

Summer 6-15-2007

ENG 5061-031: War and literature

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Eastern Illinois University

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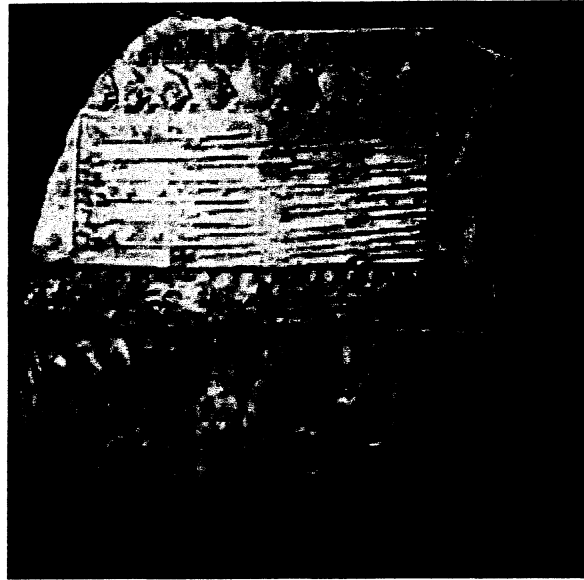
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5061-031

**English 5061-031
War and Literature
Summer, 2007
Dr. Kilgore
MW 6:00, CH 3159**



<u>Current Assignment</u>	
Choose research area. Readings as assigned.	Review Questions
Next Hand-In Date:	Check this space regularly. Last Modified: 6/4/2007

General Information

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of war itself and of ways that stories, plays, poems, and films have interpreted it to us. Assignments include a short paper, a term paper, and a final. For a fuller description, see the English Department course description booklet.

INSTRUCTOR: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Hours: M W 3:30-5:00 and by arrangement. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). E-mail: jdkilgore@eiu.edu. Please feel free to call my home at reasonable hours.

Feel free to e-mail me, even with fairly complex questions and chunks of papers-in-progress. If I don't have time to answer, I'll say so.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Assigned readings
- Attendance and participation (10%)
- Short Paper (15%)
- Term Paper (35%)
- Final Exam (40%)

I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *War Poems* (handout)
- Azar Gat, "Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of Hunter-Gatherer Fighting" (online; also handout)
- O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*
- Odell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
- Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Chapters XXIII and XXVII (online)
- Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Stanley Lombardo
- Grossman, *On Killing*
- Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One; Henry V*
- Shaara, Michael, *The Killer Angels*
- Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Hemingway, *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*
- Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*
- Wells, *The War of the Worlds*
- Fussell, ed., *The Norton Book of Modern War* (NBW)
- O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
- Two movies: *Full Metal Jacket* and *Patton*

Don't worry! In most cases we will be reading just fairly brief excerpts.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Will count approximately 15% of your grade in the course. Beginning with the first meeting, I will pass around an attendance sheet which you must sign. At the end of the term, I will assign a participation grade according to the following scale: 2 absences —A; 3 absences —B; 4 absences —C; 5 absences —D; 6 absences —F; more than 6 —further, proportional declines in your course grade (your attendance grade becomes a negative number, and your chances of passing the course rapidly dwindle). I will raise the basic grade a bit if I think your contributions to class discussion have been especially good.

Note that you have two "free" absences. Use these if you have to, but otherwise keep them as insurance. I will listen sympathetically to excuses, **but I will not normally award attendance credit for any session which you have missed.** But do contact me in case of truly exceptional circumstances.

READINGS. Are diverse and fairly extensive. Try hard to **read ahead** early in the term, to make time for your research project and paper. In all cases be sure to complete readings before the class meeting in which they are discussed, as you will get little from the discussion otherwise. Note that the works assigned for the course include two **movies**. These will be

screened partially in class; we will arrange viewing times in which the class can meet to view the remainder of the films as "homework."

PAPERS. By the beginning of Week 2, you must commit to a research area, which you will **NOT** be allowed to change. Choose an option from the list at the end of this syllabus; or, after reading the list, invent a topic of your own that seems similar in spirit and design. You **MUST** obtain approval for your project in either case, as no more than 2 students will be allowed to work on any given topic. The idea here (in addition to averting conflicts over research materials) is to let everyone take off in a different direction from our common class discussions, becoming especially knowledgeable in some particular, small area we have touched upon together.

