

HIST 778: Seminar in Military History – Fall 2014

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203 East Hall -- 677-5569

Course Time and Place:

This course meets in East Hall 220 on Thursdays from 3:30-6:15 pm

Office Hours:

Mondays & Wednesdays from 10-11 am, and Tuesdays from 1-2:30 pm in East Hall 203, although you can arrange to see me any time. Give me a call or send an email. If I'm in, chances are we can meet.

Catalog Description:

Readings on topics in military history.

Course Objectives:

This seminar will focus on issues of war and society in the context of American military history. The way a society prepares for and wages war reflects on its social and political structure, its values, and the way it understands "The Other." That, rather than battles and campaigns, is what we are going to look at over the course of the semester. You should leave the seminar with a greater appreciation not only of military history, but also of social history, political history, gender studies, and ethno-cultural history in the American context.

Semester Schedule and Readings

- 28 Aug - John Shy, "The Cultural Approach to the History of War." *Journal of Military History* 57 no. 5 (1993): 13-26.
- John Lynn, "The Embattled Future of Academic Military History." *Journal of Military History* 61 no. 4 (October 1997): 777-789.
 - Robert Citino, "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction." *American Historical Review* 112 (October 2007): 1070-90.
 - Wayne E. Lee, "Mind and Matter - Cultural Analysis in American Military History: A Look at the State of the Field." *Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 1116-1142.
- 04 Sept Kyle Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen During King Philip's War* (2010)
- 11 Sept Alexander Campbell, *The Royal American Regiment: An Atlantic Microcosm, 1755-1772* (2010)
- 18 Sept Wayne Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500-1865* (2011)
- 25 Sept Robert Wooster, *American Military Frontiers: The United States Army in the West, 1783-1900* (2012)
- 02 Oct Susannah J. Ural, *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* (2010)
- 09 Oct NO SEMINAR: Northern Great Plains History Conference
- 16 Oct Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (2013)
- 23 Oct Edward Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941* (2007)
- 30 Oct Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (2003)
- 06 Nov Peter Schrijvers, *Bloody Pacific: American Soldiers at War with Japan* (2010)
- 13 Nov Melinda L. Pash, *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: The Americans Who Fought the Korean War* (2012)
- 20 Nov Heather M. Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (2011)
- 27 Nov NO SEMINAR: Thanksgiving
- 04 Dec Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (2009)

Background Reading:

Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (2012)

Course Requirements:

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce you to current literature in the field of war and society. At the same time, you need to learn how to write critical book reviews, which is a contribution historians make to the larger profession when asked by journals to lend their specific expertise to succinctly evaluate books for their peers.

You will show up to each seminar meeting having read the assigned monograph for that week and having written a critical review using the guidelines that appear below. Each review will be 4-5 pages long, double-spaced, typed in a standard 12-point font with appropriate margins, and have page numbers in the upper right hand corner of the page. The review will be submitted via D2L by the start of that day's seminar. As a seminar, we will discuss that day's reading and how it fits in to the larger context of American military history. *For the Common Defense* will provide a basic understanding of the subject for those who need it.

By definition, a seminar is a discussion-intensive environment, and so each student is expected to contribute to the conversation every week. To help keep the conversation going, every student will be assigned to function as the conversation facilitator twice during the semester. As facilitator, you will be responsible for leading that week's discussion, which means you must be intimately familiar with your assigned book's thesis, content, and how it fits into the larger context of American military history. Given the size of the seminar, most facilitators will lead the discussion by themselves, but there will be weeks with two assigned facilitators.

Your course grade is determined by your reviews (100 points each = 1300 points total), by your ability to lead the seminar on your assigned weeks (150 points each session = 300 points total), and by your active participation in the seminar throughout the semester (15 points/week = 210 points total).

Freedom in Learning:

Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact Dr. Matthew Moen, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, to initiate a review of the evaluation.

Disability Services:

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

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 Web Site: www.usd.edu/ds
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Diversity Statement:

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities

are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected.

