

## **HISTORY 490: War and American Society**

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Sections V84 and 097  
Office Hours by Appt.  
ONLINE COURSE

### **\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTE FOR ONLINE COURSE\*\*\***

This is a course that meets exclusively online. It is your responsibility to make sure you have RELIABLE access to the Internet every day of the week. We live in a digital age, and this course is designed for that environment. If you think that access to a computer, laptop, or tablet on **A DAILY BASIS** will be a problem for you, I recommend that you do not take this course!

**ALL MASTER'S STUDENTS: PLEASE CONTACT ME DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS (VIA EMAIL) TO DISCUSS THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS YOU MUST COMPLETE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT IN THIS COURSE**

### **Course Overview:**

The primary objective of this course is to investigate the historical relationship between war and American society from (roughly) the Civil War to the present—although we will spend the majority of our time studying the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The topics and themes of this course will focus on the intersections of war with the social, political, cultural, and economic engines of American life. Therefore, it will not be a comprehensive history of the United States, nor will it be a traditional military history course that focuses on battles, campaigns, or changes to military technology, strategy, or tactics.

Instead, in this class we will explore several interlocking questions:

1. How has war contributed to Americans' sense of themselves as a nation and a people?
2. How has war shaped American politics and government since the end of the Civil War?
3. How has war shaped opportunities for men and women, even in times of relative peace?
4. In what ways has war been a proving ground for "Americanness"?

This class will also develop several academic skills that have broad applications in everyday life. You will analyze primary sources and make clear arguments backed by evidence through writing assignments and oral communication. You will sharpen your critical thinking skills by making sense of conflicting and competing narratives of the past and present. You will also learn how to conduct research on historical topics in order to strengthen your information literacy skills.

**Warning About the Content/Themes of This Course:** In this class we will be discussing topics that deal directly with war, violence, and death. *If you are a combat veteran or if you are a person who has experienced a violent traumatic event in your life, certain elements of this course might be an unwelcome reminder of those events.* Because this is a course on American history, we will also unflinchingly confront issues of race and racism, and the myriad other forms of bigotry that are a part of our national story.

Moreover, some of the texts we will be reading contain profanity, depictions of violence, and/or sexually explicit situations. The arguments and ideas about war and American society that I present to you may conflict with (or contradict) your core beliefs, principles, or convictions. I do not expect you to agree with me all of the time, but you will be required to learn the material and arguments I present to you. You will not always agree with your fellow classmates. I expect you to argue your point of view—using evidence from the course materials where appropriate—passionately, but with respect toward other people’s feelings and beliefs. *Ad hominem*, or personal attacks, on your fellow classmates **WILL NOT** be tolerated.

**No department or college within the Louisiana Tech University System requires students to take this course for graduation, certification, or specialization. It is entirely elective. Therefore, I will not make any accommodations, exceptions, or excuses for students who find the material objectionable. Please take time to reflect on the course themes and review the assigned material, outlined below, very carefully before you commit to taking this course.**

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **READING LIST**

There are three required books for this course, which are widely available for purchase online, or at the campus bookstore (if you prefer to pay more):

**Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).**

**Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (New York: De Capo Press, 2002). \* ANY VERSION OF THIS BOOK WILL SUFFICE!**

**Johnny Rico, *Blood Makes the Grass Grow Green: A Year in the Desert with Team America* (New York: Random House, 2007).**

**There will be a SUBSTANTIAL amount of additional required reading for this class, all of which will be available electronically on the course Blackboard page.**

**REQUIRED FILMS:**

We will be watching several films in this course. It is your responsibility to obtain these films, whether they be a physical copy (DVD) or streaming online. The REQUIRED films for this course are:

***Death and the Civil War*, Directed by Rick Burns (2012)**

***The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, Directed by Nunnally Johnson (1956)**

***A Few Good Men*, Directed by Rob Reiner (1992)**

**Course Policies and Procedures: PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS SECTION. It is your instruction manual for the rest of the semester!!**

We will be interacting with each other every week via [VoiceThread](#), an application that allows users to collaborate without having to be logged in at the same time. There will be no set time for class meetings, but you will be required to participate in this virtual classroom multiple times each week!

