

Spring Semester 2010
ASTD 393-02
Dr. Susanne Wiedemann
TR 2:30 - 3:45
Xavier Hall 117
Office Hours:
T&Th 10-12 and by appointment
Humanities Bldg. 113
swiedema@slu.edu
Tel.: 314-977-3516

Over There: The Iraq War In U.S. Film and Media

This course examines the many and diverse visual representations of the Iraq war in Hollywood and independent films, television series, documentaries, and in news media coverage. It focuses on the representations and experiences of Iraqis, U.S. soldiers, and their families at home, and asks larger questions about national identity and war, history and culture, and issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and class in war narratives.

Required Books:

Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009).

Jonathan Pieslak, *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009).

Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad* (New York: DC Comics, 2006).

All chapters and articles are available on e-reserve, unless a www link is provided.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)

Class attendance **and** weekly film screenings outside of class are mandatory. My attendance policy is strict and in accordance with SLU's policies. Your course grade will drop by 1/3 (for example, from a B- to a C+) for every absence, beginning with your third. I expect you to come to class fully prepared, with the assigned book or assigned course readings printed out, and to participate in class discussions. Weekly film screenings are required. All written assignments are due at the beginning of each class. I do not accept late papers; no exceptions. A late paper results in a failing grade for this particular assignment.

WEEKLY MEDIA UPDATES (30%)

For each Tuesday class, you will prepare a brief media update and present on it for about five minutes. Select and compare at least two newspaper/magazine articles, blog entries, photographs, or television news segments.

MIDTERM PAPER (20%)

Comparative Media Analysis (5-7 pages)

FINAL PROJECT (30%)

Organize and facilitate a discussion panel on the Iraq War for the SLU community. This event will take place in May. This assignment is a group project, and its success depends on your personal involvement and your collaboration skills. I will grade you individually on your engagement, based on biweekly updates, on the success of the event, and on an accompanying paper (5 pages).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who believe that, due to the presence of a disability, they may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this, or any other, class at Saint Louis University are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or by visiting by the Student Success Center, Suite 331. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. I am only able to support student accommodation requests upon receipt of an approved letter from Disability Services. I will gladly speak with approved students after registration with Disability Services.

* * *

WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION

January 12

Introduction and Welcome

January 14

Assignment: bring to class two news items (any media) about the Iraq War

WEEK 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

January 19

“Introduction: The Perils of Ignoring History” and “Chapter One: The Legacy of the Western Encounter with the Middle East,” in Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America’s Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005 [2004]), pp. v-xvi and 1-36.

January 21

Stuart Hall, “The Determinations of News Photographs,” in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds. *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance, and Mass Media*. Revised Edition (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981 [1973]), pp. 226-243.

SCREENING: *BODY OF WAR (2008)*

WEEK 3

MILITARY RECRUITMENT

January 26

- USMC's new recruiting video ("America's Few"):

<http://www.marines.com/>

- USMC recruiting videos on www.youtube.com:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwY67LYzH7Q>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl5QLcGBmCk&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-9KHqMVe1k&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7ni8TgyDS8&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jh0Iyt0J7xw&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFeHoMhuz7A&feature=related>

- U.S. Navy recruiting video:

http://www.navy.com/gffg/?campaign=promocalling_navy

- U.S. Army recruiting video:

<http://www.goarmy.com/home/officership/index.jsp#/?section=introvideo>

- James Dao, "With Recruiting Goals Exceeded, Marines Toughen Their Ad Pitch." *The New York Times* Sept 18, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/18/us/18marines.html?emc=eta1>

January 28

"Music and Contemporary Military Recruiting," in Jonathan Pieslak, *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 16-45.

SCREENING: *GUNNER PALACE (2005)*

WEEK 4

RACE AND ETHNICITY

February 2

Melani McAlister, "Military Multiculturalism in the Gulf War and After, 1990-1999," in *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005 [2001]), pp. 235-265.

February 4

Tom Engelhardt, "Iraq as a Pentagon Construction Site," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts*, Catherine Lutz, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2009), pp. 131-141.

SCREENING: *THE SHORT LIFE OF JOSÉ ANTONIO GUTIERREZ (2006)*

WEEK 5

GENDER: WOMEN AT WAR I

February 9

Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp. 1-55.

February 11

Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp. 57-90.

SCREENING: THE HURT LOCKER (2009)

WEEK 6

GENDER: WOMEN AT WAR II

February 16

Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq*, pp. 93-162.

February 18

- Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq*, pp. 163-193.

- "Introduction" and "Who Wants to Be Average," in Kristen Holmstedt, *Band of Sisters: American Women at War in Iraq* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2007), pp. xi-xxiii and pp.155-183.

