

THE 405: War On Film

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Course Details

Online Fall Session B, 2017
October 11 – December 1, 2017
SLN 90999/91000

Instructor

Philip J. Taylor
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I will be checking and responding to e-mails at least once a day, unless circumstances prevent, in which case I will post an announcement to that effect. If you do not hear from me within 24 hours after your first e-mail, please send another e-mail. Please use your ASU e-mail address for ALL correspondence. Correspondence from other email addresses will be ignored. Please place THE 405 War on Film in the subject line.

If you run into a technical problem, use the Help page of the course website to submit a Help Desk ticket, or email **holsupport@asu.edu**, as soon as possible. I am unable to resolve technical issues and so emailing me will only delay an answer to your problem.

TextBook

There is no textbook for this course.

Course Description and Objectives

“The most persistent sound which reverberates through men's history is the beating of war drums.”

- Arthur Koestler

Is mankind inherently and irredeemably warlike? The debate has raged for more than two thousand years. Are we hard-wired for war, or is war a shameful byproduct of human culture, like slavery or poverty, which, hopefully, one day will be eradicated? While this is not the place for such a debate, the sad fact is that wars have been fought throughout recorded history. In over three thousand years, there has never been a time when the world was totally at peace and – guess what! – turn on CNN and you will see that is definitely not the case today. There are currently ten conflicts in the world which have resulted in the loss of two thousand or more lives. In the case of the war in Afghanistan, that number exceeds two million since the Soviet Union invaded that country in 1979.

As war has always been with us, so has our need to experience war stories. Sometimes, we're thrilled by an act of courage against all odds; at other times, we're grieved, angered, by the

indiscriminate destruction of war. There's a startling contradiction there. We can view a violent, deeply antiwar film such as *Platoon* (1986) and an action-adventure film like *The Great Escape* (1963) and consider them both entertainment. I think that's because they are cathartic which, according to the early Greeks, is the purification and purgation of our emotions—especially pity and fear—through art. And nowhere is this more in evidence than in the some of the earliest surviving Greek works of literature. Homer's *Iliad* is an epic poem about the Trojan War. The first Greek play that has come down to us, *The Persians* by Aeschylus, tells of the Battle of Salamis during the second Persian invasion of Greece. In fact, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* from Mesopotamia is one of the earliest known works of literary fiction, and it's a war story. Moving forward in time, medieval literature is bursting with tales of war and, of course, some of Shakespeare's most thrilling scenes are in his war plays. "Once more unto the breach, dear friends..." etc.

The war film has been a popular film genre since the earliest days of cinema. Indeed, when film was born in the late nineteenth century, the two major wars in the world were being waged in the exotic locations of China (The Boxer Rebellion) and South Africa (The Second Boer War). Audiences were hungry for footage from these far-off lands, although the cameras were so cumbersome that it was difficult to shoot any actual "action" footage. So the shots of the soldiers preparing for battle, doing drill exercises, etc. were "juiced up" with recreated scenes.

James Williamson made his film *Attack on a China Mission* (1900) at a derelict house in a town south of London, England. He put up a bilingual 'Mission Station' sign and used his knowledge from his previous career as a chemist to fake the gunshots and explosions. The Thomas Edison Studios film *Capture of [a] Boer Battery* (1900) was actually shot on a field in West Orange, New Jersey. These short films were called reconstructions and neither the exhibitors nor the audiences seemed to care too much about authenticity. The new media of film was too exciting to worry about such distinctions.

The Spanish-American War gave filmmakers the same problems. Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders' famous charge up San Juan Hill looked less than heroic on film. So did the American naval victory at Santiago. So two enterprising young men, J. Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith, shot *Battle of Santiago Bay* (1898) in Blackton's kitchen on an upside-down table with an inch of water, using cutouts of ships pasted on cardboard with smoke provided by a cigar wielded by Blackton's wife. Probably the first use of special effects and audiences were amazed.

Things became even more complicated with the onset of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Francisco "Pancho" Villa quickly became famous, winning battle after battle against the Mexican army with daring cavalry raids. Some saw him as nothing but an outlaw, but others viewed him as a kind of Robin Hood, the hero of the oppressed. The American public devoured the newspaper articles about his exploits, but he was elusive, always on the move. It would be quite a coup for the company that could capture him on film.

