

# CMST 3900: Rhetorics of War and Peace

109 Coates – TR, 3:00-4:20

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Office: 216 Coates Office hours: Wed. 10:00-Noon

## - COURSE DESCRIPTION -



“The Art of War is therefore, in its proper sense, the art of making use of the given means in fighting.”

– Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*

“Rhetoric may be defined as the art of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”

–Aristotle, the *Rhetoric*

**RHETORIC AND WAR:** both are often framed as distinctively human “arts,” the outcomes of which depend on the capacity of the artist(s) to “observe” and “make use of” the “available means” in particular situations toward particular ends. Yet persuasion and violence—**words and bombs**—have traditionally been figured as polar opposites in the drama of human affairs. As we shall see in this course, the relationship between words and bombs is rarely so distinctive or clear. Our job this semester will be to shed some light on these issues.

The questions below will drive our investigation of the relationship between rhetoric, war, and peace:

1. **What is war?** That is, how has war been defined over time, and to what ends?
2. **What is peace?** How has peace been defined over time, and to what ends?
3. **Why do we fight?** On what grounds are people typically compelled to make and endure war?
4. **How do we fight?** What is the nature of the relationship between rhetoric, technology, and war?
5. **How do citizens remember –or, how are they asked to remember– wars past and present?** And how do our memorials of past wars shape the course of the future?
6. **What roles do the media play in the orchestration of war?** Is “propaganda” a useful concept?
7. **What is the nature of the relationship between democracy and war?**

Through parsing numerous commentaries on war, peace, and rhetoric with certain concrete cases of war and peace in U.S. history, this course will help students to achieve the following objectives:

1. To comprehend how the phenomena of “war” and “peace” are negotiated and performed through discourse.
2. To be able to identify and to counter the common arguments by which cultures are compelled to war.
3. To become more engaged and critical consumers of war messages.
4. To synthesize complex ideas for consumption by the lay public.

## Required Texts

In addition to the texts below, several required readings will be made available on our Moodle page. Readings that can be found on Moodle are designated by (M) in the course schedule.

Cortright, David. *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Dower, John W. *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, 9-11, Iraq*. New York: Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc., 2011.

Ibrahim, Raymond. *The Al Qaeda Reader*. Crown Publishing Group, 2007.

Stahl, Roger. *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009. [E-book available at LSU Libraries website]

Winkler, Carol K. *In the Name of Terrorism*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2006. [E-book available online at LSU Libraries website]

## Assignments

Handbook Entry (500 points, or 50%)	A+ ... 970-1000 points
	A ... 930-969 points
	A - ... 900-929 points
Project Consultations (2 x 50 pts, or 10%)	B + ... 870-899 points
	B ... 830-869 points
	B - ... 800-829 points
Film Response (100 pts, or 10%)	C + ... 770-799 points
	C ... 730-769 points
	C - ... 700-729 points
Take-home Midterm (100 pts, or 10%)	D + ... 670-699 points
	D ... 630-669 points
	D - ... 600-629 points
Reading Quizzes (100 pts, or 10%)	F ... 0-599 points
Participation (100 pts, or 10%)	

## Assignment Descriptions

### **Course project: CMST 3900's Handbook on the Rhetoric of War**

This class will collaboratively produce a handbook addressing the common themes and problems of contemporary rhetorics of war and peace. **The shared interests of you and your classmates will shape the content of the handbook.** The handbook will be written for a public audience, with the goal being to distribute the handbook for free online when the course concludes. As a student in the course, your main responsibility will be to produce one entry, or 'chapter' for the handbook. Your entry will be produced over five stages, described below:

1. **Entry Proposal:** Within the first month of class, you will meet with me to discuss ideas for your handbook entry (see "Project Consultations" below). Following that meeting, you will write a 1-page proposal for your handbook entry. This proposal will include citation and discussion of no fewer than three research sources. (50 pts)
2. **Entry Rough Draft:** After your proposal is given the thumbs up, you will write a 4-5 page rough draft of your handbook entry. This rough draft will include a clear definition of the subject that you are addressing, some historical context for that subject, and a summary of any relevant controversy. (100 pts)
3. **Peer Critique:** Your entry will be the subject of a peer-review session. Your entry will be reviewed, and you will review the entries of your peers. You will write a one-page review of one of your peer's drafts. (75 pts)
4. **Oral Presentation of Entry:** Following the peer-review process, you will give an oral presentation of your entry. (125 pts)
5. **Entry Final Draft:** Prior to the final exam period, you will submit a final version of your handbook chapter draft. (150 pts)

### **Project Consultations**

You will meet with me at least twice throughout the semester to discuss your contribution to the course project. **The first meeting must occur prior to turning in your entry proposal on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The second meeting must occur prior to the first day of entry presentations/November 5<sup>th</sup>.** These meetings are intended to help you to identify the subject of your handbook entry, as well as to ensure your timely completion of the handbook entry. More information on the requirements for this assignment will be shared in class.

