

WS 541 Seminar in Women's Studies
Gender, War, And Peace
Course Information

Fall, 1997
Tuesdays, 3:00–5:30 pm
Comer Hall, Room 262

Instructor: Dr. Elaine Martin
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Course Information

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Course Description:

In many cultures war and peace are gendered concepts; specifically, peace is considered "feminine" and war is thought to be "masculine." To investigate both the validity and ramifications of this assumption, we will read texts drawn from history, literature, philosophy, sociology, religion and psychology.

After briefly considering gendered concepts of war and peace in early accounts such as biblical stories, the Iliad, and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, we will investigate several topics from cross-cultural perspectives: war as a cultural phenomenon, major anthropological interpretations, changing concepts of masculinity and heroism, theories of sexuality and aggression, the politics of peace, and the effects of militarization(s). We will then apply our theoretical knowledge to several specific wars and conflicts: the two world wars, the nuclear era, including Vietnam, and contemporary wars such as the Gulf war and Bosnia.

Requirements:

1. All primary materials should be read with care, and secondary materials as time and interest dictate (or when specifically assigned).

2. Each student will lead a discussion or two (depending on class size). This involves preparing questions for discussion. Everyone is expected to participate actively.

3. An integral part of this course is the keeping of a weekly journal (see below).

4. Each student will prepare a seminar paper on a topic of her/his interest.

Grading:

Class participation: (incl. leading discussion) = 1/3

Journal = 1/3

Paper = 1/3

Journal:

Record your process of reading the texts as you read or immediately upon completing them. You may wish to react to, comment upon, question, or disagree with the texts. You may also wish to respond to and (dis)agree with classroom discussions: my statements and interpretations, those of other students, or even your own. Your journal may be handwritten or written on a word processor; if handwritten, please use a spiral notebook so that individual pages can be turned in and then later reinserted.

You will give me notebook pages, a photocopy or a printout of your latest journal entries each week in class. On occasion I may read aloud or hand out excerpts of your writing for discussion. If you do not wish something you write to be used in this way, simply note this in the margin. You will want to write approximately 2-4 typed pages per week. This may sound like a lot now, but the ease with which you will find yourself writing in your journal may surprise you, especially if you have never kept a journal before.

Syllabus

[x=xerox copy; R=on reserve]

24 Aug Introduction

Feminisms, "Just War" theories, concepts of war

Poems: Sappho (Untitled Poem), June Jordan ("War and Memory"),
Marge Piercy
("What's that smell in the kitchen?")

31 Aug

Susan Thistlewaite, "'You May Enjoy the Spoil of Your Enemies': Rape
as a Biblical Metaphor for War" (Semeia 1993: 59–78) [x]
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* [x]
"Lysistrata Petition" (1977) [x]

7 Sep

Homer, *The Iliad* (Book 6) [R]
Christa Wolf, *Cassandra*
– Simone Weil, *The Iliad, Poem of Force* [x]
– Heidi Gilpin, "Cassandra: Creating a Female Voice," *Responses to
Christa Wolf*, ed. Marilyn Fries: 349–366
– "To Mark the Publication of *Cassandra*: A Conversation with
Brigitte Zimmermann and Ursula Fröhlich," *The Fourth Dimension:
Interviews with Christa Wolf* (NY: Verso, 1988): 128–135

14 Sep Nature, Biology and Aggression, Part I

John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, pp. 1–94 [R]
Jean Elshtain, *Women and War*, Ch. 2,5,6

21 Sep Nature, Biology and Aggression, Part II

James McBride, *War, Battering and Other Sports*
Linda Boose, "Techno–Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal': From the
Quagmire to the Gulf" (Cooke/Woolacott, Ch.4) [xR]
FILM: "My Private War" Dir. Harriet Eder, Thomas Kufus, 1990

28 Sep World War I

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*
Joyce Berkman, "Feminism, War, and Peace Politics: The Case of
World War I" (*Women, Militarism, and War*, Ch. 7)
–Lynne Layton, "Vera Brittain's Testament(s)" (*Behind the Lines*, 70–
83) [R]

-Sandra Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War" (Behind the Lines, 197-226) [R]
-Claire Tylee, "Maleness Run Riot: The Great War and Women's Resistance to Militarism" (WSIF 11.3 [1988]: 199-210) [xR]