Enter the Mutual Film Corporation. They tracked down Pancho Villa and offered him a contract: \$25,000 in advance (that's over half a million today) if he let them shoot his battles in daylight, and for re-enacting them if more footage was needed. Mutual also provided uniforms for Villa and his men to lose that brigand image. The line between fiction and reality was closing fast. In

fact, French writer Paul Virilio asserts that, in a culture dominated by war, “War is cinema and cinema is war.” I wouldn’t go quite that far but, over the past century, film and television portrayals of war have certainly become our reality. They have evolved into how we perceive the character, the very personality of a war. Mention World War II to someone of my generation and their first mental images are probably going to be from *The Longest Day* (1962) or *They Were Expendable* (1945). To a younger generation, those images might derive from *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) or *Schindler’s List* (1993). And, in spite of the extensive television coverage of the Vietnam War, our perception of that conflict is probably lifted from *Apocalypse Now* (1979) or *Platoon* (1986). The carefully assembled images from skilled directors such as Coppola, Spielberg or Stone are going to have a far stronger impact on our collective consciousness than newspaper photos, history books, or TV reports from embedded journalists. I cannot stress the importance of the editing process in filmmaking. As Quentin Tarantino has said, the editor provides the final draft of the movie. Example: give a skilled director the same footage that Michael Moore used in his anti-George Bush documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) and that editor could turn out a film that makes George Bush look like a hero. That’s what makes film such a powerful and manipulative medium.

As we will see during this course, the choice of stories and way the images are assembled in the cutting room will very much depend on the temperature of the war. When the war is a dark cloud looming on the horizon – 1912, say, or the late Thirties, or the JFK years – governments and film studios are preparing the population for the mobilization of war. However, while the war is actually being fought, the tone of the cinematic output changes drastically. Newsreels, documentaries and feature films all show us *why* we must fight, what evil, unmitigated scum the enemy are, and the heroic exploits of our brave boys in harm’s way. These patriotic films usually last until several years after the war is over. Introspection then sets in and we begin to see films appear with an ultra-bleak view of the incredible waste and inhumanity of warfare; the anti-war films.

We’ll be placing each of the films we’ll be looking at in its historical context. I think you will definitely appreciate that every film is very much a child of its time. We will not be confining ourselves to films from the United States and Great Britain. We will also be discussing films from countries which had a totally different experience in World War II. Obviously, a Polish film about the Nazi occupation is going to have an entirely different feel than a Japanese film about their surrender, or a French film about the resistance movement.

This is not going to be a comprehensive appraisal of the genre. That would be impossible given the length of this course. This is an introduction to how war has been represented on film throughout the last century from a kaleidoscope of viewpoints. The time the film was made, the reason it was made, the country in which it was made, are all inextricably linked as we shall see. The majority of war films tend to be set in the 20th century and portray mechanized warfare where combat scenes are a requisite part of the action, if not the pivotal part. However, we will certainly be looking at a few films that take place during a war, and while they don’t contain any actual fight or battle scenes, they most definitely make strong statements about war and conflict.

I have not limited this course to films about wars of the past century, although they will be the primary focus for reasons of time. We will not be looking at any fictitious wars so, if you were

expecting to cover material such as *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Independence Day*, etc., you'll be disappointed.

Early societies waged war for food and other resources... If that river was on our land, we would have a year-round supply of fish... or political motives... If we replace this leader, the new leader has promised to give us more freedom... and, in some terrifying cases, the extermination of another race or people. Auschwitz and Rwanda are only two of the more recent disgraces in that area of human history. Human nature hasn't changed much. As we will see in the opening module of this course, we have merely devised more efficient ways to destroy our enemies in greater numbers.

Course Schedule

The course is divided into seven modules. This is the equivalent of one module per week. The first two modules will be a journey through time as we explore the strategic, philosophical and technological advances in warfare over a span of two thousand years through the eyes of some of the world's greatest screenwriters and directors. This will be a very intensive part of the course, as we'll be screening excerpts from a large number of movies. The remaining modules are self-explanatory.

Module 1: War Through The Ages, Part 1

Module 2: War Through The Ages, Part 2

Module 3: World War I

Module 4: World War II, Asia

Module 5: World War II, Europe

Module 6: Korea/Vietnam

Module 7: Today

Each module contains from five to eight lectures. Each lecture is divided into three sections. RECON, MISSION, DEBRIEFING. First, you need to recon the area. The material here will help you put my lecture and the video material you'll be watching on your mission in context. The recon section has above-the-line and below-the-line material. The above-the-line material is information you really need to look at before going on the mission. In the recon section, you will find a link to a biography of the man and his slave revolt, also a link to a short history of Rome. Since this is not a history course, there will be no questions on these pages in the module quiz unless they lie within the context of the films and clips you'll be viewing. These links and PDF files will be invaluable in giving you some basic background material. They will enhance your appreciation of my lectures and the films. I suggest you thoroughly explore the above-the-line material.