### **Film Response**

There will be three movie screenings held outside of class time throughout the semester. You will be required to attend one of these screenings, and to write a 1-2 page paper in response to the paper. This response should be informed by the readings and classroom discussion.

## **Participation**

This upper-division, seminar-style course depends on your active participation in class discussion. Participation includes asking questions, respectfully engaging in classroom discussions, visiting me during office hours, and—last but not least—attendance. If you must be absent from class, please notify me as promptly and as ahead of time as possible.

The nature of our subject matter—often times dealing directly with violence and death—is highly political and emotionally charged. As such, it is especially important that we approach classroom discussion with honesty and a presumption of respect for our peers' viewpoints. Discussion will be a central component of each class period.

## **Take-home Midterm**

At the midpoint of the semester you will be given a question for which you will compose a short essay response. The purpose of this midterm will be to get a sense for your retention of course content, and also require you to use your critical interpretive skills.

## **Quizzes**

You will be given short reading quizzes at regular intervals in the semester. These quizzes will ask you to summarize and respond to the readings.

## **Communication-Intensive Course**

This is a certified Communication-Intensive (C-I) course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU's Communication across the Curriculum program, including

1. instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal writing and speaking;
2. teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques;
3. use of draft-feedback-revision process for learning;
4. practice of ethical and professional work standards;
5. 40% of the course grade rooted in communication-based work; and
6. a student/faculty ratio no greater than 35:1.

Students interested in pursuing the LSU Distinguished Communicators certification may use this C-I course for credit. For more information about this student recognition program, visit [www.cxc.lsu.edu](http://www.cxc.lsu.edu).

## **Writing Center**

I would be very happy to meet with you to help with your writing and presentation preparation processes. E-mail me at any time to set up an appointment, or just stop by during office hours. I am not your only resource, though. Students who want additional help with writing projects are encouraged to make appointments with a writing tutor in **Studio 151**, in 151 Coates Hall, well in advance of due dates by going

to <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/cxc/writing/> to read information on how to prepare for and what to expect during a tutorial. There you will also find instructions on how to schedule tutorials on line. Hours are limited, so schedule early. I cannot overstate the helpfulness of this resource—please check it out!

## **Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: “If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged.” After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

## **Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (“LSU”) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy establishes a mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, LSU programs and/or an academic environment.

[LSU Commitment to Community](#) - LSU is an interactive community in which students, faculty, and staff together strive to pursue truth, advance learning, and uphold the highest standards of performance in an academic and social environment.

## Course Schedule

T, 8/25

**Introductions: Studying the Rhetorics of War & Peace at LSU**

### **- Unit One: Definitions -**

TH, 8/27

**The Rhetoric of Definition and Some Definitions of Rhetoric**

Readings: Burke, "Definition of Man" (M); Jasinski, "Definition/Definition of the Situation" (M)

T, 9/1

**Defining "War": The Evolutionary Perspective**

Readings: Moseley, "The Philosophy of War" (M); E. O. Wilson, "Is War Inevitable?" (M)  
Watch in class: Pinker, "The Myth of Violence"

TH, 9/3

**Defining "War": The Devolutionary Perspective**

Readings: Ryan, "The Never-ending Battle" (M); Fry, "War is Not Part and Parcel" (M);  
Horgan, "No, War is Not Inevitable" (M)

T, 9/8

**Rationalizing War: "Civilization" and "Modern Warfare"**

Readings: Keegan, "War in Human History" (M); Moseley, "Just War Theory" (M); Avalon  
Project, "The Laws of War" (M)

TH, 9/10

**"War" as:**

Read: Stahl, "Reality War"; Butler, "War is a Racket" (M)

Watch: Hedges, "War is a Force" (M); Callaghan, *Blood and Oil* (2008) (M)

T, 9/15

**Defining "Peace"**

Readings: Cortright, "What is Peace?" pp. 1-8; King, "The Quest for Peace and Justice," (M)

