

History 440: Senior Research Seminar

“Life During Wartime,” Fall 2019

Tuesdays, 3:30 to 6pm, Lincoln Hall 215

John Abbott, Instructor

Course Description

History 440 offers history majors a structured setting in which to write their senior papers; in our case, those papers will address the theme “life during wartime.” This theme provides a shared denominator to our labors while presenting students a wide range of perspectives and research agendas – battlefield versus homefront experience, relations between occupiers and occupied, behaviors of collaboration and resistance, policies of “ethnic cleansing” and forced resettlement, atrocity and sexual violence, among others. Students also have wide latitude in their choice of world regions and historical eras in determining their specific research topics (every continent outside Antarctica is fair game). Final papers should reflect a solid grasp of the secondary literature and, most importantly, research in primary source materials. While the greater part of coursework will take place outside the classroom, much class time will be devoted to a) the diverse historical approaches to our theme; b) research strategies; c) interpreting evidence; d) craft and responsibility in the writing of history.

Assigned Reading

- a) Catherine Merridale, *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (Metropolitan Books, 2006).
- b) Marie E. Berry, *War, Women and Power. From Violence to Mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Cambridge U Press, 2018)
- c) the online summary of the Chicago Manual of Style (16th ed.), available at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>
- d) additional readings available at Blackboard (see course schedule, below)

Course Requirements

Nearly (if not quite) everything in this course hinges on your final paper. Even more than with the History 300, most other activities are means to that end. This doesn’t therefore mean our classroom activities are unimportant, and I expect everyone to do his or her part in making these as intellectually productive as possible. To that end, I’m sticking with my usual **20 percent class participation grade allocation**.

There will be **two shorter writing assignments**. a) The first is intended to get our collective juices flowing (and incidentally provide me with a quick diagnostic read of your writing styles): a short, one-and-a-half to two-page essay, addressing the theme “My Favorite War Movie, and Why.” Please submit this in our second class session (Sept. 3). The second assignment is rather more rigorous: I ask that you submit a book review for either the Merridale or Berry books.

Those reviews come due Oct. 1, after we have had opportunity to discuss them in class. I will provide additional guidelines for this assignment via Blackboard. **Combined score: 20 points.**

In working up your research agendas, I expect you to consult with Daley Library staff, scheduling at least one individual session with a librarian to determine those sources available for your topic. What distinguishes your senior paper from your History 300 projects is our assumption that you will do most of your work with primary source materials. In availing yourselves of this documentary and textual record, you will find our librarians a great (if chronically underutilized) resource. I ask that you arrange a consultation with Daley staff (most likely Jeff Wheeler, who is the library liaison for history) for sometime during weeks 4 & 5. The entire class will meet in the library on Tuesday, October 1, for a follow-up session in those resources available through the Daley. (And yes, **your work with library staff will factor into your class participation score**).

You will need to submit a proposal (two to three pp. in length) for your project, indicating the historical issue or problem you will address, as well as your research strategy for doing so (including a selective bibliography). This comes due at the beginning of Week Eight; I ask that you submit these via email attachment by Monday night, October 14). **Your proposal score will factor into your final paper grade (see below).**

We will conduct oral presentations of your projects the final three weeks of class. That **oral presentation (ca. twenty minutes, with ten minutes for questions and discussion) will also factor into your final paper grade.**

Finally, the papers themselves: I ask you to submit the first draft of these at the beginning of week eleven. I will return these to you during class in week twelve.

You will submit your revised papers by Wednesday of finals week (December 11). **The final version of your papers counts for 60 percent of your final grade.**

Course Ethics

This course has been designed to encourage classroom discussion and the free exchange of views. The sometimes contentious nature of course materials requires that we show one another the utmost courtesy, respect and consideration so as to ensure a consistently high level of discussion, instruction and interaction.

Course Policies

- a) *No phones* out during class (not negotiable). Laptops are permissible for those who sit in the front row. In those cases where students use laptops for purposes unrelated to class, they will be asked (once only) to put these away.
- b) *Make-up exams* will be allowed only when you can produce a valid (written) excuse.
- c) *Incompletes* will only be considered in cases where the student has completed all the work up to the final exam, but cannot take the final for a valid reason.

d) *Plagiarism* in any form will be dealt with harshly. Recycling papers from the internet or elsewhere, copying other students' work, or cutting-and-pasting from other sources will be punished to the fullest extent of university policy. Count on this.

e) *Classroom citizenship*. Classroom behavior is one of many factors determining your final participation grade. Showing up prepared, answering or asking questions, taking notes and paying attention – these will be appreciated and duly noted. On the other side of the ledger: consistently showing up late, talking during class, using laptops for purposes other than note-taking and other disruptive behavior will also be duly noted. A special category in hell is reserved for those students who come to class, sign the attendance sheet, and then walk out. You really don't want to call that kind of attention to yourself.

f) *Religious holidays*. In those instances when classroom schedules conflict with religious holidays, students should provide us advance notification of their absence. We will in turn make every reasonable effort to honor these requests and make necessary accommodations.

g) *Disability accommodations*. We are committed to working with the Disability Resource Center in ensuring a barrier-free environment to all students at UIC. Please let us know as early as possible in the semester as to anticipated accommodations.

h) *Know your rights*. UIC is devoted to the principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. Freedom from discrimination for both students and employees is central to our academic mission. Students are encouraged to study UIC's policies and procedures pertaining to these issues, accessible at the web pages of the Office of Access and Equity (go to <http://oae.uic.edu/>).

Course Schedule

Note: italicized items refer to class discussion addressing formal issues of writing your papers

Week 1 Getting Started. Course aims and class mechanics

Week 2 a) War and the Modern State. Reading: Sheehan.
b) *Grammar and Historical Writing, reading at Blackboard*
c) Categories of Wartime Experience (discussion). This discussion is intended to stimulate thinking about possible topics and themes for your paper
First writing assignment (favorite war movie and why) due

Week 3 a) Evidence and interpretation. Class exercise and discussion (brief)
b) War as experience: soldiers' perspectives. Merridale, *Ivan's War*

Week 4 a) War as experience: homefronts and battlefields in World Wars I & II. Lecture & readings available at Blackboard
b) Collective memory in war and peace (reading on Blackboard)

During Weeks Four through Five: individual meetings with library staff

- Week 5** War as Experience: civil society under siege. Berry, *War, Women and Power*
- Week 6** Research sources and strategies. For this session, we will meet in the Library Classroom (Daley Library). Please arrive with your latest thinking as to possible research projects (at the very least, arrive with some commitment to a time frame and region or country.) **Book reviews due**
- Week 7** **No class.** Individual meetings with instructor
- Week 8** a) Short Reports (and Discussion) on Research Topics. **Submit proposals via email night before.**
b) *Workshop: citations and form*
- Week 9** **Students review other proposals.** *Note: I ask that each of you reviews and comments upon **two** proposals from your classmates. Come well prepared to do so!*
- Week 10** **No class.** Write, write, write!
- Week 11** **Papers Due (first draft).**
Class discussion: civil society, morality and war. Reading, Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (excerpts posted at Blackboard)
- Week 12** No class, individual meetings with instructor
- Week 13** Dissent, resistance, mutiny. Lecture & discussion (readings to be posted on Blackboard)
- Week 14** Student Reports
- Week 15** Student Reports

Final version of papers due during Finals Week (Wednesday, Dec. 11)