**This means that all of you will be required to set up a VoiceThread account (free of charge) and be enrolled in our class VoiceThread page. IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE USING VOICETHREAD, OR SEEING OUR CLASS PAGE DURING THE FIRST WEEK, CONTACT ME IMMEDIATELY VIA EMAIL SO I CAN FIX THE PROBLEM!**

Every Monday morning, I will provide an outline/study guide for the required reading on MOODLE. This will be your roadmap for getting through the weekly reading assignments and supplemental materials (video/audio clips, primary source documents, etc...). I will also post a video with questions and prompts to get the weekly discussions rolling on VoiceThread.

**Required Reading, Supplemental Materials, and Optional Reading:** The **Required Textbooks** should be read at your own pace throughout the quarter, although I have marked on the syllabus several benchmarks you should be keeping in mind. You are required to read both the **Himes** and **Rico** books, but you only need to write a review for one of them. The **Sherry** textbook is intended to provide

you with a firm grounding in the narrative history of the (roughly) 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of our weekly required reading will be in the form of articles or book chapters I have selected. All of these articles can be found on MOODLE. Most weeks, there will also be **Supplemental Materials** (videos, music, primary source documents, etc...) that you will be asked to look at. I will post these supplemental materials on VoiceThread so that we can engage them directly in our discussions.

**Online Discussions:** Besides the reading, our online discussions will be the most important task you do this semester. Without these discussions, this course won't work. Every week you will log on to VoiceThread. I will provide prompts to get the weekly discussion going. These prompts will be included in my weekly outlines/study guides to the class. **Please answer at least three questions from the study guide each week.** You will be required to not only engage with my questions, but also with your fellow classmates! This means that you will be **REQUIRED** to participate **AT LEAST** two (2) times per week. In order to ensure that a lively discussion happens, I have devised a strategy for when each of you will be required to post to VoiceThread. Here is what I would like to have happen every week:

**Monday:** I will post the outline/study guide for the week.

**Monday-Wednesday:** You will post your first response to the reading and the discussion prompts from the study guide.

**Wednesday-Friday:** After viewing one of your fellow classmates' thoughts, you will comment on what they have said.

The reason why I have staggered the response times is because otherwise students will wait until the last minute to do their reading and post a response to VoiceThread. In order for an online class like this to work, we must have a lively debate each week about the reading and course themes! I know that all of you are busy people and have different schedules, but this is the only way I know how to make sure that our discussions work well. You can post at any time—morning, afternoon, or the middle of the night—so saying that you had a “scheduling conflict” will not be an acceptable excuse. This also means that you must complete the reading assignments **BEFORE** Wednesday each week. Plan your schedules accordingly!

VoiceThread will allow us to interact with each other in many ways (text, video, and audio). I want you all to explore each of these options throughout the semester. This means that you must have access to a device that has a microphone and webcam capability (i.e., laptop, smartphone, or tablet).

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

The primary methods of evaluation for this course will be writing assignments and participation in our online discussions:

**Quizzes:** Each week, I will give you a short quiz (usually consisting of 3 questions). The questions will be drawn from the weekly reading assignments, and will be very broad in nature. They are not meant to trick you and they will never be hard if you have done the reading.

**Book Review:** You will write a short (750 word) book review of either the Chester Himes novel (*If He Hollers*) or the Johnny Rico memoir (*Blood Makes the Grass Grow Green*). If you choose Himes, the review will be due during Week 5; if you choose Rico, the review will be due during Week 10.

**Film Review:** At several times during this quarter, we will be watching a film as a class. You will be required to pick one of those films to write a short (750 word) review essay. Your essay will be due on whichever week we watch the film.

**Final Essay:** In the final essay (5-6 pages), you will write a response to one of the four questions outlined at the beginning of this syllabus. This essay will require you to synthesize the required reading, films, and class discussions and to make an argument that demonstrates to me that you understand the material we cover this quarter.