Once you have chosen your area or general topic, you are to write two papers: a short essay due at the end of Week 3, which you will present and defend in a class workshop during Week 4; and a term paper, due in the last week, which will be an improved, expanded, more fully supported and developed version of the short paper. Shoot for 1500-2000 words for the short version, about twice that for the final. Note that the long version counts more than double the short one (35% vs. 15%) in the final grade.

Though I will bow to custom in referring to this project as a "research paper," don't take the term too literally. I understand that you are not an expert (neither am I) and am not asking you to become one; I ask only that you go out and find a *reasonable* amount of information not already included in assigned readings, and that (this is the hard part) you then work the information into an argument of your own that remains substantially personal in tone and outlook. Another way of saying the same thing is that, in the small area you have defined for yourself, you need to become an authority *compared to your classmates here*. When you know enough to speak comfortably and usefully to the rest of us for 10 pages or so, your research is done—even though you will and should still have dozens of unanswered questions.

For most topics, you should take the syllabus as your point of departure and work hard to sustain the connection, aiming to deepen and extend our grasp of the texts and general issues we have been discussing. Imagine your classmates as your audience and write to them rather than to that intimidating abstraction, the Reader; but don't take informality *too* far. Define a clear thesis with (usually) a strong argumentative edge, and let your argument drive the research, rather than vice versa. A fairly small amount of extra reading should be sufficient if you can maintain a clear vision of what is necessary to your argument and what is useful or interesting to your audience.

Format. Since you will be submitting your first paper for group discussion, you must provide twelve copies. Copies cost money, so I take the unusual step of allowing you to use small fonts (11 or even 10 point—no smaller) and to single-space. But leave reasonable margins, and skip an extra space between paragraphs (following the format you see in front of you here). The final term paper should be double-spaced with 1" or 1.25" margins. Avoid covers, and make sure the bibliography (or "Works Cited") and notes (if any) are in some reasonable approximation of MLA format. Pages must be numbered.

Style. The writer's standing assignment, to quote the late Martin Scott, is "to create something that is beautiful in some way." Revise and polish like a maniac. Aim to write the kind of paper that will be such a pleasure, not just for the information but for the pure delicious *sound* of it, that when you rediscover it in a box in the attic twenty years from now, you will stop whatever you are doing and re-read every word.

Workshop. The short papers, counted as required reading, will be distributed to the class, then discussed in some detail in Week 4, with about 20-30 minutes budgeted for each paper.

Each author will read his or her paper, then field questions.

Please prepare for our workshop sessions by reading your classmates' work carefully, annotating the copies you have been given and writing at least a brief terminal comment. After each paper is discussed, the annotated copies will be handed back to the author, hopefully to provide material assistance in the writing of the final term paper. In both your written comments and your questions during workshop, aim to help the author, but remember that "Opposition is true friendship." Spirited objections to a paper's argument may be the best help of all in sparking further development. Be cordial, but be candid.

FINAL EXAM. Scheduled for Wednesday, August 1 at 6:00 PM, will be a major exercise, accounting for 40% of your course grade. It will be comprehensive (note that we have no midterm) and will aim to ascertain that you have a good grasp of the readings and the ideas raised in class discussion. Numerous short essay questions will ask you to analyze concepts, interpret passages, and demonstrate basic familiarity with works on the syllabus. **The exam will be open-book, open-note.**

LATE WORK & MISC: There are only two real hand-in dates for this course, so it seems quite reasonable to expect you to meet both deadlines. In the case of an emergency, get in touch with me as soon as you possibly can, and we will work something out. Papers that are late without adequate excuse will be penalized one full grade for each calendar day of lateness and will receive no written commentary.

Please be aware that the penalty for plagiarism or cheating—which I trust I will not have to impose—is automatic failure of the course. See me if you have any questions about this policy.

I will be more than happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability. Please contact me if you will need such an accommodation; or call the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services, 581-6583.



SCHEDULE

Note: *Please complete the readings for each session before the class meets. As the course gets underway, try hard to READ AHEAD of the schedule. You will have a hard time keeping up at the end of the term if you do not make a head start on the longer readings.*

To keep track of changes, make a habit of bringing a hard copy of the syllabus to class with you, and check the posted online version periodically.

