

The College of William and Mary
Department of History
Spring 2010

HIST312/FILM401 (CRN26782)
Film, Memory and Modern War

Dr. Frederick Corney
email: fccorn@wm.edu
Office: James Blair 321
Office hours: W. 1-2; Th. 1-3 (and by appointment)
Class times: Mon. 4.30-5.20; W. 4.30-7.00.
Classroom: Blair 223

This syllabus can be found at my website under "Courses Offered" (<http://fccorn.people.wm.edu/>)

Introduction:

This course draws upon recent study of the complex interrelationship between history and memory, and the role played by documentaries and feature films in both constructing and deconstructing that relationship. While it is too depressing to accept uncritically the cliché that people get much of their history from the movies and television, it is undoubtedly true that movies in particular have deeply influenced popular attitudes to the past. In 1923, Leon Trotsky wrote that the new medium of cinema "cuts into the memory." He was echoing the excitement and caution of many leaders and politicians of the modern age about the potential and peril of the new medium of cinema. More than any other phenomena, the social, political and cultural upheavals of the wars of the 20th century brought into question received wisdoms about gender, race, ethnicity, and class, and, of course, war. Not surprisingly, filmmakers addressed these issues in their representations of these wars, sometimes explicitly, sometimes unconsciously. In short, this course takes the view that films about war are always about efforts to deal with the past and with past memories of that war.

This course will explore the ways in which filmmakers have depicted modern warfare, and how such depictions have pursued these wars into modern memory. Using satire, humor, absurdity, brute reality and visceral evocation, filmmakers have exposed to their audiences the inhumanities and idiocies of war. They have used their movies' inherent narrative power to make the case for war, and the case against. They have dissociated the great narratives of war from the underlying pretexts of war. They have shown the ways in which war has changed in the course of the twentieth century from Great Wars, Patriotic Wars, and Cold Wars to Proxy Wars and Wars on Terror. They depict the troubled processes of remembering war, and the equally complicated process of forgetting it. They raise troubling issues about the role memory, nostalgia and the past play in sustaining the idea of war in the modern world as an integral part of the national project for many states.

Every week, the Monday class will be devoted to a discussion of the readings. These readings are designed to provide not only background, but also the tools which might help us 'read' these films in subtle and fruitful ways. I have selected the films we will be watching not in order to cover all modern wars, or even to provide equal coverage to different wars. I have selected the movies on the basis of a particularly engaging or controversial filmic approach to war. As you will see in the weekly breakdown, most of the movies treat World War II, although the issues we raise will be applicable to other modern wars. This will provide a central focus for our course, allowing us to build a historical and political context for these films.

LCST351: Film Analysis Tutorial

Students who have not taken a film course before are strongly encouraged to take the 1 credit, pass/fail LCST 351: Film Analysis Tutorial. The class meets Friday, 3:00-4:50 for the first six weeks of the term in Blow Hall 332.

Required Texts (available for purchase at the College bookstore):

1. Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
2. Gross, Jan. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Hynes, Samuel. *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War*. New York: Penguin, 1998.
4. MacArthur, John R. *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the 1991 Gulf War*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2004.
5. Smith, Malcolm. *Britain and 1940: History, Myth, and Popular Memory*. Routledge, 2001.
6. Tumarkin, Nina. *The Living and the Dead. The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*. Basic Books, 1994.
7. The individual weekly readings are in pdf format on the course Blackboard site.

Movies (most on reserve at Swem):

- *Human Remains* (dir. Jay Rosenblatt, 1998, 30 min.)
- *All Quiet on the Western Front* (dir. Lewis Milestone, 1930, 145 min.)
- *Oh! What a Lovely War* (dir. Richard Attenborough, 1969, 144 min.)
- *London Can Take It!* (dir. Harry Watt and Humphrey Jennings, 1940, 9 min.)
- *Went the Day Well* (dir. Alberto Cavalcanti, 1942, 92 min.)
- *Hope and Glory* (dir. John Boorman, 1987, 113 min.)
- *Come and See [Idi i smotri]* (dir. Elem Klimov, 1985, 142 min.)

