

HIS 270: War & Society in U.S. Culture

Fall 2018

Instructor: David Kieran **Email:** dkieran@washjeff.edu

Class Time: MWF 9:00-10:10AM **Class Location:** TBD

Office: OM 209C **Office Hours:** MW 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

This course examines the relationship between war, the military, and U.S. culture. We will focus less on how the military has been used in particular instances or on the history of particular wars and instead ask broader questions that emerge from understanding the military as critical cultural institution. Among them will be: What should the relationship between the military and the nation be during times of war and peace? How have Americans, including service members and veterans, sought to define the military's place in American culture? How have wars and militarism created spaces for debating larger questions about national identity, race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship?

Among the topics we will consider are the relationship between military service, citizenship, and civil rights; debates about the citizen's obligations during wartime; military recruiting, the draft, and the transition to an all volunteer force; debates about the appropriate roles of women and gay and lesbian service members; and veterans issues.

Texts for the Course:

The following books are required for the course and can be purchased at the bookstore. Other readings marked with ** are available on Blackboard.

- Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*
- Chester Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go*
- David Kieran and Edwin A. Martini, eds., *At War: The Military and American Culture in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*
- Ron Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July*
- Anthony Swofford, *Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles*
- Tru Dinh Tran, *Ship of Fate: Memoir of a Vietnamese Repatriate*

Course Requirements:

- **Active and Engaged Participation (15%):** This class's success, and more particularly *your* success, will depend upon a) your arriving in class having done the reading and thought carefully about it and b) your willingness to share your thoughts and engage critically but respectfully with those of others. However, good participation is not simply about talking. It is also about listening and collaborating. With that in mind, I am borrowing from Dr. Stephen Brookfield the following list of *some* of the ways in which I will define "good participation" in this class:
 - Make a comment that helps us understand the key issues in the reading and their relevance to larger issues that we are discussing in the course.
 - Contribute something that builds on, or springs from, what someone else has said. Be explicit about the way you are building on the other person's

thoughts. (These two the traditional definition of “Class Participation,” right?)

- Ask a question or make a comment that shows you are interested in what another person says.
 - Ask a question or make a comment that encourages another person to elaborate on something they have already said.
 - Bring in a resource (a reading, web link, video) not covered in the syllabus but adds new information/perspectives to our learning. You may also post such an item to the course blog with a brief description and analysis.
 - Make a comment that underscores the link between two people's contributions & make this link explicit in your comment.
 - Use body language (in only a slightly exaggerated way) to show interest in what different speakers are saying.
 - Post a comment on the course blog (<http://wjracemedsoc.blogspot.com/>) that summarizes our conversations so far and/or suggests new directions and questions to be explored in the future.
 - Make a comment (including on the course blog) indicating that you found another person's ideas interesting or useful. Be specific as to why this was the case.
 - Responding to the blog post of another student in a way that expands upon their comments by reflecting on our class discussions. This should be done within 48 hours of the class.
 - When you think it's appropriate, ask the group for a moment's silence to slow the pace of conversation to give you, and others, time to think.
 - Make a comment that at least partly paraphrases a point someone has already made.
 - Make a summary observation that takes into account several people's contributions & that touches on a recurring theme in the discussion (on the blog, if you like). This should be done within 48 hours of the class.
 - Ask a cause and effect question - for example, "can you explain why you think it's true that if these things are in place such and such a thing will occur?"
 - Find a way to express appreciation for the enlightenment you have gained from the discussion. Try to be specific about what it was that helped you understand something better. Again this can be done on the blog if this suits you better.
- **Please Note Two Important Issues:**
 - In this course we will read about and discuss issues that are contentious for a variety of reasons. Some of them – accounts of various kinds of human suffering, for example – can be gruesome and unsettling. Almost all of them are politically charged. Please note that in the classroom there will be a range of beliefs and opinions on these issues. These concerns should not prohibit us from having frank, open discussion of the texts that we read and the issues that we discuss. However, they should remind us to approach these issues, and each other, with open-minded respect and willingness to listen and discuss. The success of the course depends in large part on our striving

to be aware of and sensitive to our responses to these texts as well as those of our colleagues, to interrogate *why* we are responding as we are, and to encourage ourselves and each other to read and discuss these materials in a way that produces positive intellectual and personal growth.