5 Oct World War I (cont.)

George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* (Ch. 1-5) [R]
Elaine Showalter, "Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties" (Behind the Lines, 61-9) [R]
- Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* [R]

12 Oct War and Art: Picasso and Käthe Kollwitz

In Class: Kollwitz' "War" Drawings, Picasso's "Guernica"
Selections from Kollwitz' Diary [xR]
Sara Friedrichsmeyer, "'Seeds for the Sowing': The Diary of Käthe Kollwitz" (*Arms and the Woman*, 205-24) [R]
Herschel Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations, Meanings* (selections) [R]

19 Oct World War II: Perpetrators?

FILM: "Germany, Pale Mother" Dir. Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1979 (130 min.)
Roger Cook, "Melodrama or Cinematic Folktale? Story and History in Germany, Pale Mother" (*The Germanic Review*, 66.3 [1991]: 113-21) [xR]
Peter Brunette, "Helma Sanders-Brahms: A Conversation" (*Film Quarterly*, 44.2 [1990]: 34-42) [xR]
Angelika Bammer, "Through a Daughter's Eyes: Sanders-Brahms' Germany, Pale Mother." *New German Critique* 36 (1985): 91-110 [xR]

26 Oct World War II: European Victims

Elie Wiesel, *Night* [also R]
Charlotte Delbo, *None of us will return* [R]
FILM: "Night and Fog" Dir. Alain Resnais, 1955 (32 min.)

2 Nov World War II: Japanese Victims

Hara Tamiki, "Summer Flowers" (Hiroshima, 19–114)
Ota Yoko, "City of Corpses" (Hiroshima, 115–274)
– Georges Bataille, "Concerning the Accounts Given By the Residents of Hiroshima" (American Imago 48.4:497–514) [xR]
– Haruko Taya & Th. Cook, Japan at War: An Oral History (selections) [R]
FILM: "Hiroshima Mon Amour" Dir. Alain Resnais (based on book by Marguerite Duras) 1959 (91 min.)
– Barbara Freeman, "Epitaphs and Epigraphs: 'The End(s) of Man'" (Arms & the Woman, 303–22, about "Hiroshima Mon Amour") [R]

9 Nov Vietnam, Part I (Guest: Dr. Philip Beidler)

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
– Stanley Rosenberg, "The Threshold of Thrill: Life Stories in the Skies over Southeast Asia" (Cooke/Woolacott, Ch. 3) [xR]
– Marie S. Bonn, "Can Stories Save Us? Tim O'Brien and the Efficacy of the Text" (Critique 36.1 [1994]: 2–15) [xR]
– Lorrie N. Smith, "'The Things Men Do': The Gendered Subtext in Tim O'Brien's *Esquire* Stories" (Critique 36.1 [1994]: 16–40) [xR]

16 Nov Vietnam, Part II (Guest: Dr. Philip Beidler)

Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country*
– Maureen Ryan, "The Other Side of Grief: American Women Writers and the Vietnam War" (Critique 36.1 [1994]: 41–57) [xR]
– Ellen A. Blais, "Gender Issues in Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country*" (South Atlantic Review 56.2 [1991]: 107–18) [xR]
– Visions of War, Dreams of Peace; Writings of Women in the Vietnam War, eds.
Lynda Van Devanter & Joan Furey (selected poems)

PAPERS DUE

23 Nov THANKSGIVING

30 Nov The 1980s and 1990s: Language, Technology, Politics and the Military

Carol Cohn, "'Clean Bombs' and Clean Language" (Women, Militarism, & War, Ch.2)

Kathleen Jones, "Dividing the Ranks: Women and the Draft" (WM&W, Ch. 6)

Sheila Tobias, "Shifting Heroisms: The Uses of Military Service in Politics" (WM&W, Ch. 8)

7 Dec The Future: Peace or War??

Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After* (Ch. 1,5,7,8,9)

Klaus Theweleit "The Bomb's Womb and the Genders of War (War Goes on Preventing Women from Becoming the Mothers of Invention" (Cooke/Woolacott, Ch.13) [xR]

- Sara Ruddick, "Notes Toward A Feminist Peace Politics" (Cooke/Woolacott, Ch. 5) [xR]

- Lynne Jones, "Perceptions of 'Peace Women' at Greenham Common 1981-85: A Participant's View" (Macdonald, 179-204) [R]