- *Army of Shadows [L'armée des ombres]* (dir. Jean-Pierre Melville, 1969, 145 min.)
- *Night and Fog [Nuit et brouillard]* (dir. Alain Resnais, 1955, 30 min.)
- *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (dir. Alain Resnais, 1959, 90 min.)
- *Katyn* (dir. Andrzej Wajda, 2007, 121 min.)
- *Nasty Girl [Das schreckliche Mädchen]* (dir. Michael Verhoeven, 1990; 92 min.)
- *Atomic Café* (dir. Jayne Loader, Kevin Rafferty, 1982, 86 min.)
- *Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision* (dir. Frieda Lee Mock, 1994, 25 min. extract)
- *MASH* (dir. Robert Altman, 1970, 112 min.)
- *Three Kings* (dir. David O. Russell, 1999, 114 min.)
- *Inglourious Basterds* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2009, 153 min.)

Students with Disabilities

If you have any special needs due to a disability, please inform me at the beginning of the course, so that I can work with the College's Disability Services to accommodate these special needs.

Excused Absences

If you are unable to attend class through illness or other unforeseen circumstances, please have the courtesy to inform me. ***If you are an athlete*** with a game schedule for the semester or a student with regular demands on your schedule that conflict with class times, please see me before the end of the first class, as I will need to know beforehand if your schedule can accommodate this course.

Classroom Policies and Conduct

Please avoid side-conversations in class. This is a large class, and even low conversations can be distracting. They disrupt both my ability to teach and your ability to learn. It is a sign of disrespect to me and other students to read a newspaper in class, to leave class early without informing me beforehand, or to pack up your things early. Of course, if I have gotten carried away with my lecturing (as I sometimes do), please let me know. Cell phones must of course be switched off during class-time.

Technology is a wonderful thing and enriches our lives (mostly), and the interwebthingy has been a boon to learning. Still, while you are in class please avoid emailing, messaging, texting, txtng, skypeing, google-earthing, facebooking, myspacing, yoursacing, just spacing, blogging, twittering, tweeting, friending, unfriending, surfing, turfing, yahooing, googling, giggling (except in the unlikely event I've said something funny), or any other such vital exercises.

Assignments

You will write three pieces for this course (you will need to come see me in the course of the semester about these assignments):

1. **Review** (a 2-3 page review of one of the movies from the list (or of another if you have a particular preference). Agree with me on your choice beforehand. This is a rolling deadline. It **MUST** be completed before Wednesday February 24, but you can submit it to me before that (by electronic submission as a Word file).
2. **Comparative Review** (a 5-6 page review comparing two of the movies on the list (or of two others of your choosing). Agree with me on your choices beforehand. This is a rolling deadline. It **MUST** be completed before Wednesday April 7, but you can submit it to me any time before that (by electronic submission as a Word file).
3. **Final Paper** (6-8 pages, a discussion of one or two major themes from the movies we have watched and discussed in class). Due date: Friday April 30, 5 pm (by electronic submission as a Word file).
4. **Oral Presentations**: You will also partner up with one other person in class and present orally in the Monday class on the readings for that week. You should not merely summarize the readings (we will all have read these readings beforehand), but discuss the major themes brought up in the readings. The idea is to discuss some of the issues and themes that war movies treat - well or badly - before we screen the week's movie on the Wednesday.

Grade Breakdown

Review: 20%

Comparative Review: 25%

Final Paper: 30%

Participation/Presentation: 25%

Class Schedule

Week 1 (January 20): Introduction

Film: Human Remains (1998)

Week 2 (January 25, 27): Bad Wars, Good Soldiers

Readings:

- Eric Dorn Brose, *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 3.
- Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1998).
- Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, ch. 1-3.

Film: All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)

Week 3 (Feb. 1, 3): War and Satire

Readings:

- Robert Brent Toplin, "The Filmmaker as Historian," *AHR* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1210-27.
- Robert A. Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History Onto Film," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1173-85.
- Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, ch. 4 and 9.

