

AHIS 365 (10434)  
**War, Society, and Culture to 1789**  
Fall 2017  
Tue, Thu 4:15-5:35, LC 3C

**Instructor:** Dr. Richard Fogarty, Associate Professor of History

**Office:** SS 60C/LC31

**Office Hours:**

- Tue, Thu 3:30-4:00 and 5:35-6:35—in LC31
- By appointment

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### **Course Description and Purpose**

This course will survey the history of war and society from the origins of organized violence in prehistory to the eve of the profound transformation of war that began in the West during the Revolutionary period in the late eighteenth century. Our starting point and touchstone will be the following observation by renowned military historian 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.

The primary focus will be on Western and European civilizations, though we will also examine developments in other parts of the world to gain a comparative perspective and throw into clearer relief the distinctiveness of war and culture in the West. The history of armies, leaders, battles, and tactics and strategy will be among the important topics the course will cover, but we will also take seriously the social and cultural contexts that inform and shape these and other aspects of war. Some of the specific questions and themes we will address include:

- The origins and nature of organized violence among human beings from earliest times: Are human beings inherently violent, or is the propensity to inflict organized violence on other human beings a phenomenon that attends the growth of civilization? Are certain human groups more or less violent than others? Do certain social or cultural contexts encourage warlike behavior more than others?
- The role of war and violence among the progenitors of Western civilization, the Greeks: What are the origins of war in Greek society? What were some of the attitudes toward war, and how did these attitudes change over time? Just how central was war and soldiering to Greeks' understandings of who they were and what made them different from other peoples? More specifically, what do Xenophon's adventures in Persia tell us about Greek identity?
- The place of warfare and violence in the culture of the Middle Ages, an era in which European and culture took concrete and decisive shape: How did warmaking and social organization mutually reinforce one another in the various systems known as feudalism during this period? What was the

medieval understanding of the proper role of the warrior, especially as revealed in *The Song of Roland*? How did waging war against Muslims in the Crusades shape European culture and identity? What was the role of violence and war in personal lives of knights and in the social code known as chivalry?

- Near the end of the period we will examine, the transformations in war wrought by emerging technologies: What factors explain the decline of medieval styles of warfare and the knights who waged them? What technologies played the most critical roles in this process? What were the consequences of the so-called “military revolution” for the world beyond Europe?
- Two broader and recurring questions we will address: Do contemporary historical films and their visions of war and society tell us anything reliable about the past, or do they tell us more about contemporary cultural concerns? Finally, from the time of the Greeks to the end of the early modern period (and, to be sure, beyond), Westerners’ often violent meetings with non-Westerners have decisively shaped both war and society in the West. What does this tell us about European and Western identity and culture over the longer term?

The study of history is about interrogating the past—asking why and how, as well as who, what, where, and when—and the history of war and society is no different, so this is how we will proceed. We will do our best to answer these questions, though with the full knowledge that hard, concrete answers will more often than not be elusive. Still, when we have finished this course, we will not only know more about the facts and figures of military history, but we will be in a better position to understand how that history has developed in various social and cultural contexts from prehistory to the eighteenth century. We will do what historians (for that’s what you are learning to be in this course) are really supposed to do: explain, as best they can, change over time.

### ***History Skills Learned in This Course***

The History Department has identified a number of general skills students in its more specialized, upper-level courses will acquire, skills that build upon the foundations laid in earlier coursework. Accordingly, students in this course will:

- Master more detailed, sophisticated, and in-depth content
- Become more intimately acquainted with historical methodologies and historiographical debates
- Communicate effectively with others about history and historical concepts, in writing and discussion, at an advanced and mature level
- Understand historical authorship, in print and other formats, and begin to engage in such authorship themselves
- Ask historical questions and articulate the importance of historical context
- Deploy evidence to support arguments effectively
- Produce written documents in clear and grammatically correct prose, with a clearly-articulated argument supported by primary and secondary evidence that is cited in standard style
- Engage in library research
- Gain some experience defining and designing research projects organized around compelling historical questions
- Understand the ethics of scholarship, including issues of plagiarism, but move beyond them to the responsible use of evidence, balanced and nuanced interpretation, and other norms of scholarly discourse

### **Texts**

(Books are available for purchase at the UAlbany Bookstore. Some readings are also on 3-hour reserve at the Main Library. Other, shorter readings listed in the schedule below are available via Blackboard.)

- Lawrence Keely, *War before Civilization* (978-0195119121)
- Xenophon, *The Persian Expedition* (978-0140440072)

- *The Song of Roland* (978-0140445329)
- Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* (978-0805208986)
- Eric Jager, *The Last Duel* (978-0767914178)

## Films

(Available on Blackboard and, in some cases, at the Main Library.)

- *Troy*
- *300*
- *Kingdom of Heaven*
- *The Mission*

## Class Requirements and Grading

Grades will be based upon the completion of all of the following assignments:

- Exam 1 (10%)
- Exam 2 (10%)
- Exam 3 (15%)
- Paper 1 (15%)
- Paper 2 (25%)
- Quizzes (20%)
- Research project proposal (15%)

Exams will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer questions that are largely interpretive and thematic in nature. In other words, they will test not only your ability to remember facts and figures reviewed in class lectures and assigned readings and films (who, what, where, when), but also—and more importantly—your understanding of major themes and developments (why and how).