Watch: Obama, "Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech" (M)

TH, 9/17

**Defining "Peace," cont'd**

Readings: Cortright, "What is Peace?" pp. 8-21; Terrill, "An Uneasy Peace" (M)

T, 9/22

**Democracy and Peace**

Readings: Cortright, “Democracy”; Woodrow Wilson, “Address to Congress, April 2, 1917” (M)

**FILM SCREENING: Wednesday, September 23, in 155 Coates, from 6:00-8:00p.m.**

TH, 9/24

**“Peace” as**

Readings: Cortright, “Social Justice” and “A Moral Equivalent”

**Entry Proposal Due!**

**- Unit Two: Theses -**

T, 9/29

**Thesis and Parenthesis: American Exceptionalism and “9/11”**

Readings: Excerpts from Gingrich, *A Nation Like No Other* (M); Dower, “Hiroshima’ as Code,” and “Pearl Harbor’ as Godsend”

Watch: Gingrich, “A City Upon a Hill” (M)

TH, 10/1

**Antithesis: “Evil”**

Readings: Hariman, “Speaking of Evil” (M); G. W. Bush, 2002 State of the Union Address (M); Ibrahim, “Al Qaeda’s Declaration of War Against Americans” and “Why We are Fighting You”

Watch in class: *Faces of the Enemy*

T, 10/6

**Antithesis II: Terrorists v. Crusaders**

Readings: Winkler, “What’s in a Name?” and “America Under Attack”

Finish: *Faces of the Enemy*

TH, 10/8

**Synthesis: The Enemy and American Identity**

Readings: Carney & Stuckey, “The World as American Frontier” (M); Ivie, “Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War” (M)

T, 10/13

**Prosthesis: Technologies of the Kill**

Readings: Grossman, selections from *On Killing* (M): “Killing and the Existence of Resistance”; “Desensitization and Conditioning in Vietnam”

Watch: PBS Frontline, “The Torture Question” (M)

**FILM SCREENING: Wednesday, October 14, in 155 Coates, from 6:00-8:00p.m.**

**- Unit Three: Devices -**

TH, 10/15

**Euphemism & Metaphor**

Readings: Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (M); Danforth, “The Enduring Influence of the Crusades” (M)

**Entry Rough Draft Due!**

T, 10/20

**Occultatio**

Readings: Conley and Saas, “Occultatio” (M)

Watch: PBS Frontline, *Top Secret America* (2011) (M)

**In-Class Peer Review**

TH, 10/22

**Condensation & Dispensation**

Readings: Dana Nelson, “Presidential War Powers and Politics as War” (M); Arundhati Roy, “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” (M)

T, 10/27

**Propaganda & Spectacle**

Readings: Stahl, “Introduction”

Watch in class: *Manufacturing Consent: “The Propaganda Model”*

**Peer Critiques Due!**

TH, 10/29

**Interactivity & Virtuality**

Readings: Stahl, “All-Consuming War”

Watch: PBS Frontline, *Secrets, Politics, and Torture* (2014) (M)

T, 11/3

**Interactivity & Virtuality II**

Readings: Stahl, “Sports & the Militarized Body Politic”

TH, 11/5

**Entry Presentations**

T, 11/10



## Entry Presentations

**FILM SCREENING: Wednesday, November 11 (Veterans Day), in 155 Coates, from 6:00-8:00p.m.**

## - Unit Four: Techniques -

TH, 11/12

### **Mnemonics & Amnesiacs**

Readings: Biesecker, “Remembering World War II” (M)

T, 11/17

### **Prognostics: “Future of War” Rhetorics**

Readings: Stahl, “Life is War” (M); Moreno, “Building Better Soldiers” (M)

### **Final Entry Due**

TH, 11/19

### **Institutional Inheritance & Political Legacy**

View in class: *Dirty Wars* (2013)

T, 11/24

### **Institutional Inheritance & Political Legacy**

Finish *Dirty Wars* (2013)

Read: Goodnight and Mitchell, “Drones: Argumentation in a Communication Control Society” (M)

TH, 11/26 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving holiday

TH, 12/1

### **Parrhesia and the War at Home**

Readings: Fanning, “Thank you” (M); King, “Beyond Vietnam” (M)

TH, 12/3

### **Parrhesia and the War at Home**

Readings: Cortright, “Realistic Pacifism”; Camus, “Neither Victim nor Executioner” (M)

TH, 12/10: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

### **Final Exam Period**

Assemble Handbook