Film: Oh! What a Lovely War (1969)

Week 4 (Feb. 8, 10): Narrating War During War

Readings:

- Brose, *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ch. 6.

- David Herlihy, "Am I a Camera? Other Reflections on Films and History," *AHR* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1186-92.
- Malcolm Smith, *Britain and 1940: History, Myth, and Popular Memory* (Routledge, 2001).

Films: London Can Take It! (1940); *Went the Day Well* (1942)

Week 5 (Feb. 15, 17): War and Nostalgia

Readings:

- Brose, *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ch. 7.
- Peter Fritzsche, "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," in *The Work of Memory. New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (University of Illinois Press, 2002), 62-85.
- Jay Winter, "Film and the Matrix of Memory," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001).

Film: Hope and Glory (1987)

Week 6 (Feb. 22, 24): War and Anti-Nostalgia

Readings:

- Hayden White, "Historiography and Historiophoty," *AHR* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1193-99.
- Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead. The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (Basic Books, 1994).

Film: Come and See [Idi i smotri] (1985)

Week 7 (Mar. 1, 3): War, Resistance, and Collaboration

Readings:

- Pieter Lagrou, "The Politics of Memory. Resistance as a Collective Myth in Post-War

France, Belgium and the Netherlands, 1945-1965," *European Review* 11, no. 4 (2003): 527-50.

- Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome. History and Memory in France Since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), Introduction and Ch. 7.
- Angelique Chrisafis, "Ghosts of Collaboration Haunt Vichy's Attempt to Rehabilitate Its Image," *The Guardian [Online]*, 12 July 2008.

Film: *Army of Shadows [L'armée des ombres]* (1969)

Week 8 (Mar. 8, 10): Spring Break

Week 9 (Mar. 15, 17): War and Humanity

Readings:

- Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2002).
- Michael Hogan, "The Enola Gay Controversy: History, Memory, and the Politics of Presentation," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), ch. I ("The Bomb, Hirohito, and History: The Foundational Narrative of Postwar Relations between Japan and the United States").

Films:

- *Night and Fog [Nuit et brouillard]* (1955)
- *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959)

Week 10 (Mar. 22, 24): Forgetting and Remembering

Readings:

- George Sanford, *Katyn And The Soviet Massacre Of 1940: Truth, Justice And Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2005), ch. 7, 8, and Conclusion.

Film:

- *Katyn* (2007)

Week 11 (Mar. 29, 31): War and Guilt

Readings:

- William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power. The Experience of a Single German Town 1930-1935* (1973) (Conclusion).
- Geoff Eley, "Nazism, Politics and the Image of the Past: Thoughts on the West German *Historikerstreit* 1986-1987," *Past and Present* (Oxford) 121 (1988): 171-208.
- Bartosz Jalowiecki, "Lies the Germans Tell Themselves," *Commentary* 117, no. 1 (2004): 43-46.

Film: *Nasty Girl* [*Das schreckliche Mädchen*] (1990)

Week 12 (Apr. 5, 7): Cold War as Domestic War

Readings:

- Jerome F. Shapiro, *Atomic Bomb Cinema. The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film* (2002), Introduction and Ch. 1.
- Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound. American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988), ch. 1, "Containment at Home: Cold War, Warm Hearth."

Film: *Atomic Café* (1982)

Week 13 (Apr. 12, 14): Lost War

- Marita Sturken, "Reenactment and the Making of History. The Vietnam War as Docudrama," from Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories. The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (1997).

Films: *Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision* (1994) (clip); *MASH* (1970)

Week 14 (Apr. 19, 21): Virtual War

Readings:

- John MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the 1991 Gulf War* (1993).
- Marita Sturken, "Spectacles of Memory and Amnesia. Remembering the Persian Gulf War," from Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories. The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (1997).

Film: *Three Kings* (1999)

Week 15 (Apr. 26, 28): War on Film: Probing the Limits of Representation

- *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the "Final Solution,"* ed. Saul Friedlander (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), Introduction.
- Terry Gross interview with Quentin Tarantino (August 27, 2009).