The readings marked "optional" will not appear on the final exam.

1) June 11, 13 Introduction

Questionnaire. Clips from *Saving Private Ryan*, *Star Wars*.
War Poems handout.

Azar Gat, "Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of Hunter-Gatherer
Fighting."
O'Connell, Chapters 2 & 3.
Choose Research Topic.

2) June 18, 20

Odell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

O'Connell, pages 45-70, 98-105.
Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Chapters XVII and XXIII.
Begin Homer.

3) June 25, 27

The Iliad. Murnaghan's Introduction, Lombardo's Introduction, and Books 1,
6, 9, 19, 21-22.
Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*. Bring *Henry V* to class as well, so we can
examine selected passages.

4) July 2

Short Paper due in multiple copies.
Patton. (Screen in/out of class).
O'Connell, 176-211.
Begin discussing Grossman.

5) July 9, 11

Workshop.
Grossman, *On Killing*. Read pages 1-156; 249-306; 323-332.

6) July 16, 18

Grossman, *On Killing*
Shaara, *The Killer Angels*

Optional: Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

7) July 23, 25

Optional: Wells, *War of the Worlds*

O'Connell, Chapter 14.

From NBW: Fussell, "Introduction: On Modern War"; "Never Such Innocence Again" (17-39); "From *All Quiet on the Western Front*," 114-137. Hemingway, "In Another Country," p. 267, "Soldier's Home," p. 143, and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," p.3.

Term paper due Wednesday or Friday.

8) July 30, August 1

Full Metal Jacket. (Screen in/out of class).
Review.

Final Exam: Wednesday

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RESEARCH PROJECTS

The following are samples and suggestions only. Many, many other projects are possible, and you are quite free and welcome to propose your own if you prefer it to any of those listed below. No more than two students may work on any one topic. For all topics, try hard to establish and sustain a strong connection to readings on the syllabus.

1. How natural is war? Do we make war primarily due to historical and cultural factors (overpopulation, competition for resources, and a resulting history of warfare and the need to prepare for it, with preparedness itself becoming a *casus belli*), or because of instinctual factors (innate aggressiveness on both the individual and group level)? Don't feel you must settle this huge question once and for all, but collect and present evidence bearing on one side or the other. Take Azar Gat's essay as your starting point, then look at responses to him and at his sources. Try to relate your conclusions, whatever they are, to Grossman's thesis that killing is completely unnatural, accompanied always by powerful trauma on the part of the killer.

Some particular research areas you might want to consider:

- Primate studies. Do our nearest relatives in the animal kingdom engage in war or in warlike behavior? If so, that suggests that war is genetically programmed in us, too. Authors whose works you may want to look for: Jane Goodall, Judith Harris.
- Anthropological studies. Do preliterate, preindustrial societies tend to be warlike or peaceful? Find examples from around the world and from different eras. Check out Robert O'Connell's book, *Ride of the Second Horseman*, which seems to argue that prehistoric humanity was basically matriarchal and pacifistic. Note that Gat says something very different. You might even write a very useful paper comparing and contrasting Gat with O'Connell on this crucial point.

- Testimonies to "the joy of war." Collect examples from both literature (starting with works on our syllabus!) and from nonfictional memoirs. If battle can be a thrilling, ecstatic experience, doesn't this argue that it is somehow natural and "right" for us? Relate the question specifically to works on the syllabus.
- Testimonies to the disgust, shame and trauma of war. If war so frequently leaves the soldier permanently traumatized, and if Grossman is right in arguing that the "myth of easy killing" is a cynical though partially unconscious lie, and that the average man finds it desperately difficult to kill — doesn't this argue that war is deeply unnatural and "wrong" for us? Isn't our detestation of war ipso facto evidence that it is unnatural?

2. Odell's Hunters and Gatherers. Are Odell's native tribesmen realistically conceived and rendered, or are they basically fantasies, native folk as the white man would like to imagine them? Do they serve primarily to mythologize the concerns of the dominant culture, as "noble savages" have typically done in the literature of the west, or do they seem founded in real observation and imbued with their own intrinsic logic? Does Karana confirm and conform to the politically correct stereotype of the peaceful, ecologically sensitive native? As you pursue your answers, try to discover what sort of research Odell did in preparing to portray his villagers; what is factually known about the Lost Woman of San Nicolas; and what reviewers have said about his portrait of Native Americans, if anything.

