



ENG 407: Representing War

Section 22253, Winter 2020

Section 22253: T,R 2:00-3:20pm | **Room:** 101 PETR

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Office Hours: 11:30-1:00pm T,R and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

4 Credits; English Major, C-Literature 1789-Present, E-Media/Folklore/Culture, English Minor, Comics Studies Minor, Old English Major (1995-2015), Old Major: C-Literature 1789-Present

How can artists ethically represent war? Are certain media predisposed to certain kinds of narratives and interpretations of war? Do films, comics, photographs, and prose stories create different political and emotional effects? How do our cultural frames change the way that we understand “enemy,” “conflict,” and who is grievable or killable? In this course we will explore these questions by investigating how war is represented in contemporary and historical literature, graphic narratives, documentaries, and animated films that depict combat zones and lives affected by war. We will use theory from Susan Sontag, Ariella Azoulay, and Judith Butler as well as readings such as comics journalism from Joe Sacco, graphic memoir from Thi Bui, short stories by Aleksandar Hemon, and films by Alain Resnais and Ari Folman to develop critical frameworks for analyzing the ethics of representing war, armed conflicts, and the pain of others.

This is a cooperative course that requires your full attention and participation. You are responsible for coming to class fully prepared every day. I expect you to arrive on time, having completed the readings and assignments, and to be ready to share your ideas and to engage in all group work and activities. The ideas presented in activities and readings build on each other, so it’s important to keep up. You can expect me to be supportive, enthusiastic, helpful, and understanding. You can also expect me to challenge you to critically analyze written and visual texts and to develop ideas in your writing.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bring a copy of the assigned reading to class EVERY DAY

- Course Reader (the reader is available on Canvas and contains required readings)

Books:

- Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*
- Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*
- Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde*
- Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

Films:

- *Night and Fog*, dir. Alain Resnais
- *Waltz with Bashir*, dir. Ari Folman

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Educational activity	Hours student engaged
Course Attendance	30
Assigned Readings, Discussion Questions, and Annotations	60
Writing Assignments	25
Session Facilitation	5
Total hours:	120

Grade Breakdown:

Participation including course facilitation:	15%	Discussion Questions:	15%
Session Facilitation:	5%	Micro Essays:	20% (2@10%)
Reading Annotations/Quizzes:	15%	Final Project:	30%

Participation: It is essential that you attend every meeting and show up to class ready to contribute to discussion. More than **two** unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade. An excused absence requires written documentation of the illness or legal obligation that kept you from class. Participation requires both physical and mental presence; if you are **texting** or otherwise **engaged in non-course related activities**, you will be considered absent for the day.

Session Facilitation: You will work with a partner once during the quarter to facilitate our seminar. Instructions are posted to Canvas.

Reading Annotations and Quizzes: When a secondary reading is assigned, you will be responsible for submitting annotations. Instructions for annotations will be posted on Canvas. To perform well in this course, you must complete required readings when they are due. In order to facilitate this requirement, we will have unannounced reading quizzes that may not be retaken. Reading quizzes are an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the reading for the course.

Discussion Questions: We have a course discussion board on our Canvas site. You are expected to post regularly to our board based on the instructions on the syllabus and Canvas. Make sure that you complete your postings at least **three** hours before class.

Micro Essays: Over the course of the semester you will write two 500-700 word essays and upload each to Canvas. These essays will help you to develop your ideas and work on writing strategies. We will discuss specific prompts and guidelines.

Final Project: Your final project for the class is a creative research project of 2000-2500 words. Your project should reflect everything that you have learned in the class. Instructions will be posted to Canvas.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis

Accessible Education Statement of Support

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu

COURSE POLICIES

- **Respect:** A respectful environment is essential to facilitate discussions and to create a safe space for students to share their thoughts. Part of being an active participant is listening to others' ideas and being considerate with your own comments. At times, discomfort can be productive when our ideas are challenged, but at no time will we tolerate sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments in class. I reserve the right to ask students to leave if they do not adhere to these guidelines. Furthermore, the UO Student Conduct Code provides clear guidelines regarding student behavior. You are responsible for acting in accordance with this code or you will be subject to disciplinary action.
- **Academic Conduct:** The UO Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as: "using the ideas or writings of another as one's own." Plagiarism is not only detrimental to your own development as a scholar and a writer; it is also a serious violation of UO policy. Any plagiarized assignment will result in a failing assignment grade, the threat of a failing course grade, and academic sanctions as determined by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Please contact me with any questions about how to avoid plagiarism.
- **Assignments:** You are responsible for reading and understanding all assignments. I am always available to answer any questions that you have about a given assignment. However, if you ask a question that is clearly answered in the assignment description, I will assume that you have not read the assignment, and your grade will reflect this inattention to the course requirements. You are also responsible for noting the word count requirements for all assignments. Do not submit an assignment that does not meet the minimum word count requirements; you may submit an assignment that exceeds the maximum word count requirements if you feel it is necessary for preserving your ideas and argumentation.
- **Assigned Readings:** Assigned readings are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. We will build on the ideas from the reading during class, and a thorough understanding of the reading will be necessary in order to complete the class activities. Feel free to ask questions about a reading if there are any aspects that you do not understand. Do not come to class if you have not completed the assigned reading.
- **Sensitive Material and Self Care:** Many of the readings for this class feature disturbing language and images. You are responsible for all course readings. Take the time to look over the course material and ensure that the violence, sexuality, and mature themes included in many readings will not prevent you from succeeding in the course. Exercise self-care as you process thoughts and feelings that come up in relation to the course. On campus at UO, students have access to mental health and wellness support through the UO Counseling Center (<https://counseling.uoregon.edu>), through the Ducknest (<https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest>), and through UO Recreation (<https://rec.uoregon.edu>). I encourage you to seek out these resources to support your mental health and wellness.
- **Outside of class contact:** I will respond to emails within 48 hours, feel free to email if you need to make an appointment outside of my office hours.