The below-the-line items are recommendations only and will not be used in the quiz. You will find further material to explore – books, videos, screenplays, music, etc. – if you choose to do so.

Once you have performed your recon, you will set off on your mission which is where you will watch my lectures and any required films. This is the heart of the course. Any information in

here can be a question in the module quiz. This is the heart of the course. Any information in here can be a question in the module quiz. Be sure to watch all the parts of each lecture. Ten seconds before the end of each lecture part a “Next Up” box will appear in the lower right hand corner of the screen. Clicking on the ► symbol in the control panel will also take you to the next part of the lecture, if there is one.

Finally, each lecture ends with the debriefing. The questions in the debriefing cover the material from both the Recon and Mission sections. These questions are not graded; they are there to allow you to check your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. If you can't answer all of these questions on the first try, you might want to go back over the lesson material before you try the end of module quiz.

At the end of each module there will be a quiz consisting of 20 multiple choice and fill in the blank questions based on the lectures and the films you have viewed in that module. You will have 25 minutes to complete the quiz, and **it must be taken before you can continue to the next module**. You will be penalized if you exceed that time limit. For every two full minutes you go over the limit, one point will be deducted from your final score. You will see this deduction on the confirmation page that follows a successful quiz submission. Please note that the quiz program does not cope well with foreign characters such as é ñ ç. No need to use them on fill in the blank questions.

There is no on-screen timer, so you are responsible for keeping track of your own time. The quiz page will clearly state the exact time you started the quiz, so there is no excuse for not knowing when you should submit it. The only times that matter are the start and end times as recorded by Herberger Online's servers, and those are the times that will be used to calculate any and all overtime penalties. As such, no points will be added to a quiz score, and no quiz grade will be changed, simply because you say that your clock/phone/computer said something else. Do not waste your time taking screenshots or photographs of the quiz page to prove you were under the time limit; that's not the official time.

It should go without saying that the best way to avoid overtime penalties is to study the material beforehand, and simply be prepared. If you attempt to open new tabs to Google for an answer, or anything else like that, not only will you risk an error upon submitting the quiz, but such activity only eats up more of your time. If you try to access the course lectures on another tab or computer while taking a quiz, that quiz will be voided and you will receive zero points. There's plenty of time for any prepared student to answer all the questions. Please note that you will not be able to pass the quiz unless you have listened to all the lectures and watched all the films in that module. Please keep in mind that Herberger Online has a record of exactly how much time you spend on the course website. You are advised to make extensive **handwritten** notes as you listen to the lectures and watch the films. You are allowed to use these handwritten notes during the quizzes. A number of the questions in these quizzes will focus on the final couple of reels of some of these films. Just in case you decide to opt out early from a screening.

I will post updates on new war films and current affairs when I think they're relevant. Material in this section will not be included in the quizzes, but I've received a great deal of positive feedback about this feature in previous classes. You will find these updates in the Instructor's Blog under

the Discussions tab on the home page. As an incentive for you to read this material I will sneak in a 3-point extra credit question now and then.

There is also a General Discussion option which will allow you to comment on the lectures and films you've been watching. There are no points for your contributions. However, when the semester is over and I'm grading, a student who has less than an half a percentage point from a higher grade, may get that grade boosted, if the student has made a number of serious and meaningful contributions to the Discussion board. Please keep your comments polite and clean. Please don't include queries about the quizzes here. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I cannot discuss a student's grades (points) in a public forum such as this discussion board. Email me privately about such matters.

Important: Access to the Films

The Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts is committed to making our online class offerings as cost-effective and pedagogically sound as possible. However, we are required to adhere to the TEACH Act (Section 110(2) of the U.S. copyright law) which specifies conditions under which educators may perform or display copyrighted works in distance education or online environments. Whenever possible, we obtain and pay for film licenses to make the films available on our course websites. No license is available for some of the films covered in this class. This means that you will need to use other means to view these films via Amazon, Hulu Plus, Netflix, etc. Amazon Prime, Hulu Plus and Netflix all have free trial periods so, if you are not already a member, you may be able to time your trial period effectively. Your total cost for viewing these films will still be far less than most textbooks.

PLEASE NOTE: Herberger Online's license for "The Hurt Locker" expires on November 30th, so you're advised not to leave screening this movie until the final day.