3. Captive Women. Apparently bride-stealing (as it is euphemistically called) is a widespread practice in "primitive" societies, and continues in some hunting and gathering peoples up to this day. Find out whatever you can about the experiences of women captured in this way and write a descriptive essay and report that responds to at least some of the questions a modern inevitably has: on what terms do the women consent to be "stolen"? What alternatives do they have? Do they come to accept their new status, or do they attempt to escape? Do they hate their captors or learn to regard them as genuine husbands — or a little of both? In what ways does marriage in more "civilized" societies seem like captivity by another name? Notice that Homer's Helen and Briseis give us literary examples, which it may be quite appropriate for you to bring in by way of comparison. Note too that early American literature is rich in "captivity narratives."

4. The demographics of war. Who fights in war, and why? Select one to three wars that especially interest you, and find out everything you can about the backgrounds of the soldiers who fought it, with the ultimate goal of shedding some light on that eternal mystery, the soldier's motivation. Are the soldiers in your selected battles rich or poor, young or old, volunteers or professionals? What alternatives if any do they have to the military life? How dangerous is that life compared to the civilian life they have left? What are their odds of survival, and what rewards await them if they do survive? What role do patriotism and other forms of idealism play in their motivation? Are they genuinely lethal when they do fight, or does their role often consist (as Grossman would suggest) mainly of "display"? Note that for one reason or another, many soldiers never do see battle.

5. Women soldiers. What role is appropriate for women in the modern U.S. military? Start by learning in some detail what the current policies for women's participation are in one of the four branches of our military -- and how well those policies seem to be working. Then take a position and defend it against counter-arguments. If, for instance, you advocate female participation in the infantry, what is it about the current rationale for excluding them that you find insufficient? If you oppose any expansion of women's role, why do you think women could not do what men have always done? Does it seem likely to you that women infantry could bear up as well as men -- or better than men -- under the

kinds of psychological stresses Grossman analyzes? What of O'Connell's point that women have usually been combatants only when war reaches its "predatory" extreme? And what of Gat's point that young men are natural risk-takers while women are not? Doesn't this imply that women are simply too meek, timid, and sensitive to make good soldiers? Will they fight suicidally, as men have often done?

Note that women's participation in war, historically, has been quite limited, and that there must have been some reasons for this; depending on your position, you will want to say either that those reasons remain valid, or that they no longer are if they ever were. Remember that the ultimate issue here should not be "What is fair to the soldier?" but "What will give us the most effective military?" A hot-button topic for people who thrive on intellectual combat.

6. Homer's Tactics. Finish reading the *Iliad*, then try to understand the nature of the combat Homer is depicting. How "true to life" do these battles seem? In terms of weaponry used, tactics employed, casualties suffered, conventions observed, and so on, how well does Homer's account correspond to what is known historically about warfare in this time and place (the west coast of Asia Minor in the second millennium BC)? How consistent does his description of tactics seem? Has he possibly superimposed the tactics of different eras? The topic is huge and elusive, though fascinating. You will probably need to be content with partial, tentative, carefully limited conclusions, unless you hit paydirt with an authoritative article that addresses just these questions.

7. Sport and war: Homer's heroes as jocks. Finish reading *The Iliad*, then do some shrewd searching through such publications as *Sports Illustrated*, looking for behaviors and attitudes which parallel those of Achilles and the other warriors. To what extent does the modern sports hero seem to occupy a niche — and display values and behaviors — that seem similar to those of the ancient warrior? Can the service performed by the athlete be compared to that of the war hero? Can the monumental self-absorption of (let's say) a Rasheed Wallace or a Terrell Owens be usefully paralleled to the vain-glory of Achilles? How does the logic of conflict tend to bring out such qualities in men? At what point does the analogy break down?

