and off the battlefield.

Requirements and Grading

Grades will be based upon the satisfactory completion of all of the following requirements:

- Attendance and active participation in seminar discussions (50%)
- Two 5-page book reviews (10% each)
- One 15-20 page review essay (30%)

Attendance and active participation in class discussions are mandatory. You must complete all of the week's assigned reading by the beginning of class that week, and be prepared to discuss it with the class.

Details about the **book review** and **review essay** assignments appear below.

Please take note of the policy of the Department of History on **plagiarism**: "Plagiarism is taking (which includes purchasing) the words and ideas of another and passing them off as one's own work. If in a formal paper a student quotes someone, that student must use quotation marks and give a citation. Paraphrased or borrowed ideas are to be identified by proper citations. Plagiarism will result, at the minimum, in a failing grade for the assignment." I will add that plagiarism violates the educational mission of the University, the ethical foundations of the scholarly endeavor, and the essential trust between instructors and students. Do not do it. If you do, and I catch you, I will enforce the appropriate penalty, including referral to University authorities for formal adjudication and sanction.

As you may imagine, the University at Albany as a whole also takes plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity very seriously. Please familiarize yourself with the **Standards of Academic Integrity** published in the Undergraduate Bulletin (http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#standards_integrity).

I will make reasonable **accommodations** in this course for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Books

- Michael Howard, *War in European History**
- David A. Bell, *The First Total War**
- John Keegan, *The Face of Battle**
- Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*
- Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction**
- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*
- Paul Jankowski, *Verdun*
- James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?*
- Kara Dixon Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*
- Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale**
- Pat Barker, *Regeneration*

*Available at the UAlbany bookstore

Schedule

Week 1, August 27: Michael Howard, *War in European History*

Week 2, September 3: David A. Bell, *The First Total War*; H-France Forum on *The First Total War* (<http://www.h-france.net/forum/h-franceforumvol2.html>)

Week 3, September 10: John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*

Week 4, September 17: Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, Introduction and Parts I and II

Week 5, September 24: No class

Week 6, October 1: Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, Part III and Conclusion; **First book review due**

Week 7, October 8: Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, pp. 1-229

Week 8, October 15: Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, pp. 230-348; William G. Rosenberg, "Reading Soldiers' Moods: Russian Military Censorship and the Configuration of Feeling in World War I," *American Historical Review*, 119, no. 3 (June 2014), 714-740; Richard S. Fogarty, "Out of North Africa: Contested Visions of French Muslim Soldiers during World War I"

Week 9, October 22: Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*

Week 10, October 29: Paul Jankowski, *Verdun*

Week 11, November 5: James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?*

Week 12, November 12: Kara Dixon Vuic, *Officer, Nurse, Woman*

Week 13, November 19: Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale*

Week 14, November 26: No class, eat turkey

Week 15, December 3: Pat Barker, *Regeneration*; John E. Talbott, "Soldiers, Psychiatrists, and Combat Trauma," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 27, no. 3 (Winter 1997), 437-454.

Final paper due no later than **Wednesday, 10 December**

Book Reviews and Review Essay

Each student will write two book reviews and a longer review essay. The first will be a 5-page review of Christopher Clark's *Sleepwalkers*, due by the beginning of class on October 1. The second will be a 5-page review of one book of your choice from among the books by Kramer, Hanna, Jankowski, and Sheehan, due by the beginning of class the day we will be discussing the book you have reviewed. The third assignment, a review essay, will be 15-20 pages assessing the different approaches to writing the history of war that we will have encountered all through the semester, due on December 10. You will submit each essay no later than 2:30 p.m. on the day it is due via an email attachment in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx, or even .rtf).

For each book you review in the shorter, single-book essays you will incorporate **two other scholarly reviews** into your analysis. These must be scholarly, i.e., published in a reputable academic source such as:

- A scholarly journal (e.g., *The American Historical Review*, not *Civil War Times*)
- A well-regarded periodical (e.g., *The New York Review of Books*, or even the Sunday book review sections of major national newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Los Angeles Times*, not *People Magazine*)
- A trustworthy Internet resource (e.g., *H-Net Review*, not *Amazon.com*, or *Wikipedia*)

There is nothing inherently unworthy about the negative examples I've just listed here, perhaps, but for our purposes only scholarly sources will do. You can find reviews of books published in journals fairly easily via databases accessible through the library's web site (EBSCO, World Cat, etc.), and some internet sources (H-Net, or similar scholarly listservs). A word of caution: the Internet is laudable for its wealth of information and the democratic way in which that information can be both produced and consumed, but the overall lack of vetting and filtering results in a great deal of unreliable and inexperienced opinion. Not to put too fine a point on it, but any fool can publish anything on the Internet. Thus, you must use only scholarly reviews.

