

Experiences of Warfare
First-year Seminar FYSB BC1287
Spring 2009
T, Th 2:40-3:55pm

Prof. Kimberly Marten

Office: 402 Lehman

Office hours: Tues., Wed. 4-5pm

km2225@columbia.edu

Course description: This course examines some outstanding examples of both fiction and non-fiction writing about warfare across time and place, including by Thucydides, Shakespeare, Hemingway, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Anthony Shadid, and less well-known women writers of World War I, alongside one Broadway play and one film. Why do people go to war, and what affect does warfare have on those experiencing it? What roles do glory, honor, and duty play in warfare? Do gender roles shape people's perceptions of war? How do both civilians and soldiers cope when war tears their lives apart?

Assignments

Each student will write four essays of around five pages each on the assigned readings (one each on Thucydides (**Feb. 5**), Shakespeare (**Feb. 19**), gender roles (**Mar. 31**), and the war in Iraq (**Apr. 23**), with each topic chosen by the student from the discussion questions provided by Prof. Marten. The Thucydides and gender roles essays will then be re-crafted and re-submitted by the student after receipt of Prof. Marten's comments (**Mar. 12** and **Apr. 9**). The Shakespeare essay and the Iraq war essay will be shared with the student's peer partner (to be randomly assigned by Prof. Marten at the start of the semester), and each peer partner will be responsible for critiquing the essay in a prepared, oral, class presentation (dates listed on syllabus).

In addition, attendance at the Broadway play "Ruined" and viewing the movie "Gunner Palace" are required assignments outside of class. Prof. Marten will arrange to have a class outing to the play through Columbia Artslink (you may attend with her on the evening of Wednesday, **Feb. 25**, or on your own on the evenings of Feb. 24 or 26). Prof. Marten will arrange to have the movie shown by Barnard media services on Sunday evening, **Apr. 19**; if students cannot make that time, they are welcome to view the movie before the assigned class discussion dates on their own time at the Barnard Media Center (or by renting them through Blockbuster or Netflix using their own equipment).

Grading

Four essays and two rewrites: 10% each (60% total)

Two oral critiques of peer partner: 10% each (20% total)

Class participation: 20%. Students are expected to demonstrate through their class participation that they are keeping up with the assigned readings, and that they have watched the assigned movies.

Barnard Honor Code Statement

“We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our academic life. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. We consider it dishonest to remove without authorization, alter, or deface library and other academic materials. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.”

Prof. Marten has served on the Barnard Honor Board, and is therefore very attuned to the problem of plagiarism. As members of this class, students affirm that all written work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources and unpublished sources, used in their writing. No collaboration is allowed in writing the papers.

Required readings

Each of the books has been ordered at Book Culture, 536 West 112th Street. Each has also been put on reserve at the Barnard College Library.

1. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998). Please obtain this edition, as it is considered the best current translation with excellent explanatory footnotes, and the scholarly commentaries included will be used in class discussion.
2. William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, updated ed., ed. Andrew Gurr (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), the New Cambridge Shakespeare Series. Please obtain this edition, as its footnotes do an excellent job of explaining and annotating difficult passages.
3. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*. Any edition.
4. Margaret R. Higonnet, ed. *Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* (New York: Penguin, 1999). This volume collects journalism, memoirs, short fiction and poetry by women from around the world during World War I.
5. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (New York: Knopf, 2007). This novel by a Nigerian woman won the British Orange Prize for fiction. Adichie is a 2008 MacArthur Fellow (the so-called “genius grant”).
6. Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq’s People in the Shadow of America’s War* (New York: Henry Holt/Picador, 2006). Shadid, a Lebanese-American who is fluent in Arabic, won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Iraq War in the *Washington Post*. This book is based on his interviews with dozens of Iraqis in 2003/4.

Class schedule

Jan. 20: Introduction.

Class discussion: How do we experience warfare now, from afar?

Brief lecture: introduction to Thucydides, a participant-observer historian and philosopher.

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars (selections)

Jan. 22: Onset of war: Book One, sections 1, 15-23, 31-88, 118-126 [1], 139-46 (pp. 3, 12-16, 21-49, 65-69, 79-85)

Class discussion: Causes of war; justifications for war.

Jan. 27: The funeral oration of Pericles; the plague in Athens and its consequences: Book Two, sections 34-65 (pp. 110-28); the revolution in Corcyra: Book Three, sections 70-87 (pp. 194-202).