8. Homosexuality in ancient Sparta and Thebes. Learn everything you can about the tradition of homosexual love in ancient Sparta and Thebes, then relate this to the topics of military morale, camaraderie, and militarism. Is it an accident that the most militaristic and militarily effective of the ancient Greek city-states was also the one in which homosexuality was most practiced and encouraged? Does it seem true, as Plato argued, that men will fight more bravely if their lovers are fighting with them? If so, does the exclusion of gays from the modern U.S. military make sense? You might want to take a look at a short science fiction novel, Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*. It's lots of fun, and at one point Haldeman pictures a society in the distant future reverting to the Spartan model.

9. Arms and Strategy in Shakespeare. The class will touch upon the substantial lack of realism — at least in the narrow sense — in Shakespeare's renderings of the battles of Shrewsbury and Agincourt. For example, he makes *no mention at all* of the weapon that was overwhelmingly decisive in both engagements, while assigning central roles to weapons not even used, and we will wonder why this should be. Make this issue your own. Find out as much as you can about the arms and tactics in these battles, then study and ponder Shakespeare's departures. Has any scholar zeroed in as yet on his depictions of arms? If so, the book or article might be a gold mine for you.

Some questions that you should ponder in any case: To what extent does Shakespeare's omission or reinvention of the bald facts of history seem necessary and artistically valid? Is his vision of the way combat unfolds, often "untrue" in the simplest sense, true in some larger artistic sense that justifies his departures? Or is something essential lost? Is part of the problem that he is working from imperfect sources, and writing long after the battles he has dramatized? You may want to pursue your question beyond the bounds of just these two plays, to other of Shakespeare's works that include battles -- but there is plenty to work with here, both in terms of fascinating research waiting to be done and important interpretive questions to be wrestled with.

10. Grossman and the critics. Grossman makes some decidedly unorthodox and controversial claims: that most soldiers in most wars are unable to, and do not, kill; that those who do are forever burdened with guilt; that soldiers in the Civil War and other wars usually shot to miss. How have such claims been received by military experts and historians? Track down as many reviews and other sources as you can, and give us a survey of the critical response. Then add your own considered assessment of the validity of Grossman's arguments. If you like, you may narrow your focus to just ONE claim, e.g. his account of Civil War firing rates.

11. Sins of the Cinema. The camera's need to show warfare in personalized, dramatic terms — with close-ups, recognizably heroic gestures, and mass outcomes visibly influenced by individual action — tends to lead to a persistent falsification of the realities of combat. Watch, in addition to the movies required for this class, a number of other war movies, then select just 2-4 for close scrutiny. Look at the battle scenes and appraise what is realistic and what is not, doing research as needed to support your contentions. Engage with specific questions like: is there historical justification for the scene in which Patton stands fearlessly in the middle of the street, shooting with a pistol at the German fighter planes, while machine-gun bullets trace a path right up to his feet? For Henry V leading a charge on horseback (!) through the breached wall of Harfleur in Kenneth Branagh's film? How realistic and probable are such moments? You might also want to consider, e.g., the opening of *Saving Private Ryan* as a contrasting example — battle scenes that hold to a higher standard of historical realism.

12. The Shaara Trilogy. Read *The Last Full Measure*, Jeff Shaara's excellent sequel to his father's novel. Do a little bit of background reading to learn how this novel (together with *Gods and Generals*) came to be written so long after *The Killer Angels*. Then (your main task), compare and contrast the visions of war in the two novels. Is Michael's vision of combat more heroic than Jeff's? Does he believe in glory, sacrifice, triumph, and other martial values and catchphrases more fully than his son? Or is this impression more a function of the sharply different designs of the two books, the one concentrating on *just* the four days of Gettysburg, the other detailing the nearly two year time span from Gettysburg to Appomatox? Give carefully chosen comparisons and contrasts in support of your argument.

13. Shaara vs. Remarque: the anti-heroic and the neoheroic. Finish reading Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, one of the most devastating critiques ever written of the heroic martial ideal. Then analyze the ways in which Shaara, at the unlikeliest of historical moments (1970, in the midst of the Vietnam debacle) subtly rebuilds the myth Remarque has tried to demolish. Use secondary sources as appropriate, but make a sharp contrast of the two great novels the backbone of your argument.