Papers will be 5-6 pages in length each, and will address a specific question focused on, respectively, Xenophon's *The Persian Expedition* and Eric Jager's *The Last Duel*. You will receive specific topics and guidelines a few weeks prior to the due date for each paper.

Quizzes will consist of a few multiple choice and/or short answer questions. They will be simple, short reading or viewing comprehension tests on the readings and/or the films assigned for that day's class.

The research project proposal will develop an area of particular interest to you by having you plan out a potential research project, such as you might undertake in a History capstone course or for an honors research thesis. In this case, you will choose a topic in the history of war, society, and culture; define a research question within this topic that you might try to answer; develop a proposal that suggests ways of answering this question and sources you might use to do so; and produce an annotated bibliography listing some of those sources. In the end, you will not actually conduct the research and write up your findings, but you will have learned about the ways historians go about doing their work, and you may well have the beginnings of a research project that you might pursue further in another class or context. You will complete the various stages of this assignment over the course of the semester, receiving feedback from me at each stage, helping you refine your approach.

Grades will be determined, according to the weights given above, on an A-E scale: A=92-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=63-66; D-=60-62; E=0-59.

## Policies:

- **Attendance** is mandatory. Out of consideration for your fellow students' efforts to learn, and your instructor's efforts to teach, you are required to arrive on time for class and to

remain seated (barring an emergency) until the class is finished. For the same reasons, please turn off cell phones, and do not send or receive text messages, play video games, read the newspaper, dance, sing, or otherwise goof off and distract other people in the room. Repeated violations of any of the above rules shall be grounds for sanction or dismissal from the class. Please understand that these rules are not designed to make your lives difficult, but to ensure that we all benefit from the courtesy, respect, and opportunity to learn and to succeed, to which we are entitled.

- You must complete all of the **assigned reading/viewing** by the date indicated on the schedule below. Exams, quizzes, and papers are due on the dates and times (the beginning of that day's class) indicated below, unless you have made prior arrangements, for legitimate reasons, with the course instructor. Otherwise, **late assignments** will be penalized 10 points per day. Unless you have made alternative arrangements, with formal approval from the instructor, you may not make up missed quizzes.
- The policy of the Department of History on **plagiarism** is as follows: "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 would 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/undergraduate\\_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)).
- I will gladly 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 me with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

## Schedule

(Reading assignment—author, page numbers—due for each day appears in parentheses after the topic of the day's lecture or discussion)

### Week 1

8/29: Introduction/Primitive War  
8/31: Primitive War (Keely, Preface)

### Week 2

9/5: *War before Civilization* (Keely, Chapters 1-6) [**Quiz on Keely**]  
9/7: *War before Civilization* (Keely, Chapters 7-12) [**Quiz on Keely**]

### Week 3

9/12: Heroic War in Ancient Greece (*Iliad*, selections)  
9/14: The Siege of Troy, Then and Now [**Quiz on Troy**]

Week 4

9/19: The Transformation of War in Ancient Greece [**Initial research topic due**]  
9/21: **No class (UAlbany classes suspended, Rosh Hashanah)**

Week 5

9/26: A Western Way of War  
9/28: **Exam 1**

Week 6

10/3: War and Identity in Ancient Greece (Xenophon, Introduction and Book I) [**Quiz on Xenophon**]  
10/5: War and Identity in Ancient Greece (Xenophon, Books II-V) [**Quiz on Xenophon; Revised research topic and initial question due**]

Week 7

10/10: Conquest, Empire, and Hellenistic Civilization (Xenophon, Books VI-VII) [**Paper 1 due**]  
10/12: Greek Warriors, Then and Now: War, the West, Identity, History, and Myth [**Quiz on 300**]

Week 8

10/17: War and the Origins of Roman Hegemony  
10/19: Army, Politics, and Culture in the Roman Empire [**Revised research question due**]

Week 9

10/24: Barbarians at the Gate: War and the Decline of the Roman Empire  
10/26: Feudalism and the Warrior Ethos in the Middle Ages (*The Song of Roland*, Introduction and entire poem) [**Quiz on Roland**]

Week 10

10/31: War, Religion, and Identity in the Middle Ages [**Initial research proposal and bibliography due**]  
11/2: The Crusades (Maalouf, Foreword, Prologue, and Parts One-Two) [**Quiz on Maalouf**]

Week 11

11/7: The Crusades (Maalouf, Parts Three-Six) [**Quiz on Maalouf**]  
11/9: The Crusades, Then and Now (Maalouf, Epilogue) [**Quiz on Kingdom of Heaven**]

Week 12

11/14: **Exam 2**  
11/16: The Last Duel: The Hundred Years War and the End of the Wars of Knights

Week 13

11/21: Honor, Masculinity, Justice, and Violence in the Middle Ages (Jager, Prologue and Part One) [**Quiz on Jager**]  
11/23: **No class—eat turkey**

Week 14

11/28: The Last Duel (Jager, Part Two and Appendix) [**Paper 2 due**]

11/30: Guns and Their Consequences: The Military Revolution in Europe and Around the World [**Final research proposal and annotated bibliography due**]

Week 15

12/5: Soldiers and Crusaders in the New World [**Quiz on *The Mission***]

12/7: Gentlemen's Wars and the Edge of the Abyss

**Monday, 18 December: Exam 3 (LC 3C, 1:00-3:00)**