***History 440: Senior Research Seminar***

***(Special Plague Edition)***

**“Life During Wartime,” Fall 2020**

**Wednesdays, 3:00 to 5:30 pm, online instruction**

**John Abbott**

**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 – and “the classroom” itself has taken on new meanings in this, our age of Covid-19 – we will hold synchronous class sessions most weeks of the semester (exceptions indicated in class schedule below). Those class sessions will be devoted above all to a) the diverse historical approaches to our life-during-wartime theme; b) research strategies; c) interpreting evidence; d) craft and responsibility in the writing of history.

**Assigned Reading**

1. Catherine Merridale, *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (Metropolitan Books, 2006).
2. Marie E. Berry, *War, Women and Power. From Violence to Mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Cambridge U Press, 2018). Please note: this is available as an e-book through the Daley Library.
3. the online summary of the Chicago Manual of Style (16th ed.), available at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>
4. 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 History 300, most other course activities are means to that end. This doesn’t therefore mean our classroom activities are unimportant, and I expect everyone to do their part in making these as intellectually productive as possible. To that end, I’m sticking with my usual **20 percent class participation grade allocation** (please note: course participation for the 440 also includes your working with those library personnel assisting with this course).

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 roughly two-page essay addressing the theme “My Favorite War Movie, and Why.” Please submit this via email attachment prior to our second class session (Sept. 2). The second assignment is rather more rigorous: I ask that you submit a book review for either the Merridale or Berry books. This review comes due Oct. 7, after we have had opportunity to discuss these books in class. I will provide additional guidelines for this assignment via Blackboard. **Combined score for two papers: 20 points.**

In working up your research agendas, I expect you to consult with Daley Library staff as you begin to identify 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, and I ask that you arrange an online consultation with one of them (most likely Jeffrey Wheeler, who is the library liaison for history) at some point during weeks 4 & 5. He can be reached at [jwheel9@uic.edu](mailto:jwheel9@uic.edu).

In past iterations of this course, I have scheduled one in-library session, held in the Daley classrooms; past experience has shown this to be remarkably efficient in identifying additional research options for students. Our current circumstances however rule out such a session *on-campus.* Instead, Jeff Wheeler and I intend to hold an online equivalent, held via teleconferencing during our usual class time on **September 30**. Our aim will be to provide, as best as circumstances allow, personal assistance to each of you in identifying relevant source materials. That world of online possibility widens every year; each and every time I teach the 440, I am struck by how much new (often scintillating) source material has been digitized and made available via online collections.

**At the beginning of Week Eight, you will to submit a prospectus for your project** (two to three pp. in length), indicating the historical issue or problem you will address, as well as your research strategy for doing so (including a selective bibliography). I ask that you submit these via email attachment by Monday night, October 12. **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. Final papers should be 12-15 pages in length (with the usual specs regarding double-spacing, one-inch margins and 12-point fonts), and draw upon substantial work with primary source materials. Please note: identifying a suitable topic is one of the great challenges of this course. By “suitable” is meant, above all, a topic that offers sufficient primary documentation – accessible online or via other resources offered by the Daley Library – as to enable you to work up a fresh perspective on one or another historical problem or theme.

**If you have facility in another language (or languages),** please consider a project that enables you to work in foreign-language sources; such work, and the bi- or multilingual facility it reflects, may well prove advantageous as you pursue employment or advanced study opportunities upon graduation.

You will submit your revised papers by Wednesday of finals week (December 9). **The final version of your papers counts for 60 percent of your final grade.**

**Course Ethics**

This course has been designed to encourage class discussion and the free exchange of views. That course materials might prove contentious (what worthwhile topic does not involve disagreement?) 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) *Make-up work* will be allowed when you can produce a valid (written) excuse.

b) *Incompletes* will be considered in cases where the student has completed all the work up to the final paper, but cannot submit that final work for a valid reason.

c) *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.

d) *Classroom* c*itizenship.* Classroom behavior is one of many factors determining your final participation grade. Behavioral issues play out differently, of course, in online situations, but the basic principles remain intact: logging in on-time, being prepared, answering or asking questions, taking notes and paying attention – these will be appreciated and duly noted. 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: James Sheehan, Introduction from *Where*

*have all the Soldiers Gone?*

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 (please submit**

**via email attachment by midnight).**

**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 online sessions with library staff***

**Week 5** War as Experience: civil society under siege. Berry, *War, Women and Power*

**Week 6** Research sources and strategies. This is the session usually held in the Library

Classroom (Daley Library); this time around we wil conduct it online. Our aim is to add to those sources, primary and secondary, you have identified and begun consulting for your papers.

**Week 7** **No class.** Online conferences with instructor

**Book reviews due** (send via email attachment by midnight that day)

**Week 8 No class**. More online meetings with instructor

**Week 9** **No class.** More meetings if necessary. *Otherwise write, write, write!*

**Week 10** a) Short Reports (and Discussion) on Research Topics. **Submit proposals via**

**email attachment by Monday night.**

b) *Workshop: citations and form*

**Week 11 Papers Due (first draft)**

Dissent, resistance, mutiny. Lecture & discussion (readings to be posted on

Blackboard)

**Week 12** Class discussion: civil society, morality and war. Reading, Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (excerpts posted at Blackboard)

**Week 13** Student Reports. (six per class session; see Blackboard for guidelines)

**Week 14** Student Reports, cont.

**Week 15** Student Reports, *fini*

***Final version of papers due during Finals Week (Wednesday, Dec. 9)***