

ENG585: USA/War/Movies
Spring 2010
Tuesday 6-10, Caldwell G107



“To make a real war movie would be to occasionally fire at the audience from behind the screen during a battle scene.” —Sam Fuller

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Required Texts:

Basinger, Jeanine. *The World War II Combat Film* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan, 2003).
Additional readings will be available on “e-reserve”: <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/> under Eng585. Please print out all essays and bring them to class for discussion.

Course Description and Expectations:

Perhaps more than any other genre, war films explicitly engage with the ideas that uphold a nation’s notions of itself, its allies, and its enemies. Representing national interests in terms of battle and sacrifice, victories and losses, war films—in all of their myriad guises—reveal national pressure points at various historic moments, whether the films in question depict contemporary, historic, or (in the case of science fiction) future wars. This course will look at films that represent American wars starting with the Spanish American War and going through the Iraq War. We will look at any array of different kinds of war films: battle films, coming home films, documentaries, romances, adventure films, and even comedies. Students will complete a short paper about a film viewed outside of class, a film review presentation, a final research paper, and a final oral examination.

Course Requirements:

Screenings/Attendance:

Regular course attendance is required. The library’s media center—located on the second floor of D.H. Hill, 515-2977—has most of the films we’ll be viewing this semester. The Film Studies lab (Tompkins G116), where you can go to review films, will be staffed Tuesdays 10-2, Wednesdays 3-7, and Thursdays 1-3. by Terry Hobgood. Feel free to email Terry regarding availability of the film you want to see/review: tah8780@gmail.com.

Excessive unexcused absences will have an adverse effect upon your grade; missing more than two days of class will result in incremental drops in your final grade of a grade per additional day.

Administrative:

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information, visit http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes all forms of plagiarism, cheating on assignments or exams, turning in work that has been written (partially or entirely) by someone else (this includes *websites*), fabricating information or citations, or helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. In addition to failing the assignment and being referred to the Office of Student Conduct should you commit any trespass of academic integrity, I reserve the right to give you a failing grade in the course. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at: http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/stud_affairs/policies/code95.html.

Grades: All assignments will be graded with letter grades using a plus/minus scale, or on a point system with an equivalent scale. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Film Review Presentation (3-5 pages): 20%

External Viewing Paper (3-4 pgs.) 10%

Final Research Paper (15-20 pgs.): 50%

Final Exam: 20%

**USA/War/Movies
Syllabus for Spring 2010**



Spanish American and Civil Wars

- Tues Jan 12 Screen: Edison Co. Spanish-American War films: *Burial of the Maine Victims* (1898); *Colored Troops Disembarking* (1898); *Troops Making Military Road in Front of Santiago* (1898); *Raising Old Glory Over Morro Castle* (1899); *US Infantry Supported by Rough Riders at El Caney* (1899); *Love and War* (1899)
His Trust (D.W. Griffith, 1911)
The Red Badge of Courage (John Huston, 1951)
Read: "The Journal's Vivid Moving War Pictures" (e)
Guerric DeBona, "Masculinity on the Front" (e)

WWI

- Tues Jan 19 Screen: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, 1930)
Read: Jerold Simmons, "Film and International Politics" (e)
John Whiteclay Chambers II, "All Quiet: The Antiwar Film" (e)
- Tues Jan 26 Screen: *Sergeant York* (Howard Hawks, 1941)
Read: Jeanine Basinger, *WWII Combat*, 1-75
Thomas Doherty, "Genre Work" (e)

WWII

- Tues Feb 2 Screen: *So Proudly We Hail* (Mark Sandrich, 1943)
Read: Jeanine Basinger, *WWII Combat*, 76-108; 199-235
Clayton Koppes & Gregory Black, "OWI Takes the Offensive" (e)
"President Calls Screen to War" (e)
"OWI Outlines Voluntary 'Propaganda' Requirement" (e)
- Tues Feb 9 Screen: *Private Snafu: The Home Front* (Frank Tashlin, 1943)
They Were Expendable (John Ford, 1945)
Read: Jeanine Basinger, *WWII Combat*, 109-147
Thomas Doherty, "Production Codes" (e)
- Tues Feb 16 Screen: *With the Marines at Tarawa* (1944)
Sands of Iwo Jima (Allan Dwan, 1949)

Read: Jeanine Basinger, *WWII Combat*, 147-158; 171-198
Marsha Orgeron, "Shooting the Pacific" (e)

Tues Feb 23 Screen: *Best Years of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946)
Read: David Gerber, "Heroes and Misfits" (e)
Prior to class view *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945) at archive.org
External Viewing Papers Due

Korea

Tues Mar 3 Screen: *Getting Ready Physically* (Coronet Films, 1951)
The Steel Helmet (Sam Fuller, 1951)
Read: Jeanine Basinger, *WWII Combat*, 159-170

Tues Mar 9 Screen: *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970)
Read: Norman Kagan, "War Genre: *M*A*S*H*" (e)

Tues Mar 16 Classes Cancelled—Spring Break

Vietnam

Tues Mar 23 Screen: *Green Berets* (Ray Kellogg & John Wayne, 1968)
Read: Rick Berg, "Losing Vietnam" (e)
David James, "Documenting the Vietnam War" (e)
Prior to class view *Why Vietnam* (1965) at archive.org

Tues Mar 30 Screen: *First Blood* (Ted Kotcheff, 1982)
Read: John Hellmann, "Rambo's Vietnam & Kennedy's New Frontier" (e)
Michael J. Arlen, excerpts from *Living Room War* (e)
Final Paper Topic Roundtable

Tues Apr 6 Screen: *Full Metal Jacket* (Stanley Kubrick, 1987)
Read: James Stevenson, "Beyond Steven Crane" (e)
Thomas Doherty, "Full Metal Genre" (e)
Susan White, "Male Bonding, Hollywood Orientalism..." (e)

Tues Apr 13 Screen: *Born on the Fourth of July* (Oliver Stone, 1989)
Read: Thomas Doherty, "Witness to War" (e)

Iraq

Tues Apr 20 Screen: *Standard Operating Procedure* (Errol Morris, 2008)
Read: Errol Morris, "It Was All Started By a Mouse" (Parts I and II) (e)

Tues Apr 27 Screen: *The Hurt Locker* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2008)
Final Research Papers Due

Thurs May 6 Oral Final Exam, 6-9pm, Caldwell G107.
There is no way to make-up the final examination.