Grading: 100-Point Scale, corresponding to letter grades

<b>ONLINE DISCUSSIONS</b>	<b>30 POINTS</b>
<b>WEEKLY QUIZZES</b>	<b>15 POINTS</b>
<b>BOOK REVIEW</b>	<b>15 POINTS</b>
<b>FILM REVIEW</b>	<b>15 POINTS</b>
<b>FINAL ESSAY</b>	<b>25 POINTS</b>

### **SPECIAL NOTE ON THE AMOUNT OF READING**

This class requires you to read what I consider to be a fair amount for an upper division college course. When I have taught upper level courses in the past, students have complained about the amount of time it takes to complete the required reading each week. Many of you are busy with jobs, family responsibilities, and other classes. While I empathize with this position, here's my rebuttal: **college is supposed to be difficult**. You should have to spend hours (yes, **multiple** hours) outside of class reading, studying, and writing. This means less time for watching TV, drinking age-appropriate beverages with friends, etc. College requires sacrificing our present wants for our future desires. Bottom line: I promise that this class will be interesting and rewarding, but it will also be difficult. If you want to take an easy course with an easy A, there are plenty of classes in the course catalog to help you fulfill that desire.

Keep in mind, also: One major benefit of an online course is that you save time by not having to commute to school and sit through classroom lectures each week. Please remember that when you assess how much reading I am requiring.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

I expect you to turn in your work on time. You are responsible for ensuring that you have reliable access to the Internet, that you have access to a working printer, and that you have ink, paper, staples, and/or paperclips. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DOCKED 1/3 OF A LETTER GRADE FOR EACH DAY PAST DUE.** After 1 week, you will receive a zero for the assignment. **There will be NO makeup for missed discussions.**

## **CITATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

On all written work, you will be required to use proper footnote citations. For this course, we will be using the Chicago Manual of Style format. Please use the "note" format, NOT the "author-date" method. For your reference, please consult this website: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)  
I understand that many of you have learned different citation styles. However, in this class, you will all use the Chicago format.

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font.

You must provide a word count with each written assignment. You should type it underneath your name on the assignment.

Typos, misspelled words, grammatical mistakes, and other careless errors demonstrate a lack of care about your work. Please use spelling/grammar check functions on your computer and **PROOFREAD** your papers.

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

I fully expect each of you to turn in ORIGINAL work. Copying the work of other authors, cutting and pasting from the Internet, paraphrasing without proper citation, or any other form of plagiarism **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** **Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically receive a failing (F) grade for the course.** Students found guilty of academic dishonesty will also be referred to the Honor Committee for further action. For your reference, the Louisiana Tech Honor Code defines plagiarism as:

- “3.1.2. Representing another person's work or any part thereof, be it published or unpublished, as one's own, which is referred to as "plagiarism."
- 3.1.3. Copying another's entire paper and claiming it as one's own.
- 3.1.4. Copying a part of a paper or another source and claiming it as one's own.
- 3.1.5. Copying information from a source word for word without using citations.
- 3.1.6. Copying information from a source but changing the words around without
- 3.1.7. Obtaining, distributing, or referring to a copy of an examination which the instructor and/or department have not authorized to be made available for such purpose.
- 3.1.8. Submitting work that has been previously or is being concurrently used in a different class by oneself or by another student. Special permission must be obtained from the instructor or

professor if a student wishes to utilize or develop further any work prepared for another class” (REF: <https://www.latech.edu/documents/honor-code.pdf>).

### **Students with Disabilities**

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. You should also contact Disability Services at (318) 257-4221, or visit their office in 318 Wylly Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## Course Schedule

All required readings for the week are listed in **BOLD** font. Some of the required reading will be found on MOODLE. In addition to the required reading, for most weeks there will be supplemental material that you must look at. These may be short video clips, music, or primary source documents from the time period discussed in the readings.

Finally, I have included more readings for you to explore these topics in more depth if **you so choose**. Because quarters are so short, we can't cover everything. For those of you who are history majors, or even if you are just interested in the topics and themes, I encourage you to read the supplemental materials!