SCREENING: GRACE IS GONE (2007)

WEEK 7

THE MANY STORIES OF JESSICA LYNCH

February 23

- Michael Luo, "Panel Hears About Falsehoods in 2 Wartime Incidents." *The New York Times* April 25, 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/25/washington/25army.html>

- Michael DeLong, "Politics During Wartime." *The New York Times* April 27, 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/opinion/27delong.html>

- Melani McAlister, "Saving Private Lynch." *The New York Times* April 6, 2003.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/06/opinion/saving-private-lynch.html?pagewanted=1>

February 25

Stacy Takacs, "Jessica Lynch and the Regeneration of American Identity and Power Post-9/11." *Feminist Media Studies* Vol. 5 No. 3 (2005).

SCREENING: SAVING JESSICA LYNCH (2005)

WEEK 8

WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

March 2

- Liam Kennedy, "Securing Vision: Photography and US Foreign Policy." *Media, Culture & Society* 30, no. 3 (2008): 279-94.

<http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/30/3/279>

(accessible via Pius Library's E-Journal Portal)

- Lori Robertson, "Images of War". *American Journalism Review* (October/November 2004).

<http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=3759>

(accessible via Pius Library's E-Journal Portal)

March 4

- Michael Kamber and Tim Arango, "4,000 U.S. Combat Deaths, and Just a Handful of Images." *The New York Times* July 26, 2008.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/world/middleeast/26censor.html?ex=1217736000&en=dbcc93cc0647f37b&ei=5070&emc=eta1>,

- Listen to segment or read transcript on NPR (National Public Radio):

"Debate Over Photo Of Lance Cpl. Joshua Bernard" (Sept. 8. 2009).

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112644023&sc=emaf>

SCREENING: *HOME OF THE BRAVE* (2006)

WEEK 9

No Classes (spring break)

WEEK 10

POPULAR MUSIC I

March 16

Introduction and Chapters Two and Four in *Sound Targets*

March 18

Chapter Five in *Sound Targets*

SCREENING: *STOP-LOSS* (2008)

WEEK 11

POPULAR MUSIC II

March 23

Chapter 6 in *Sound Targets*

March 25

Postscript in *Sound Targets*

SCREENING: *THE WAY WE GET BY* (2009)

WEEK 12

THE IMPACT: IRAQI CIVILIANS

March 30

Introduction and Chapter 5, in Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian, *Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians* (New York: Nation Books, 2008), pp. xiii-xxxvii and pp. 87-113.

April 1:

No Class (Holy Thursday)

SCREENING: *ABOUT BAGHDAD* (2004)

WEEK 13

THE IMPACT: ABU GHRAIB

April 6

- Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, "Exposure." *The New Yorker* May 23, 2008.
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/03/24/080324fa_fact_gourevitch?yrail

- Frank Rich, "Saving Private England." *The New York Times* May 16, 2004.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/16/arts/saving-private-england.html?scp=1&sq=saving%20private%20england&st=cse>

- Shawn Michelle Smith, "Afterimages: White Womanhood, Lynching, and the War in Iraq." Special Issue: "Strange Fruit: Lynching, Visuality, and Empire." *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* Number 20 (Fall 2006): 72-85.

April 8

- Errol Morris, "The Most Curious Thing." *The New York Times* May 19, 2008.

<http://morris.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/the-most-curious-thing/index.html>

- Paul Kramer, "The Water Cure: Debating Torture and Counterinsurgency - A Century Ago." *The New Yorker* Feb 25, 2008.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/02/25/080225fa_fact_kramer

SCREENING: *STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (2008)*

WEEK 14

HOMECOMINGS

April 13

- Michael R. Strobl, "Taking Chance." *Marine Corps Gazette* (July 2004): pp. 42-47.

<http://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/Strobl.pdf>

- Jan Hoffman, "War's Other Enduring Videos." *The New York Times* Nov 27, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/29/fashion/29video.html?scp=1&sq=soldiers%20surprise%20homecomings&st=cse>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6yPvsWg1Ms>

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/videos/en/?bctid=25329763001>

<http://www.news4jax.com/video/21565419/index.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFU5qu0G84M>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/21816438#21816438>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgibVZ9pcbg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bbHofrAVTo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bbHofrAVTo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kpohfny7jWg>

April 15

"After" ("Coming Home" and "Fixing the Future"), in Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier*, pp. 197-232.

SCREENING: *TAKING CHANCE (2009)*

WEEK 15

ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATIONS: HISTORY AND THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

April 20

- Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad* (New York: DC Comics, 2006).

April 22

- "US Troops Kill Baghdad Lions." *BBC News Online* April 22, 2003

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/2966107.stm

- Zoltan Istvan, "In Iraq, Uday Hussein's Lions Remain Victims of War." *National Geographic Online* Oct 2, 2003.

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/10/1002_031002_iraqlions.html

- "Graphic Novel Tells Story of Baghdad Lions." *NPR Online* Sept 13, 2006.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6068585&sc=emaf>

SCREENING: *IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH* (2007)

WEEK 16

CONCLUSIONS

April 27

"From Over Here to Over There And Back Again": Lecture and Discussion

April 29

Conclusions