- We should all strive to be members of this learning community who treat each other with dignity and respect, which includes striving to attend to our implicit biases and avoid microaggressions. “Microaggressions,” according to *Psychology Today*, “are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.”¹ They are often intended to be innocuous, or even complimentary. However, comments like “You speak good English,” “When I look at you, I don’t see color,” or “I’m not a racist. I have several Black friends” are, in turn, derogatory and insulting, denials of the ways in which identity differences are manifest and real, and elisions of the speaker’s privilege.² I encourage you to be cognizant of the assumptions that underlie your thinking, to consider how your comments might be perceived, and to work towards engagements that in which you are consciously respectful of difference and privilege. If you find that you are experiencing a microaggression or witness one, I would encourage you to respond in the way that you feel most comfortable – approaching the person directly, seeing me, or visiting the office of Diversity Programs and Multicultural Affairs (<http://www.washjeff.edu/diversity-programs>).

- **Weekly Blog Posts (15%):** The class will be divided into two groups, A and B, each of which corresponds to ten days when we will be reading secondary literature from *At War* or another source. For **SEVEN** of those days, you will write a 250 word blog post in which you respond to the readings – what do you find interesting, surprising, problematic, or otherwise worthy of discussion in class? What connections can you make between this and other issues that we have discussed? These are due one hour before class, so that I can read them and we can use them as a basis for discussion.
- **500-Word Response Papers to Cultural Texts (20%):** Over the course of the semester, we will analyze in detail twelve different “cultural texts” that shape the ways that Americans have thought about the relationship of the military and its engagements to the broader contours of U.S. culture. For **TEN** of these, you will write a well-organized essay of about 500 words that analyzes this Text in relation to other readings that we have done and our broader discussion in the class. You must write about at least three of the novels or memoirs, at least two films, and at least one other form of cultural product. You must complete at least ONE of these before Fall Break. These essays should be posted to the course blog at least one hour

¹ Derald Wing Sue, “Microaggressions: More Than Just Race,” *Psychology Today*, November 17, 2010. Available: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>

² “Examples of Microaggressions,” University of Minnesota School of Public Health, n.d. Available: <http://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

ahead of the discussion for that text, so that we can use your comments as the basis for our discussion.

- **Two Rewrites and Expansions of Cultural Text Essays (20%):** You will expand two of your initial responses into more formal essays that offer a deeper analysis and draw upon a wider range of secondary source material. These will be due one week after you receive comments back from me on your initial post. You must complete one of these by November 1 and the second by the last day of class.
- **Mapping War and Society in Western Pennsylvania Entries (15%):**
- **Final Exam (15%):** You will take a final exam on the day scheduled by the registrar. More details will be provided in class.

Course Policies:

My understanding is that by remaining enrolled in the course, you agree to adhere to the following policies.

It is your responsibility to read the syllabus and be aware of policies, assignments, due dates, etc. To that end, please be sure that you read the syllabus in its entirety and make note in your calendar of important dates. To assure me that you have in fact read the syllabus, please email me a picture of a dog when you have finished reading it.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is required. You may miss **FOUR** classes without penalty, and no excuses or explanations are required. Beginning with your **FIFTH** absence, your final grade will fall by 1/3 (e.g. from a B to a B-) with each absence. Repeated absences could, therefore, result in a failing grade *regardless of your other work in the course*. In extraordinary circumstances (i.e. extreme illness, death in the family), this policy may be waived pending appropriate documentation.
- **Late Arrival to Class:** Class will start promptly at the scheduled time. I expect you to arrive in class on time and prepared. If you are late, please enter the room and take a seat near the door in order to cause as little disruption as possible. I will excuse one late arrival. Beginning with the second late arrival, I will deduct one point from your final grade for class participation each time that you are late.
- **Distractions and the like:** It pains me to have to include this on a syllabus, but it is increasingly necessary to remind students that class meetings should be spent paying careful attention to and participating in class activities. Other activities – checking your email, updating Facebook, trying to finish an assignment, sleeping, reading the *New York Times*, sending text messages, doing a crossword puzzle, shoe shopping – disrespect the instructor, your colleagues, and the overall purpose of higher education. Participation in such activities will be construed as evidence of your lack on engagement in the course and will be taken into account in the evaluation of your participation.
- **Electronic Devices:** You may use your laptop or tablet to access readings in PDF or to take notes. However, you should not abuse this privilege by engaging in any of the activities described above, and you should be prepared to email me your notes immediately upon request. Students should silence and put away cell phones, etc. Recording of any portion of the course in any form is not allowed without the

written permission of the instructor and all members of the class. Inappropriate use of electronic devices in class will be construed as evidence of your lack on engagement in the course and will be taken into account in the evaluation of your participation.