How to incorporate these reviews into your own reviews? More importantly, how to write a book review in the first place? The latter is what these assignments are to teach, but I'll just say for now that a review is not merely a summary, or "book report." Some summary will be necessary, but the preponderance of the review should be given over to analysis, i.e., your assessment of the book's arguments and evidence, even style (the way in which the argument and evidence is presented). Please note that I use words like "judgment" and "assessment," rather than "opinion." The subtle difference is that the former are terms that connote thoughtful and careful consideration, whereas opinions are often hastily arrived at and ill-informed. In short, anyone can have an opinion, but experts are in a position to make judgments that carry real weight.

We will talk more about the art of writing book reviews as the semester goes on, but for now let me point you to H-Net's guidelines for reviewers at: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/guidelines_books.php. Some aspects of these guidelines will not apply to the kinds of reviews you'll be writing in this class, but some will, so have a look. At the very least, you will be following the **technical guidelines** (header information, style, etc.) for H-Net book reviews, with slight modifications. Please disregard, though, most of the instructions in the "Text Guidelines" section, which are designed to make the reviews easier to publish on-line. In this class, your reviews will conform to the following **technical parameters**: **typed, double-spaced, numbered, and stapled** pages, with **one-inch margins** and **12-point Times New Roman font**. You will cite all the sources you've consulted, including the other reviews, in footnotes, according to standard scholarly practice and format (*Chicago Manual of Style*; for quick reference, see: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Your format should look like this example:

David A. Bell, *The First Total War. Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. x + 420 pp. \$27.00, (cloth) ISBN 978-0-618-34965-4.

Reviewed for History 626/628/642 by [Name—in **boldface**], Department of History, University at Albany, SUNY

[Your title for the review—something creative, but appropriate]

[Body text—double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. Use footnotes, formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, for references, including references to other reviews.]

Another way to learn the standard conventions of scholarly review-writing is to read other reviews, which this assignment, not coincidentally, requires you to do. The publications listed above (*AHR*, *NYRB*, H-Net) are all good places to find models (and sometimes anti-models, since there are certainly badly done reviews out there!).

But what about the first question, about incorporating other reviews into your own? This should, actually, be very easy. You will have read the book, and you will have before you the opinions of two other scholars who have also read that same book. They will likely be specialists in the field, and so they may have insights that you yourself may not have. This should enrich your own analysis, even while you give full and proper credit to these other scholars in your own review. However, you may find yourself in disagreement with the analysis of one or both of these other scholars. You may even find yourself wondering if they've read the same book you did. One scholar might love everything about a book you thought had serious problems. Another might dismiss as shallow a book you found to be thoughtful and informative. It happens. But don't let the exalted status or tenured professorships of these other reviewers intimidate you or prevent you from asserting your own right to an opinion. Now, you must support your opinion, of course, and provide a convincing argument about why you don't share another's opinion. And, conversely, it's possible that a reviewer can make observations that radically alter your own perception of a given text, that you find his or her analysis convincing. But whatever the case, remember that you've read the book, perhaps (I hope!) even more carefully than other reviewers, and you ought to present the strongest, most honest case you can.

The purpose of the longer review essay is to allow you to explore what you have learned over the semester about different ways of studying and writing about war in its social and cultural contexts. Ideally, this will put you in a position to make more sophisticated and more informed judgments about all the texts and issues under consideration. The idea is NOT for you to write a dozen separate reviews and splice them together. A review essay is just that, an essay—a substantial piece of writing that grapples with difficult issues and makes mature, reasoned assessments. Use the texts under consideration as a platform to ask questions, make judgments, think broadly about important issues that the works raise or address. Again, remember that this is a class on war, society, and culture, so your essay should discuss the books under review in light of what they can teach us about the broader history of war and the societies and cultures that fight them. In short, keep Michael Howard's statement about studying war, quoted at the beginning of this syllabus, always in mind.