Here's a breakdown of your options for these specific films.

Also, don't forget that there are copies of many of these films available in the ASU library system and at your local public library – Tempe, Glendale, Phoenix, Scottsdale, etc.

Joyeux Noël

Netflix DVD only	Amazon streaming	Hulu Plus no
Google Play streaming	iTunes streaming	Vudu streaming
YouTube streaming		

Army of Shadows

Netflix DVD only	Amazon streaming	Hulu Plus no
Google Play streaming	iTunes no	Vudu streaming
YouTube streaming		

Courage Under Fire

Netflix DVD only	Amazon streaming	Hulu Plus no
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Google Play streaming
YouTube streaming

iTunes no

Vudu streaming

Quizzes

Each of the seven modules opens at the beginning of the session. Each of the quizzes and the discussions close on another date later in the session. This will allow you to move through the course at very high speed, should you choose to do so. **Please pay careful attention to when each module quiz closes.**

MODULE	QUIZ & DISCUSSION CLOSSES
1	October 19 11:59 PM
2	October 26 11:59 PM
3	November 2 11:59 PM
4	November 9 11:59 PM
5	November 16 11:59 PM
6	November 21 11:59 PM
7	December 1 11:59 PM

This class is intensive but extremely workable if you pace yourself. You are strongly advised not to leave taking the quizzes until the last minute.

General Conditions for Taking an Online Quiz:

You need to have reliable access to the Internet on the assigned day of the quiz.

Starting a quiz during the last 10-15 minutes of the quiz window is unwise, especially if you encounter technical problems; remember, **technical support is only available Mon-Fri, 8am to 5pm. There is no technical support on weekends.**

Quizzes can only be taken online. Submission of quizzes via email or in printed form will not be accepted.

The use of smart phones for taking a quiz is forbidden. Do not even attempt it.

Quizzes are not to be taken as a group effort or with any other form of collaboration.

No other Web pages can be open while taking a quiz. The system logs all browser activity. **Opening new browsers or new browser tabs can invalidate your quiz session. All your browser activity is logged by the Web server. Accessing course videos while you are taking a quiz will result in a failed quiz session. You may use your handwritten notes.**

Submitting Online Quizzes

Certain conditions apply for the submission of an online quiz. The important ones are:

Online quizzes that have been submitted CANNOT be reset (see below). Grades will stand as posted.

If you experience computer or technical problems during an online quiz DO NOT SUBMIT the quiz. For instance, if text or images fail to load, or the quiz itself seems incomplete or unresponsive.

If you suspect a technical error, exit the browser immediately and address the problem by trying to take the quiz again on a different computer, or by contacting technical support at holsupport@asu.edu. Do not contact the instructor.

Remember: submitted quizzes cannot be retaken. **No exceptions.**

Resets for Online Quizzes

A reset for an online quiz is an action usually taken by a student prior to contacting technical support. If you experience a glitch during an online quiz, click the course logout button and close your browser. When you attempt to restart the online quiz, the system will ask you to confirm the reset. Some important facts about resets:

- Only **one** online reset is allowed **per online quiz**.
- In **total**, only **two online resets** of online quizzes are allowed in **any given semester**. In other words, you can only reset two of the seven quizzes available in this online course.

Missed Quizzes

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the dates and times for the online quizzes, however, there are conditions that apply for missed online quizzes. The important ones are: An online quiz can be taken if it was missed because of an excused absence (see below). Permission from the instructor is necessary.

A missed online quiz for reasons other than an excused absence can be taken only with permission from the instructor.

If you miss an online quiz, you must inform the instructor immediately or at least within the subsequent 48 hours and provide an electronic copy (e.g., a PDF file) of the document supporting your absence (e.g., doctor's note, funeral announcement, letter from ASU's Athletic Department, etc.).

If you experience personal, medical or other unforeseen problems during a quiz, DO NOT TAKE OR SUBMIT THE ONLINE QUIZ – instead, email the instructor immediately to begin a discussion of your situation.

Depending on the situation, the instructor may ask for a different type of quiz as the replacement for a missed online quiz.

Excused Absences

Excused absences apply for online quizzes. They include:

- Personal illness (documented);
- Religious holidays (conforming to the ASU list);
- Unexpected personal emergencies such as death of an immediate family member (documented);
- Jury duty or other similar court obligation;
- Military duty and/or assignment;
- Direct participation in a sport event as an ASU athlete (documented).