- **Extensions:** In most cases, I am happy to offer each student one extension per semester of up to 24 hours on major assignments, provided you let me know in advance. Extensions of more than 24 hours will be given only under the most extraordinary circumstances. Please note:
 - *I will be the sole judge of what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.* In most cases, my granting an extension will require that you submit a note from a doctor or other appropriate official.
 - *Extensions must be negotiated at least 24 hours in advance of the date that an assignment is due.*
 - *Sending me an email or leaving me a voice mail does not constitute “negotiating” an extension.* Unless you and I have spoken and agreed on a new date, the original date stands.
 - *If you are seeking an extension within 48 hours of the date an assignment is due, you should be prepared to submit your work to that point* (e.g. an outline or draft of the paper, etc.).
 - *Malfunctioning computers, printers and so on are not reasonable grounds for an extension.* Save your work regularly and in multiple locations, including to the cloud, and be prepared to print your work in a computer lab if necessary.

- **Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to either submit work by the due date or negotiate an extension. An assignment not submitted by the due date will receive a grade of 0 which will, in turn, result in a failing grade for the course. Barring extraordinary circumstances, the failure to take an exam on the assigned date will result in a grade of zero and students arriving late to an exam will receive the remainder of the allotted time to complete it.

- **Submitting and Returning Work:** Papers should be submitted to me as googledocs that are open to editing. I will return all written work with comments and grades within two weeks (though usually sooner), with the exception of the final exam, which will be available for pick-up at the start of the next semester. Please note:
 - You should retain an electronic copy of your work and the sent mail containing the attachment until you receive your returned paper. In the event that work goes missing, this will provide the *only acceptable* evidence that you turned in a particular assignment.
 - You should also save all graded work until you receive your final grade in the course. In the event that your final grade gets miscalculated, this will provide

the *only acceptable* evidence that you received a particular grade.

- **Academic Honesty:** I expect that you will hold yourself to high standards, adhere to Washington & Jefferson’s Academic Dishonesty policy, and take all efforts to avoid plagiarism. Intentional plagiarism undermines the very goals of a liberal arts education. It also has the potential to jeopardize your career here and in the future. Cases of intentional academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to university regulations and may result in significant academic penalties. Please note that W&J’s academic misconduct policy is quite clear that “If a course instructor believes that the student is guilty of intentional or major academic misconduct, the instructor may give the student an ‘F’ for the course” and that “If the Office of Academic Affairs has a record of previous academic misconduct, or if a single infraction is judged to be sufficiently serious, the Office of Academic Affairs may impose an additional penalty, up to and including dismissal from the College.”³

These issues are, thankfully, easy to avoid. I recommend that you bookmark Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab’s page that details the Chicago citation style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>). As well, we will spend time in class discussing how to responsibly incorporate the ideas of others into your work, but *please* see me if you have any questions in this regard. It is much more pleasant to have these conversations before the fact than after.

In the meantime, here are five do’s and don’t’s:

- **DO Know the Policy:** You are responsible for reading before the next class, and then adhering to during the semester, the College’s Academic Honesty Policy (<http://wiki.washjeff.edu/display/CATALOG2015/Academic+Honesty+Policy>). Please see me if you have any questions!
- **Do Your Own Work.** With the exception of the final project, you will not need to consult outside sources to complete class reading and writing assignments. By making sure that you are relying solely on class readings and your own thoughts and words, you will avoid any problems in this regard.
- **DO Be Responsible With Citations.** There will be occasions in which you will consult secondary materials. In such cases, you must carefully format and appropriately cite all sources quoted, paraphrased, and consulted using the format described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- **DO Err on the Side of Caution:** When in doubt, cite the source. There are some tricky questions – what’s a summary, and what’s a paraphrase? What counts as common knowledge? – if you’re not sure, it’s better to cite the source.
- **DON’T Try To Pass Someone Else’s Work Off As Your Own:** Cut-and-paste from the Internet, buying papers from term paper mills, having someone

³ “Procedures for Academic Dishonesty,” Washington and Jefferson College, n.d. Available: <http://wiki.washjeff.edu/display/CATALOG2015/Procedures+for+Cases+of+Academic+Misconduct>

write a paper for you, turning in a paper you or someone else wrote for another class, and other obvious forms of dishonesty are the most egregious forms of this violation. They are also, as it turns out, the easiest to notice.

