

**HIST 70603**  
**Seminar in U.S. History:**

**War, Conflict, and Society in Twentieth Century America**  
**Kara Dixon Vuic**

Spring 2020  
Reed Hall 135  
Tuesdays, 1:00-3:40 PM

Office: Reed Hall 304  
k.vuic@tcu.edu 817-257-4136  
Office Hours: 12-2 Wednesdays  
and by appointment

**Course Description**

The study of military history in the past decades has expanded dramatically from a focus primarily on operations, leaders, and tactics to include a consideration of the ways social and cultural processes have framed military engagements, and in turn, the ways wars and militarization have shaped American society and culture. Over the course of this semester, our readings will consider these themes and processes through a focused look at the relationships among war, conflict, and society in twentieth-century America.

**Assignments and Grading**

- **Participation** (30%) Informed, constructive participation in discussion is vital to the work of historians, and it is central to your performance in this course. I expect that everyone come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion about the week's readings, to draw connections between readings in the course and others in your field, and to consider the ways the course readings shape a broader historiography of war, conflict, and society in twentieth-century America.
- **Leading Class Discussion** (10%) Everyone will help to lead class discussion for one book (excepting Cappozola, Stur, and Bacevich). Your task for this assignment is three-fold: provide context and background, outline relevant historiography, and frame discussion. 1) At the beginning of class, the discussion leader will introduce the week's reading by providing useful background information on the author, her/his credentials and scholarly work, and professional reactions to the book. 2) Discussion leaders will also provide a brief synopsis of the historiographical debate into which the work fits. Bring to class for distribution a briefly annotated bibliography of approximately ten related works. You need not have read every word of every book you reference in this bibliography, but you do need to explain clearly the trends in historical writing about the subject. 3) Discussion leaders will then frame the class discussion by posing prepared discussion questions (which should be typed and submitted to me, along with your thoughts). Be sure to keep your questions open-ended so that we can collectively consider important elements of the work's thesis and evidence, its contributions to the historical literature, and its relationship to other works in the course.
- **Military History textbook essay** (5%) Write a brief essay (1000 words max) that compares and contextualizes two military history textbooks of your choosing. Several textbooks will be available in the grad lounge (and several are listed below), but you're free to pick whatever texts you like, from whatever era or perspective. Compare and contrast the textbooks' approach to the study of military history and place them in the context of the evolution of the field. Due January 21.

- **Book Reviews** (10% each) Everyone will select two books to review (one before Spring Break, one after, and not the book for which you lead discussion). Reviews should follow the format of those in the *Journal of American History* or the *American Historical Review* and should address the following questions: What questions does the book address? What is the author's argument, and how does s/he use evidence to establish that argument? How effectively does the author make her/his case? What are the book's strengths and weaknesses? Reviews are due in class on the day the book is discussed and should be 750 words.
- **Historiographical Essay** (35%) Everyone will select a topic related to the readings for the course and write a 4000-word essay that describes and analyzes its historiography. Your essay should describe the origins of the field of inquiry you choose, describe the major debates that have shaped its historical literature, analyze scholars' approaches to the field, and evaluate the reasons for major changes in historians' approaches to the field. Your essay should analyze at least six works (no more than two from this class), but it should do more than merely review each book you choose. Instead, your essay should compare and contrast the works you describe, evaluate how the authors approach the subject, consider the various ways the authors use evidence to establish their argument, and analyze the ways these works contribute to the broader historiography of your subject. You may choose any subject you wish, though you should meet with me early in the term to discuss your topic and the works you select. Essays are due the last week of class.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### January 14

- Introductions

### January 21

- Edward M. Coffman, "The Course of Military History in the United States since World War II," *Journal of Military History* 61 (October 1997): 761-76.
- John A. Lynn, "The Embattled Future of Academic Military History" *Journal of Military History* 61 (October 1997): 777-89.
- John Southard, "Beyond 'A Company, B Company' History: A Military History State of the Field," *The American Historian* (August 2014): 20-23. (TCU online)
- Megan Kate Nelson, "Civil War Military Historians Are Freaking Out" blog post and replies, December 10, 2014, <http://www.megankatenelson.com/civil-war-military-historians-are-freaking-out/>
- Tami Davis Biddle and Robert M. Citino, "Role of Military History in the Contemporary Academy," <http://www.smh-hq.org/docs/SMHWhitePaper.pdf>
- Aaron B. O'Connell, "Bring Back Military History," *The Chronicle Review*, April 24, 2016
- Mark Grimsley, "Review Essay: The American Military History Master Narrative: Three Textbooks on the American Military Experience" *Journal of Military History* 79 (July 2015): 783-802.

### Military history textbooks:

- Allan Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*

- Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Enduring Freedom*
- William T. Allison, Jeffrey G. Grey, Janet G. Valentine, *American Military History*
- Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The American Military: A Concise History*
- Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David J. Ulbrich, *Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century*
- Gene Allen Smith, David Coffey, and Kyle Longley, *In Harm's Way: A History of the American Military Experience*
- <http://www.westpointhistoryofwarfare.com/>
- David Kieran and Edwin A. Martini, *At War: The Military and American Culture in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*
- Any university press “handbook” or “history of”

#### January 28

- Christopher Cappozola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

#### February 4

- Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

#### February 11

- Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

#### February 18

- John Kinder, *Paying with their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

#### February 25

- Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

#### March 3

- Chris Dixon, *African Americans and the Pacific War, 1941–1945: Race, Nationality, and the Fight for Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

#### March 9-13

- No class—Spring Break! (during which you will joyfully work on your historiography paper)

#### March 17

- Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

March 24

- Brian Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

March 31

- Amy Rutenberg, *Rough Draft: Cold War Military Manpower Policy and the Origins of Vietnam-Era Draft Resistance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

### **April 2-5: Organization of American Historians**

April 7

- William A. Taylor, *Military Service and American Democracy: From World War II to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016).

April 14

- Heather M. Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

April 15, 5:00 PM, SCAR 1010

- Heather M. Stur to give the LCpl. Benjamin W. Schmidt Lecture

April 21

- Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

April 28

- Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

### **April 30-May 3: Society for Military History**

May 5

- Historiography Paper Due