Absences that will not be considered include:

- A previously scheduled obligation such as a family reunion or trip;
- Personal obligations prior to or after an official holiday;
- Job obligations;
- Attending a wedding (even your own);
- Illness of a family member;
- Workload in other courses;
- The death of a pet.

Make-up Quizzes

If granted, the date for a make-up exam will be determined by the instructor in concert with student needs. NOTE: Any act that violates the implicit code of academic integrity will be dealt with in the appropriate manner. See **Policy on Academic Integrity**, below.

General Warning and Online Policies

Online courses are significantly different from 'live' courses. Consequently, students need to be aware of protocol and conditions that govern such courses.

Computer Requirements

You must have a computer – your own or have access to a computer on campus – that will allow you to interact with the online course. The computer must be capable of consistently streaming Quicktime movie files. The use of smart phones (iPhone, Blackberry, etc.) is not recommended. This course is known to work on all major browsers, including Safari, Firefox, Chrome, and Internet Explorer, on both Macintosh computers and PCs. Note: the use of Safari or Firefox is highly recommended.

Additionally, you must have computer skills that will allow you to surf the internet, access specific sites, confer via email, download and upload files, and any other course-related activities.

Computer Support

Please do not contact your instructor with technical questions. Herberger Online handles all technical questions and issues that may arise in this course.

Please contact the support team immediately if you encounter technical issues while completing an assignment and you are unable to resolve the problem and reset your work.

The Herberger Online support team is available to assist you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You may reach them anytime at:

- holsupport@asu.edu
- 1-888-298-4117
- 480-965-3057 (International)

When contacting support, please provide:

- The full name of this course and SLN of this course.
- The title(s) of any assignment(s) you're having trouble with
- A brief description of the problem
- Detailed, step-by-step instructions to reproduce the problem

Office Hours

There are no office hours for this online course. Please communicate directly with the instructor via email (Philip.Taylor@asu.edu). Because of ASU policy you must use your ASU email address when communicating with the instructor. Please be mindful that emails are not always effective in communicating the intent of your message. Consequently, take the time to compose what you want to say. Remember: You are not texting a friend who knows you well!

General Conditions

As stated above, access to a suitable computer and adequate computer skills are critical for your success in this online course. Consequently, the instructor will not consider computer-related excuses for the failure to meet course requirements (excuses such as: technical incompatibility, sudden infection by computer viruses, inadequate access to the Internet or any other similar reasons). Neither will inadequate computer skills be considered as a valid excuse for not successfully completing the course.

NOTE: You are strongly advised not to enroll in the online course if either computer access or computer skills are an issue.

Special Accommodations: Very Important!

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the ASU Disability Resource Center. <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc> (480) 965-1234

This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively. If you have a letter from the Disability Resource Center indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to me no later than the end of the first week of the semester so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

General Warning

Films in this class may contain language that some considered by some to be obscene or profane. Also, there may be scenes that are graphically explicit in portraying sexual or violent acts. And there may be ideas or practices endorsed by a specific motion picture that are considered immoral or amoral by some standards.

Some the films in this class will be in a foreign language with subtitles. Many will be in glorious black-and-white with mono sound. **Please consider the cautions above carefully because this class might not be for you and the appropriate time to withdraw is now.** If you remain in this class, you will be responsible for ALL material, regardless of content.

Withdrawal Policies

If you wish to withdraw from this course, it is your responsibility to do so. You can find the withdrawal deadlines, and other important dates, on this web page. Course registration changes are processed through My ASU: <http://my.asu.edu>

Barrett Honors Contracts

Barrett College honors contracts are accepted, but please contact Prof. Taylor as early as possible. No honors contracts are accepted after March 31st, 2015.

Grading

Each of the seven quizzes will contain 20 questions with a value of 5 points per question. Therefore, the quizzes will have a total point count of 700. Your final point count will be converted to a letter grade as follows:

97% ↔ 100% A+
94% ↔ 96.9% A
90% ↔ 93.9% A –
87% ↔ 89.9% B+
84% ↔ 86.9% B
80% ↔ 83.9% B –

76% ↔ 79.9% C+

70% ↔ 75.9% C

60% ↔ 69.9% D

Anything below 60% is an E

Policy on Academic Integrity

If you are found cheating on the quizzes, you will fail this class. The use of resources from the Internet, including but not limited to former exams, and recorded classes will also be considered a violation of the ASU Academic Integrity policy.

Your work will be checked by anti-plagiarism software, so please do not attempt it. One of the possible consequences is failure in the class, with a designation of “Academic Dishonesty” as the reason. You could also be expelled from the university.