Week One: Introductions, Expectations, and Thinking About War

Required Reading: **Michael Sherry, "War as a Way of Life"**  
Supplemental Material: **READ THE SYLLABUS, WATCH THE WELCOME VIDEO ON VOICETHREAD, LEAVE A VIDEO COMMENT INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO THE CLASS**

For Further Reading: NONE

Week Two: The Civil War as America's First Experience with Modern War

Required Reading: **Drew Faust, "The Dread Void of Uncertainty: Naming the Dead in the American Civil War," Southern Cultures (Summer 2005)**  
Supplemental Material: **Watch "Death and the Civil War," a documentary film directed by Rick Burns (2012)**

For Further Reading: **John Keegan, "Grant and Unheroic Leadership," in *The Mask of Command* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987)**

Week Three: Race, Gender, and Empire at the Dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Required Reading: **Gary Gerstle, "Theodore Roosevelt's Racialized Nation, 1890-1900," and "Civic Nationalism and Its Contradictions."**  
Supplemental Material: **\*\*\*you should begin reading Chester Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go*, especially if you plan to write your book review on this title\*\*\***

For Further Reading: **Kristen Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 1998**

Week Four: Citizenship, the State, and the Great War

Required Reading: **Michael S. Neiberg, "The Melting Pot, the War, and**



**American Identity,” and Christopher Capozzola, “The Obligation to Volunteer”**

Supplemental Material: **Randolph Bourne, “War is the Health of the State”**

For Further Reading: **read the Preface and Prologue to Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War***

Week Five: World War II on the Home Front

**\*\*\*Book Review of Chester Himes Due by Friday April 6\*\*\***

Required Reading: **Matt Basso, “Redrafting Masculinity: Breadwinners, Shirkers, or ‘Soldiers of Production” and Leisa Meyer, “What has Become of the Manhood of America? Creating a Woman’s Army”**

Supplemental Material: **Finish Reading Chester Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go***

For Further Reading: **Chapters 1 and 2 in Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*; Leisa Meyer, *Creating GI Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women’s Army Corps During World War II* (1996)**

Week Six: The Long Postwar and Civil Rights

Required Reading: **Steve Estes, “Man the Guns,” Margot Canaday, “Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship Under the 1944 GI Bill”**

Supplemental Material: **Visit [OUTRANKS](#) Exhibit on LGBT military service from WWII to the Iraq War. Pay particular attention to the World War II documents.**

For Further Reading: **Chapters 3 and 4 in Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*; Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie***

Week Seven: Cold Warriors, Masculinity, and the Peacetime Draft

Required Reading: **John Worsencroft, “Salvageable Manhood: Project 100,000 and the Gendered Politics of the Vietnam War”**

Supplemental Material: **Watch *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit***

For Further Reading: **K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*, Chapter 5 in Sherry, *In the Shadow of War***

Week Eight: Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam

Required Reading: **Christian Appy, “Working-Class War” and “Life Before the Nam,” Robert Self, “Last Man To Die: Vietnam and the Citizen-Soldier”**

Supplemental Material: **\*\*\* You Should Begin Reading Johnny Rico, *Blood Makes the Grass Grow Green*, especially if you plan to write your book review for this title\*\*\***

For Further Reading: **Chapter 6 in Sherry, *In the Shadow of War***

Week Nine: “Be All You Can Be”—The Military as Social Good

Required Reading: **Beth Bailey, *The Army in the Marketplace: Recruiting an All-Volunteer Force*,” and John Worsencroft, “Cold Showers: The Marines, Marriage, and Readiness”**

Supplemental Material: **Read: Jim Webb, “The Military is Not a Social Program” and Jared Keller, “The US Military Has Always Been a Social Experiment”**

**Watch *A Few Good Men***

For Further Reading: **Chapters 7 and 8 in Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, and Jennifer Mittelstadt, *The Rise of the Military Welfare State***

Week Ten: 9/11 and Citizenship in a Time of War

**\*\*\*Book Review of Johnny Rico Due by Friday May 11\*\*\***

Required Reading: **James Wright, “History Lessons” and “Remember That”**

Supplemental Material: **Jenny Eliscu, “This is the Face of the War in Iraq”**

For Further Reading: **Bailey and Immerman (eds.), *Understanding the US Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*, Dexter Filkins, *The Forever War*.**

Week Eleven: Conclusions: Why We Fight

Required Reading: **Kenneth T. MacLeish, “War Economy,” Dexter Filkins, “Atonement: A Troubled Iraq Veteran Seeks out the Family He Harmed,” and Brian Mockenhaupt, “I Miss Iraq. I Miss My Gun. I Miss My War”**

**\*\*\*Final Essays are Due Friday May 18\*\*\***