Course Information: HON 1000-07 Humanities Research through Film--Honors

Semester Taught: Fall 2020

William Paterson University

Instructor Information: Prof. K Molly O'Donnell, email:<[odonnellk@wpunj.edu](mailto:odonnellk@wpunj.edu)>

Office: Atrium 231

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Open student meeting times (office hours): Mondays 1-3 and Thursdays 2-3

Department Information: History Department office is located in Atrium 217

History dept. secretary: Ms. Malissa Williams, (973) 720-2319, [williamsma@wpunj.edu](mailto:williamsma@wpunj.edu)

Course section meets Fridays 9-9.50 in Raubinger 201.

Required Texts: None. A few online-readings will be available on Blackboard. Students may need to rent or borrow films to view. The instructor will arrange optional out of class film screenings for the class, if desired.

**Description of the Course**: A one-credit introduction to research in the humanities for first-year students which examines film portrayals of wars in the recent past. Course content features diverse points of view and differing arguments about war and justifications for war including arguments based on ethics, pacifism, patriotism, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Course analysis prominently examines how war films represent human problems and experiences from perspectives across class, ethnicity, gender, and race. Students will screen clips in class and full motion pictures outside of class to explore how to analyze film as a medium, to assess and review directorial points of view, and identify filmmaker’s methods for engaging viewers. The course introduces interdisciplinary methods of research and teaches students to apply these methods to evaluate and interpret the meaning, validity, and accuracy of historic film representations through their course discussions, papers, and presentations.

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to:

* explore the meaning and experiences of modern wars for humanity including their ethical, civic, and global implications;
* examine the uses and limitations of film as a medium for recording and conveying ideas and information;
* foster critical thinking and intellectual autonomy;
* enable students to articulate in writing or in oral presentations multiple approaches to questions, problems or texts;
* engage students in research of primary and secondary sources and provide them with the skills necessary to distinguish different points of view and arguments;
* introduce students to the purposes, values, and practices of intellectual honesty in research;
* guide students through a research project in order to prepare them for higher level inquiry.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

* analyze the meaning and experiences of modern wars for humanity, including their ethical, civic, and global implications in class discussions, journals, and papers;
* dissect specific films to evaluate their points of view, accuracy, and truthfulness as well as identifying inaccuracy, propaganda, and distortion through research, class discussions, other class activities, and papers;
* identify, appreciate, and practice the value and methods of intellectual honesty in research
* conduct a semester-length research project related to course themes including locating relevant primary and secondary sources;
* analyze readings and films and distinguish their different points of view and arguments;
* identify issues and problems for research clearly and properly source information in their research projects according to interdisciplinary standards in the humanities;
* pursue research, integrate ideas or theories, and produce solutions through short papers, and a final research paper and oral report.

The **course topics outline** is listed at the end of this document with an accompanying course calendar.

**Major Course Expectations and Requirements**:

1. Students are expected to log into the Blackboard website at http://bb.wpunj.edu before every class meeting to check for announcements, handouts, etc. and bring these materials to class. Meeting cancellations due to weather or illness will be made via Blackboard and/or student email.

2. Students are required to attend all course meetings on time, prepared for work, to be attentive and respectful, and to participate in class exercises and discussions. Attendance and participation will be graded. Electronics distractions in class strongly discouraged. Excessive absence from class may result in a low grade or failure of the course, at the instructor’s discretion.

3.All readings and other course assignments are due on the date listed on the course calendar.

4. Assignments should be submitted via Blackboard, and be professional in appearance: typewritten, numbered pages, spell-checked, double-spaced, with a list of citations, as appropriate.

5. Students are expected to follow university policies on academic honesty. Students who submit work copied from others or who fail to cite or acknowledge other people's ideas are subject to penalties for academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, a grade of F for the course, as detailed in the university student handbook.

6. Electronic recording zero tolerance policy: no images and/or recordings of class are to be made or circulated.

ASSIGNMENTS

**Assignments and Grading:**

Students will be graded on attendance and participation and the following assignments:

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| --- | --- |
| attendance & participation | 20% |
| Short Written Assignments | 20% |
| bibliography | 15% |
| Honors Orientation assignments (Attendance and work at required orientation meetings with the Honors College staff) | 20% |
| Poster and/or Electronic presentation | 25% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

Students who are experiencing serious problems that may cause extended absence or missed assignment deadlines should speak with the instructor privately, preferably in advance of missed work.

Assignments must be turned and all readings completed by at the beginning of class on the date due. If not, a student’s assignment grade may be lowered or a zero, at the instructor's discretion. If student work is submitted electronically, students are responsible for making certain that their assignment arrives on time, or else late penalties will apply. Please do not email assigned coursework to the instructor

**Students are responsible for reading and adhering to all the instructions and policies posted on the Blackboard course webpage**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade Scale:** | B+= 88-89 (88) | C+ = 78-79 (78) | D+ =68-69 (68) |
| A= 94-100 (95) | B= 84-87 (85) | C = 74-77 (75) | D= 66-67 (66) |
| A- = 90-93 (90) | B- = 80-83 (80) | C- = 70-73 (70) | F= 65 or below (60) |
| When averaging letter grades in the course, they will be weighted with the numbers listed next to them in parentheses above. Missing, late, or unacceptable work will be graded as a zero. | | | |

**Course Topics and Assignments Calendar**

**Introduction to Course:**

**Week 1** 9/4 Course introduction and methods

**Week 2** 9/11 Academic honesty and citation methods.

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**Week 3** 9/18 films as evidence (online reading) “How to Analyze Movies: A Step by Step guide” available on Blackboard. In-class film clips

**Week 4** 9/25 Film analysis -- practical aspects and methods. Film and historical definitions of citizenship and nationalism. Readings: Online “War Propaganda” & “When History is Not Good Enough for Hollywood: Selma, LBJ and Martin Luther King, Jr.” available on Blackboard.

**Week 5** 10/2 War and Pacifism: clips from *Hacksaw Ridge* and *Sargeant York*

Class discussion.

**Week 6** 10/9 Identifying a topic, library research, and formulating a bibliography.

**Week 7** 10/16 Resolving Research issues and Problems. Finalizing a Bibliography.

**Week 8** 10/23 Films, Nationalism and Heroism: Clips from *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Hurt Locker* and *The Tuskegee Airmen*

**Week 9** 10/30 Organizing and Presenting Research, part I. **Bibliographies due.**

**Week 10** 11/6 Organizing and Presenting Research, part II.

**Week 11**  11/13 Student Research Presentations

**Week 12** 11/20 Student Research Presentations

**Week 13** 11/27 no meeting (Thanksgiving)

**Week 14** 12/4 Any remaining student research presentations. Course conclusion and wrap up.