- Missed Class: All information regarding the course and scheduled assignments is on Canvas and the syllabus. Make sure that you have contact information for other students so that you can ask questions regarding anything covered in class.
- Cell Phones: Cell phones are to be turned off during class. If you are checking your phone during class you will be marked absent for the day. For the sake of your grade, please stow all electronic devices during class.
- Title IX: UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender-based stalking. If you have experienced or experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, getting academic and housing accommodations, getting legal protective orders, and accessing other help. If you tell me about harassment or assault, I am not required to report this information to anyone unless you request that I do so. I am required to consult with a confidential UO employee (someone with legal confidentiality, such as a counseling professional or a crisis center advocate) to ensure that you are supported. If you decide to make a report, I and other UO employees will help you to do so. My goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available and that you have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options or visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Schedule subject to change—I will post any changes to our Canvas site.

Week 1 (1/7) Course Introductions

(1/9): No class

Reading due: Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Chapters 2-4, and 6 (Course Reader-CR)

Due today: Abbott annotations, upload to Canvas before class

Discussion board assignment due 1/14: Post one analytical question regarding the readings from O'Brien, Hemon, and Danticat

Week 2 (1/14) **Reading due:** Tim O'Brien, "How to Tell a True War Story" (in *TTC* and CR); Aleksandar Hemon, "The Accordion" and "A Coin" (CR); Edwidge Danticat, "Children of the Sea" (CR)

Discussion board assignment due 1/16: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from O'Brien.

(1/16) **Reading due:** Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, 1-38 (through "Spin")

Discussion board assignment due 1/21: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from O'Brien.

Week 3 (1/21) **Reading due:** Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, 39-178 ("On the Rainy River" through "In the Field")

Discussion board assignment due 1/23: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from O'Brien.

(1/23) **Reading due:** *The Things They Carried*, 179-246 ("Field Trip" to end)

Due 1/24: Micro Essay #1, upload before 10pm

Discussion board assignment due 1/28: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from Sontag.

Week 4 (1/28) **Reading due:** Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 1-39; *Night and Fog* screening
Discussion board assignment due 1/30: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from Sontag.
(1/30) **Reading due:** Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 40-94
Discussion board assignment due 2/4: Post one analytical question regarding the reading from Sontag and Azoulay.

Week 5 (2/4) **Reading due:** Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 95-126; Ariella Azoulay, "What is a photograph? What is photography?" (CR)
Due today: Micro essay #2, upload before class
Discussion board assignment due 2/6: Post one analytical question regarding the readings from Sontag and Butler.
(2/6) **Reading due:** Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others" (CR); Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography," from *Frames of War* (CR)
Discussion board assignment due 2/11: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned readings from Sacco and Chute.

Week 6 (2/11) **Reading due:** Joe Sacco, "Trauma on Loan" (CR); Hillary Chute, "Joe Sacco," from *Disaster Drawn* (CR)
Due today: Project proposal, upload to Canvas before class
Discussion board assignment due 2/13: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Sacco.
(2/13) Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde* (beginning-75),
Discussion board assignment due 2/18: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Sacco.

Week 7 (2/18) **Reading due:** Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde* (76-149)
Discussion board assignment due 2/20: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Sacco.
(2/20) Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde* (150-227)
Discussion board assignment due 2/25: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Bui

Week 8 (2/25) **Reading due:** Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (1-130); Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Just Memory" (CR)
Discussion board assignment due 2/27: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Bui
(2/27) **Reading due:** Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (131-262)
Discussion board assignment due 3/3: Post one analytical question regarding the assigned reading from Bui

Week 9 (3/3) **Reading due:** Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (263-end); Harriet Earle, "A New Face for an Old Fight" (CR)
Due today: Annotated bibliography, upload to Canvas before class
(3/5) **Reading due:** Mazen Kerbaj, "Suspended Time Vol. 1: The Family Tree" (CR); Zeina Abirached, excerpt from *A Game for Swallows* (CR); Emma Monroy, "Creating Space" (CR)
Due today: Annotated bibliography, upload to Canvas before class
Discussion board assignment due 3/10: Post one analytical question regarding the film, *Waltz with Bashir*

Week 10 (3/10) *Waltz with Bashir* screening; final project drafting
Due today: Final Project Part I, upload to Canvas and bring a copy to class
(3/12) Final Project workshops; last day potluck
Due today: Final Project Part II, upload to Canvas and bring a copy to class

(3/16) Final Project due before 11:59PM