14. Honor in the trenches: Hemingway and World War I. In World War I, as O'Connell remarks, "there was hardly a heroic death to be had anywhere," because modern

technology had transformed traditional martial ethics into a recipe for senseless butchery. What lesson does Hemingway, who fought in the war, seem to take from this. Does he, like Owen in "Dulce et Decorum Est," essentially condemn the ancient ideal of courage and martial sacrifice? Or does he still find a place for it in his value system? Try to sort out this contradiction or dialectic, with special attention to the three stories on our syllabus. Why does courage still seem to matter, in the era of the machine gun? How has its nature or definition changed? What differentiates courage from suicidal folly? Your research for this paper may well take you to other of Hemingway's works, e.g. *A Farewell to Arms* or "The Capital of the World," and you should probably learn something about his life. Notice how he alternates between ironic critique of macho ideals to what (to me anyway, though you must decide for yourself) looks like reaffirmation.

15. Wells and Social Darwinism. Read Wells's famous short novel *War of the Worlds*, then turn to appropriate secondary readings to help grasp the philosophical and political context. Then write a paper that explains to us how the novel is not just the 1890s equivalent of a video game, but an earnest and cogent treatise on European imperialism and racism. Specifically, you should focus on Social Darwinism, the pseudo-scientific doctrine that purported to find in Evolution a rationale for war, racism, and aggression, quite visibly influencing the thought and actions of (among others) Theodore Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler. To what extent has Wells foreseen the catastrophes of the twentieth century? Is he advocating an overthrow of the imperial system, or a different conduct of it? In writing, remember that many of us have never read the book, so you may have to explain basic contexts more fully than in another kind of paper. You might want to rent and watch *Independence Day* and / or any of various film adaptations of the Wells novel, by way of contrasting Hollywood's simplistic feel-good jingoism to Wells's considered, circumspect, chastened humanism.

16. Grossman's assessment of domestic violence and crime. Again, he makes some sweeping claims here, and posits what may be a simplistic cause-and-effect relationship between violent entertainment and real violence. Do your best to isolate these claims and submit them to independent verification. Is it true that an "epidemic of violence" is gripping all industrialized countries including Canada and Great Britain? Has that trend continued since 1995, when Grossman's book was published? Is there in fact a strong consensus of psychologists that video games and violent movies lead to violent actions? You might want to spend much of your research time with Grossman's later book, *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill*.

17. Genocide and Human Nature. Our reading gives ample evidence of the human capacity for love, honor, and gentleness, especially in Odell's book and Grossman's. Yet the study of war throws up endless, shocking examples of the opposite kind: examples like the Holocaust, the My Lai Massacre, the Rwanda genocide. How is it that the same creature is capable of such extremes of behavior? Is human nature loving or vicious? How can apparently nice people become killers? How do we reconcile the contradiction?

In wrestling with this philosophical question, first select some particular atrocity (Rwanda would do nicely; My Lai is right there in the Norton reader). Then analyze the psychological forces at play, the forces that can turn sane people into remorseless killers. As background research, you should acquaint yourself with Stanley Milgram's famous (or infamous) experiments on obedience; and with any of various experiments on what Judith Harris calls "groupness," i.e. the disconcerting readiness of humans to organize themselves into competing teams or clans.

18. Memoir. Do you have a relative or close friend whose experiences in war you would

like to chronicle? This summer might be an excellent chance to write that bit of family history you have been wanting to record. See me in conference, soon, to work out the shape of your research and your paper.



Some Additional Guidelines

- **TOPIC:** Must be chosen and approved by June 18. First come, first served. No more than two writers per topic.
- **FORMAT:** Standard MLA or APA Style for text, notes, and bibliography. I.e., give internal references for all quotations, then include a bibliography ("Works Cited") as part of the paper. Other kinds of notes should be given on a Notes page just before the Works Cited page.
- **SCOPE OF RESEARCH:** As a **very** tentative guideline, aim to read about 100-200 pages beyond what is already required on the syllabus; or about 8-12 sources. But the far more important criterion is intrinsic: read enough to satisfy the particular needs of the topic you have defined for yourself. Be extremely shrewd and demanding in deciding just what you want to read, and why. Look carefully at the dates of books and articles, and don't waste time on sources that are out of date. Define your topic in such a way that the research plan, too, is sharply defined. Avoid at all costs the kind of aimless reading that causes you to dump a heap of essentially unrelated, undigested information in your reader's lap.

