Women, War, Resistance in 20th Century Europe

The purpose of the course is not only to understand the significance of the women’s contribution to the history of wars which was predominantly analysed by military and diplomatic historians but to redefine the term used so far to describe major events in the 20th century European history and to look at women as subjects and agents of their own past. The course tries to answer to the questions what was the impact of wars on women's lives possibly using their own narratives on the events. Also the course looks at the discursive practices how women's social roles were constructed and maintained during period in question. The course analyses the most important theoretical problems of women and war in chronological order covering the main flashpoints of the European history: World War I, the emerge of Fascism and Nazism, the period of Stalinism, Spanish Civil War, World War II, Resistance Movements and Women, Behind the Iron Curtain: Women and Resistance to Communism, the Latest War in Yugoslavia. The course is presenting a comparative view in history, which transcends national boundaries, as usually war does. Visual representation of women during wars (photos and films) is also used during the course.

Requirements:

Each student is required to prepare an oral presentation on one of the issues covered by the course. Also this should be submitted in a written and enlarged forms at the end of the term. The modifications must include reflections on comments from the class and also from the instructor. The final paper (min 15. pages) is expected to prove not only the authors expertise in the historiography of the question women and war in international and national context but also relevant questions should be formulated to stimulate further research of the field.

The second paper (max. 5 pages) should evaluate a memoir or personal testimony of a war or revolutionary experience by one or more women.

Grade Composition:

20 % Attendance and active participation
30 % Oral Presentation
50 % Final Papers
Required Readings:

Deadalus Winter 1996 Special Issue on Social Suffering

1. Introduction: Women and War. Determined Theories

Behind the Lines chapters 1. 2.

2. Women at War: the Old Image (homefront, mourning, waiting, nursing)


Narratives:

3. Women at War: the New Image: Labour and Professional Life

Behind the Lines ch. 12.


Narratives:


4. Military Violence against Women


Film

Testimonies at the Hague Court, International Crime Tribunal

5. Image of Women: Constructions of Gender


Behind the Lines ch. 15.


6. Soldiers in Uniform

Narratives

Film:
Commissar (Askoldov)

7. Mobilisation/Demobilisation. Post -War Experiences


8. Forms of Female Resistance (political, cultural, religious activities and armed resistance)

Behind the Lines ch. 10.

9. Stalinism: Accommodation and Resistance

John Erickson, "Soviet Women at War" in World War II and the Soviet People. ed. by

Narratives:

Film:
The Anna Akhmatova File

10. Holocaust and Women


Narratives:

11. Women’s Narratives on Holocaust

Women in the Holocaust ch. 20.

Narratives:
Alison Owings, Frauen. German Women Recall the Third Reich. Rutgers UP. 1993. excerpts from testimonies

Film: Greta