College of Arts & Sciences Plagiarism Policy:

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook. No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

- Given a zero for that assignment.
- Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- Dropped from the course.
- Failed in the course.

KEEP THIS SYLLABUS AND REFER TO IT OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER.
WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK QUESTIONS.

Updated 13 August 2014

HIST 778: Guide to Writing Book Reviews

"A book reviewer occupies a position of special responsibility and trust. He is to summarize, set in context, describe strengths, and point out weaknesses. As a surrogate for us all, he assumes a heavy obligation which it is his duty to discharge with reason and consistency."

- H. G. Rickover

Book reviews perform an important mission for the historical profession by bringing to a book the insight and perspective of another person working in the field. All major professional journals (such as the *Journal of American History*, *Civil War History*, and the *William and Mary Quarterly*) publish reviews. Some devote as much as half of their pages to book reviews and there are journals, such as *Reviews in History*, which devote their entire contents to them. Your review should be a finished, polished piece of work. It should be headed by a full bibliographic citation which includes the author's name, the book's title, the place of publication, publisher, date of publication, number of pages, and other contents, such as maps and tables. For example: William M. Fowler, Jr., *Jack Tars & Commodores: The American Navy, 1783-1815* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984. Pp. xiii, 318. Illustrations, Maps.) Keep in mind that a book review is not a book report. A book report merely summarizes the contents of a book while a review provides critical analysis.

Contents of a Good Review

- Identify the author's theme or thesis. Why did he write the book? What is he trying to prove? It is not enough to simply identify the subject; you must tell what the author says about it.
- Identify the scope of the work, e.g., what era does it cover, what subtopics?
- Explain how the author supports his thesis and assess his success in proving it.
- Explain what kind of evidence he uses to support his conclusions. Be specific - do not simply say he uses primary or secondary sources. Identify the type of sources: oral interviews, personal papers, newspaper accounts, census data, etc.
- Evaluate the author's style. For example, is it narrative or analytical?
- If it is not obvious from the title, explain the general nature of the book. Is it diplomatic, social, administrative, economic, military, or psychological history?
- If the book is part of a series, identify the series.
- If the author brings any special experience or training to the work, identify and explain this.
- Identify the audience to which the book is directed.

Additional Requirement for HIST 778

In order to spark discussion during our seminar meetings, your reviews also need to include an additional 2-3 paragraphs that explain realistic avenues for further research. This could be research that would be a natural extension of that which appears in the monograph, or it could be an area of research that your author should have explored in the monograph but didn't.

Suggested Procedures

- Read the complete book carefully, pausing to think about what the writer is trying to do. Take careful notes if it helps. It might be wise to stop at the end of each chapter and summarize in a paragraph what the author said.
- Write the first draft of your review. Set the draft aside for a day or two before revising into a second draft.
- Review these guidelines before starting your second draft.
- Proofread your manuscript carefully before submitting it.

Style and Grammar Reminders

- It is usually best to use the present tense when writing about the book or author and the past tense when discussing the subject of the book. For example: "The author believes that Halsey was well prepared...."
- Do not repeat information in the body of your review which is included in the bibliographic heading. A particularly poor opening sentence repeats the author's name and the book's title.
- When mentioning an individual for the first time use his/her full name.
- Be certain that someone who has not read the book will understand it after reading your review.
- Use the active voice whenever possible, but remember that there are times when the passive voice is more appropriate.
- Phrases or sentences quoted from the work should be followed by the page number in parentheses.

Things to Avoid

- Writing in the first person. Say: "This is a good book," not "I think this is a good book." The entire review is your opinion.
- Slang. Reviews are formal papers.
- Contractions.
- Repeating items or facts which the reader can be expected to know. For example, assume that the reader knows Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.
- Using hyperbole. For example, "This is the best book ever written on the subject."
- Long quotations from the book. It is usually best to state material in your own words.

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