For our purposes, "research" means anything you read that is not already required reading in the class. The moment you learn something that the person in the next desk doesn't know, you have started to be an authority relative to the rest of us. Don't make the mistake of thinking you must somehow become more knowledgeable than the experts you are reading before you can write. Research by its nature is unfinished business. Do a reasonable amount, then write up what you have. Some options, e.g. # 12, ask you to do additional primary reading, and will probably leave you no time at all for secondary sources. That's fine; in such cases, think of your project as a special report or review, not at all the kind of research paper that sifts and integrates a wide range of sources.

You are welcome to use internet sources, but be careful! 90% of what is out there is unreliable. You will need to use all your critical acumen to sift through the junk to what is useful and valid. In general, print sources tend to be more reliable than web sites. Be sure to include date captured for internet sources, and keep a hard copy in your notes for the paper.

In writing, be in command of your sources; use them selectively and shrewdly, not massively and mechanically. This is your paper, not theirs; inventing and defending the thesis is your job, not theirs. Quote your sources directly, summarize them succinctly, take issue with them, discuss and analyze them, and always cite them adequately; but avoid merely paraphrasing them. Clarify your own role by saying "I," "my own opinion," etc. as needed. "Scrapbook papers" and "data dumps" will meet with a very chilly reception. See below, "Pitfalls."

For most topics, start your research with journal articles, reading the most recent first, preferring scholarly journals to newspapers and mass-circulation magazines, and recent articles to dated ones. Avoid book-length studies; you don't have time to read them cover to cover, and if you try you risk being swallowed whole by another author. See below, "The Single-Source Trap."

- **ORGANIZATION OF PAPER:** Will depend on the nature of the particular project, but in general should not be much different from that of any good essay. The crucial criteria are that the paper have a clear and interesting thesis, that the thesis be developed and supported throughout, that everything in the paper be clearly related to the thesis. The main difference here is that you will be armed with considerably more information than usual, so that you will be proving the thesis more copiously and with more sophistication.

PITFALLS

[Pardon my tone here. These are caveats I usually issue to undergraduates. But I can't resist including them here as well.]

Do your best to avoid the following common errors:

- **The Scrapbook Approach (or "Data Dump").** The paper is so full of quotes and paraphrases, many of them poorly assimilated to the thesis, that overall coherence and interest are lacking. The paper feels padded and directionless. The reader falls asleep. Avoid by cultivating a firm, definite sense of your own purpose and thesis.

- **The Single-Source Trap.** Halfway through the project, you discover an article that says everything you wanted to say. Abashed and intimidated, you quote this source thirteen times in your own essay, making the reader wish he could be reading it instead of your paper, which seems to have no ideas of its own. Avoid by finishing your research early on, defining your topic clearly, digesting your sources completely, and citing a variety of sources.

- **The "All About" Approach.** The paper has no real focus and consists mainly of background information that is readily available from many sources. Rather than pursuing a thesis, it seems to drift and free-associate. Avoid by focussing on your thesis and argument, declining all tangents.

- **Vague Attribution.** The paper is full of information whose nature and origin is unclear. Though citations occur with some regularity, they tend to be vague, and the paper shows an enormous preference for paraphrase over direct quotation and explicit summary. As a result the reader can't tell, from one sentence to the next, whether he is reading your opinions, someone else's, or common background knowledge. Only the most meticulous reader can tell whether the paper is a mechanical paraphrase of two or three sources, or a decent job of research poorly presented. Instructors sometimes give students the benefit of such doubt. Not me. I don't believe that doing so is really a favor to the student, who learns to write horribly tedious, murky prose, or to anyone who must read his or her work in the future.

Avoid by talking directly about your sources, using various methods of citation as appropriate (short quote, long quote, summary, etc.), and by taking a more personal tone, explicitly distinguishing your own conclusions, opinions, doubts, and confusions.



Some Relevant Links:

- Why "suicidal fighting" is necessary to the growth of states
- Gettysburg tour
- High Water Mark Painting
- Photos of the dead
- Casualties in Wars of the Twentieth Century
- Casualties in all American Wars
- "War and Persuasion," an essay in progress
- "War is a Racket," 1933 address by General Smedley Butler, two time winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- Map of Eastern Mediterranean
- JFK's speech on governmental secrecy, with an irreverent video collage.