Films:

- *Blackadder Goes Forth* (clip)
- *That Mitchell and Webb Look* (clip)
- *Hovis commercial*
- *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) [***please watch on your own before Monday class***]

World War I:

1. *The Lost Battalion* (1919)
2. *Wings* (1927)
3. *A Farewell to Arms* (1932)
4. *Sergeant York* (1941)
5. *Paths of Glory* (1957)
6. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)
7. *The Blue Max* (1966)
8. *Gallipoli* (1981)
9. *Joyeux Noel* (2005)
10. *Passchendaele* (2008)

World War Two:

11. *Mrs Miniver* (1942)
12. *Casablanca* (1943)
13. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944)
14. *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)
15. *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946)
16. *The Wooden Horse* (1950)
17. *Stalag 17* (1953)
18. *From Here to Eternity* (1953)
19. *The Colditz Story* (1954)
20. *Reach for the Sky* (1956)
21. *The Cranes are Flying* (1957)
22. *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957)
23. *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959)
24. *Guns of Navarone* (1961)
25. *The Longest Day* (1962)
26. *633 Squadron* (1963)
27. *The Great Escape* (1963)
28. *My Name is Ivan (Ivanovo detstvo)* (1963)
29. *The Train* (1965)
30. *Von Ryan's Express* (1965)
31. *The Dirty Dozen* (1967)
32. *The Battle of Britain* (1969)
33. *The Battle of Al Alamein* (1969)
34. *Patton* (1970)
35. *Catch 22* (1970)
36. *Kelly's Heroes* (1970)
37. *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972)
38. *The Night Porter (Il portiere di*

- notte)* (1974)
39. *Monsieur Klein* (1976)
40. *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976)
41. *Cross of Iron* (1977)
42. *A Bridge Too Far* (1977)
43. *Ascent (Voskhozhdenie)* (1977)
44. *Cross of Iron* (1977)
45. *Soldier of Orange* (1977)
46. *Tin Drum (Die Blechtrommel)* (1979)
47. *Das Boot* (1981)
48. *Shoah* (1985)
49. *Escape from Sobibor* (1987)
50. *Empire of the Sun* (1987)
51. *Memphis Belle* (1990)
52. *Europa, Europa* (1990)
53. *Schindler's List* (1993)
54. *Stalingrad* (1993)
55. *The Tuskegee Airmen* (1995)
56. *The Thin Red Line* (1998)
57. *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)
58. *Life is Beautiful* (2000)
59. *Pearl Harbor* (2001)
60. *The Pianist* (2002)
61. *Downfall (Der Untergang)* 2004
62. *Black Book* (2006)
63. *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006)
64. *Atonement* (2007)
65. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2008)
66. *Defiance* (2008)
67. *Valkyrie* (2008)

Cold War:

68. *On the Beach* (1959)
69. *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)
70. *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)
71. *Fail-Safe* (1964)
72. *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!* (1966)
73. *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977)
74. *War Games* (1983)

75. *The Day After* (1983)
76. *Red Dawn* (1984)
77. *By Dawn's Early Light* (1990)
78. *Thirteen Days* (2000)
79. *Buffalo Soldiers* (2001)
80. *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003)
81. *The Deer Hunter* (1978)
82. *Coming Home* (1978)
83. *The Hanoi Hilton* (1987)
84. *Apocalypse Now* (1979)
85. *Birdy* (1985)
86. *Platoon* (1986)
87. *Full Metal Jacket* (1987)
88. *Good Morning, Vietnam!* (1987)
89. *Hamburger Hill* (1987)
90. *Casualties of War* (1989)
91. *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989)
92. *Heaven & Earth* (1993)

Iraq:

93. *Courage Under Fire* (1996)
94. *GI Jane* (1997)
95. *Saving Jessica Lynch* (2003)
96. *Gunner Palace* (2004)
97. *Jarhead* (2005)
98. *The Hurt Locker* (2008)
99. *The Messenger* (2009)
100. *Green Zone* (2010)