

War in Words

COURSE LEADERS

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WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

Warfare produces stories – originally these were oral stories but nowadays they are more often in the form of films, novels, theatre, song, poetry, memoirs, video games and the graphic arts (paintings, drawing and still photos), etc.

Although this course is called War in Words (WiW) we consider all media that are used to transmit experiences of war from generation to generation.

We examine how accurate they are, if they have become myths (and why), and how they influence how war is conducted.

While the course focuses on English sources, we do also examine cultural differences in the way war stories are told to better understand why nations (and non-state actors) go to war.

We set ourselves some research questions and 'test' these against the media that we examine.

These research questions are on the next slide

OUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A SELECTION OF THE QUESTIONS WE EXAMINE

- For any given event, topic or theme, which gives the more convincing social, cultural, historical and political message - the fictional account or the non-fictional account?
- What differentiates anti-war from pro-war material and can war fictional artefacts be neutral?
- What makes war entertaining?
- When an item is produced long after the event, how does the time interval 'colour' the way the material is presented?
- Why do some conflicts produce a large quantity of literature, for example, WW1, and some, such as Korea, produce little?
- Can propaganda be good art?
- There was factual (i.e. non-fictional) war reporting in the past, just as today. Why then was the fictional material in the past more important?

AIMS OF THE MODULE

YOU WILL FINISH THE COURSE BEING ABLE TO:

- understand the historical and cultural context in which wars and war material are produced and consumed
- interpret media critically using media specific language
- analyse and discuss war media topics with skill and knowledge
- justify your favourite war artefact (film, book etc.)
- write at length on various war and media related topics
- successfully give a 20-minute presentation on complex topics related to the course

METHODOLOGY

TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS YOU WILL:

- read, make notes on, and give presentations on a variety of original artefacts (film, novels, stage plays.....)
- listen to, take notes on and critically analyse original audio and video material
- initiate discussion and debate by researching new material
- suggest, explain and justify material you think is relevant to the course
- write an ongoing portfolio, in which you will see your written English improve from week to week
- take part every week in focussed discussions
- regularly prepare and deliver presentations

COURSE CONTENT

Key prose sources (e.g. important novels and short stories)

Film, Theatre (stage plays) and Audio drama

Song (songs sung by soldiers themselves and songs about war)

Poetry (key war poets who have influenced national identities)

Graphic arts (from cartoons through fine art to war photography)

Modern media sources (you tube, computer games, blogs)

Secondary sources such as key writers who have striven to interpret this field

Other audio and video material including formal exercises to develop specific skills

SCOPE OF THE COURSE

SOME OF THE WARS AND CONFLICTS WE WILL EXAMINE

We will focus on the wars of the 20th century, but also find the need to look at earlier and more modern ones too. You may therefore find yourself researching some of the following:

WW1	Spanish Civil War	WW2
Korean War	Vietnam	Falklands War
Gulf Wars	Afghanistan wars	Future War

We will also occasionally need to 'dip into' even earlier times and see what people like Homer (The Iliad) and Shakespeare had to say on this topic.

STUDENT DRIVEN CONTENT

Every attempt is made to ensure that students can drive this course by providing content they consider important, entertaining and relevant. Further to that, considerable emphasis is placed on student led discussion and critical analysis.

We encourage students to be independent thinkers and to challenge pre-conceived ideas.

We welcome debate.

We have high expectations!

PRACTICAL DETAILS

COURSE LEADERS

Peter Cant-Salkowsky

email pcs@hsu-hh.de

Dave Duke

email duke@hsu-hh.de

- War in Words (WiW) is a module aimed at students from all faculties
- Successfully completing this course will get you 4 credit points for your Bachelor. You can also refresh your SLP or just improve your English
- You need to have an SLP (HMLS) of 3332 already

LENGTH OF COURSE AND HOURS PER WEEK

- The course runs for 3 terms: Autumn 2020, Winter 2021 and Spring 2021
- Classes are 90 minutes per week and take place via MS Teams on Wednesdays from 1000-1130 (first class on Wednesday 6 October)
- There will be a homework assignment each week. Typically this will be reading, writing, listening and note-taking or a piece of research. This assignment is integral to the course and counts towards your Bachelor points (i.e. it has to be done)
- Any on-line work will be on MS Teams
- Maximum number of students per class: 12

CREDIT POINTS

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR CREDIT POINTS?

A 20-minute oral exam including a presentation and discussion

A continually assessed writing portfolio compiled during the course

You will have 3 attempts in total to successfully complete the oral and writing requirements of M3 and S3

REGISTERING FOR CLASS

Register for the module on Campus Management

Deadline: 30 September 2021 (12 am)

Questions concerning the deadline or CMS: contact either Dr. Novo in room 1124 or via e.mail at novo@hsu-hh.de or Frau Henning in room 1122 or via e-mail at melanie.henning@hsu-hh.de

A FINAL THOUGHT

*“The real war will never get into
books”*

Walt Whitman