- **Extra Credit:** At various points in the semester, opportunities to attend an event related to the course issues may arise. At my discretion, I may offer students modest extra-credit if they attend those events and prepare a short paper connecting that event to some aspect of the course. More details on these opportunities will be discussed as they arise.
- **Student Support Services:** Students needing assistance in any way should let me know as early in the semester as possible. Students needing accommodations are encouraged to consult with Disability Support Services:
<http://www.washjeff.edu/disability-support-services>
- **PAL Program:** The Peer Assisted Learning Program (<http://www.washjeff.edu/pal>) is an excellent resource for helping you conceptualize, organize, and revise your papers. I encourage you to make good use of it. If you do visit a PAL tutor, please ask them to email me that you have done so; students who visit a tutor with a draft of their papers for this course will earn extra-credit.
- **Office Hours and Contacting Me:** Please feel free to come see me about any issue relating to the course, about the History Major and the American Studies concentration, or just to chat. I am happy to work with you to improve your participation or your writing or to offer suggestions for your papers. I have scheduled office hours, indicated on the top of this document. If those aren't convenient, I am happy to set up another time to meet with you. You are also welcome to drop by my office anytime to see if I am available. *If you find yourself struggling with the concepts or the workload, or are having any other sort of difficulty see me sooner rather than later. The last week of the semester is not the best time to ask how you are doing in the course and how you can improve your grade.*
- **Emailing Me:** I respond to emails and voicemails received during the week (Monday through noon on Friday) within 24 hours; I respond to emails received over the weekend by 5:00PM on Monday. I do receive a lot of emails, though, and sometimes I miss one; if you haven't heard from me in 48 hours feel free to email me again. **Please note**, however, that email with a professor is a form of written communication that requires at least a modest level of formality. To that end, please include a *subject* for your email, and begin with an appropriate *greeting* – “Dear Professor Kieran” or “Hi DK” – rather than just launching into your message. And

please sign off – “Best, Dave” will do. This is good practice for your post-college life, when people will increasingly expect you to understand these norms, and will judge you as unprofessional for not doing so.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Please Note: My expectation is that you will spend an average of three hours preparing for each class session. The readings below are designed with that in mind, and those students who commit that time can expect to do well.

Class Number	Day	Date	Readings Due in Class	Blog Post Due
1	W	8/22	Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About You, About Me, About the Course The Syllabus: Course Policies, Requirements, and Expectations. Our shared goals, rights, and expectations as a learning community. Thinking about cultural history: John Southard, “Beyond ‘A Company, B Company’ History: A Military History State of the Field,” <i>American Historian</i>, August 2014, 20-23. 	
2	F	8/24	Introductions, Part II	
3	M	8/27	Empire	A1
4	W	8/29	The Military Industrial Complex	B1
5	F	8/31	The Military Industrial Complex	A2
	M	9/3	Race	B2
6	W	9/5	Race	A3
7	F	9/7	Gender	B3
8	M	9/10	Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Invisible War?</i> 	A4
9	W	9/12	Text #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Himes, <i>If He Hollers</i> 	
10	F	9/14	Text #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Himes, <i>If He Hollers</i> 	
11	M	9/17	Embodiment	B4
12	W	9/19	Embodiment	A5
13	F	9/21	Veterans	B5
14	M	9/24	Veterans	A6
15	W	9/26	Justice	B6
16	F	9/28	Anti-War Activism	A7
17	M	10/1	Cultural Text #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Winter Soldier</i> (1972) <i>Sir! No Sir!</i> (2005) 	

18	W	10/3	Cultural Text #3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kovic, <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> 	
19	F	10/5	Cultural Text #3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kovic, <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> 	
	M	10/8	No Class! Fall Break!	
20	W	10/10	Library Resources	
21	F	10/12	Refugees	B7
22	M	10/15	Text #4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tran, <i>Ship of Fate</i> 	
23	W	10/17	Text #4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tran, <i>Ship of Fate</i> 	
24	F	10/19	Combat	A8
25	M	10/22	Visual Culture	B8
26	W	10/24	Cultural Text #5	
27	F	10/27	Memory	A9
28	M	10/29	Memory	B9
29	W	10/31	Film / Cultural Text #6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sands of Iwo Jima</i> (1949) 	
30	F	11/2	Text #7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Deer Hunter</i> (1978) 	
31	M	11/5	Text #8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Platoon</i> (1986) 	
32	W	11/7	Text #9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> (1998) 	
33	F	11/9	Library Research Day	
34	M	11/12	Who Serves?	A10
35	W	11/14	Who Serves? / Cultural Text #10	
36	F	11/16	Text #11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swofford, <i>Jarhead</i> 	
37	M	11/19	Text #11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swofford, <i>Jarhead</i> 	
	W& F	11/20 & 11/22	No Class! Thanksgiving Break!	
38	M	11/26	Communications	B10
39	W	11/28	Text #12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> 	
40	F	11/30	Text #12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> 	
41	M	12/3	Text #12	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i>	
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