Class discussion: human nature; honor, duty, and glory, vs. the realities of warfare

Jan. 29: The treatment of cities that fell: the Athenians and Mytilene: Book Three, sections 26-28, 35-50 (pp. 171-2, 175-84); the Spartans and Plataea: Book Two, sections 71-78 (pp. 131-36), Book Three, sections 52-68 (pp. 185-92); the Athenians and the Melian Dialogue: Book Five, sections 84-116 (pp. 350-57).

Class discussion: justice and power in warfare.

Feb. 3: Alcibiades and the Sicilian expedition: Book Six, sections 1-31, 60-61, 88[9]-93 (pp. 361-78, 394-96, 412-16), Book Seven, sections 60-87 (pp. 463-78).

Class discussion: trust and betrayal in warfare; hubris in going to war.

Feb. 5: Thucydides essay due.

Class discussion: any issues that arose while writing the essay.

Lecture: historical background to and themes of Henry V; reading Shakespeare.

Shakespeare, King Henry V

Feb. 10: Acts 1 and 2

Class discussion: Honor, glory, shame, and leadership in the waging of war.

Feb. 12: Acts 3 and 4; Thucydides essays returned by Prof. Marten.

Class discussion: Revenge and the laws of war; differences between the views of leaders and soldiers.

Feb. 17: Act 5.

Class discussion: Gender, rape, and marriage in warfare.

Feb. 19: Shakespeare essay due.

Class discussion: How relevant is classical literature for modern understandings of warfare?

Lecture: short introduction to the play on Feb. 24; historical background to World War I (for Hemingway reading).

Feb. 24: No class meeting; substitute is seeing “Ruined” on Feb. 25 with the class.

Feb. 26, Mar. 3: peer partner critiques of Shakespeare essays. Brief discussion at the start of class on the 26th about the play, seeking common themes with Shakespeare.

Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*

Mar. 5: Books 1 and 2 (chapters 1-24)

Class discussion: Warfare from a distance; Hemingway’s view of women in wartime.

Mar. 10: Books 3-5 (chapters 25-41)

Class discussion: Loyalty, desertion, and punishment; Hemingway’s view of gender roles.

Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I (selections)

Mar. 12: Rewrite of Thucydides essay due.

Assigned reading: Higgonet’s introduction to *Lines of Fire* (pp. xix-xxxiii).

Class discussion: Women’s voices during wartime.

Mar 17, 19: Spring break. No class meetings.

Mar. 24: Journalistic and battlefront writings by Colette, Ivanova, Serao, West, Celarié, Dorliat, Colette (2), Rinehart, ver Mehr, and Beatty (pp. 105-111, 120-145).

Class discussion: women as participants in warfare

Mar. 26: Short fiction and poetry by Mackaey, Devi, Wharton, Mansfield, Hall, Wagner, Devi (2), and Anonymous Malawi song (pp. 380-400, 411-441, 527, 556).

Class discussion: women on the homefront, women as subalterns.

Mar. 31: Gender role essay due.

Assigned reading: Poetry by Akhmatova, Gippius, Tsvetaeva, Pope, Benemann, Fauth, Sitwell, Lowell, Borden, Farjeon, and St. Vincent Millay (pp. 467-78, 483-5, 489, 493-97, 506-10, 545-6).

Class discussion: voices in poetry.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Apr. 2. Books 1 and 2.

Lecture: historical background on Biafran civil war.

Discussion: effects of colonialism, class, what it means to be an intellectual.

Apr. 7: Books 3 and 4.

Discussion: ideology as a motivator for war, realities of wartime.

Apr. 9: Rewrite of gender essay due.

Book 5.

Discussion: unexpected effects of warfare on class and on what it means to be an intellectual.

Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*

Apr. 14: chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, pp. 51-109.

Discussion: Iraqi reactions to the US invasion.

Apr. 16: chapters 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, pp. 129-55, 197-315, 350-89.

Discussion: Iraqi reactions to the US occupation.

Apr. 21: No class meeting. Substitution: watch the 2005 movie, *Gunner Palace* (87 minutes), a documentary that records the lives of U.S. soldiers living in Uday Hussein's palace at the start of the insurgency in late 2003 and early 2004, starting four months after President Bush declared "the end of major combat operations." Many U.S. military personnel who have served in Iraq, including in leadership roles, believe that this movie is an accurate and important portrayal of the lives of soldiers on the ground.

Apr. 23: Iraq war essay due.

Discussion: movie.

Apr. 28, 30: **peer partner critiques of the Iraq war essay.**

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