FALL 2014 WRTG 3020: The Language of War
M,W,F 12-12:50pm (KTCH 119)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This is a writing course exploring the culture, language and rhetoric of war. We will look at how war is justified, documented, aestheticized, remembered and forgotten. Our primary concern will be how the language of war permeates private and public spheres and the variety of genres that have developed in response to the mass wars of the last century. Our weekly discussions will draw from vastly different sources, including documentary films and poetry, fiction, cultural studies, photography, journalism and philosophy. While the readings are not specific to U.S. war history, we will maintain a keen eye on current US foreign policy rhetoric, our own relationship to the wars of our lifetime and those experienced by our ancestors. Themes that will likely be explored are the language(s) of protest, commemoration and memorialization, trauma, propaganda, the art of cruelty, representations of violence, and war beyond the battlefield. This is a writing workshop, and particular attention will be paid to careful craft techniques, and revision strategies for your own writing development.

The semester is divided into four units, each dedicated to a particular inquiry in relation to our topic. You will be asked to write four major essayistic responses to these inquiries demonstrating independent research ability, extended rhetorical awareness, attunement to specialized discourse communities, self-reflection and thoughtful peer critique.

Texts
Assorted readings provided throughout the course, available via D2L.

Major Assignments

At the end of each unit you will have to submit an essay in which you critically respond to our inquiry. Each essay will have a slightly different focus, purpose and research angle.

Essay I (200 points): Ethics of War Autobiography (6-8 pages) in which you will reflect on how we justify violence and war and relate some of these concepts to your own life and relationship to war. This will be the most personal of all essays, and you have relative creative range as to how you choose to narrate and present your ideas. However, you will have to incorporate at least two secondary sources and clearly define your philosophical worldview regarding war. You may also focus on a specific change to your philosophical worldview in relationship to war and violence.
**Essay II** (100 +100 points): **Presentation (5-7 min + 4-6 pages written documentation)**
Document and analyze the particular rhetoric of a current or past war. Follow multiple news and/or other documentation streams over the course of the unit, and compare how they choose to narrate and represent not only events but also create positions and images of "enemy" and "victim" within the discourse. Examine and explicate audience and purpose, and how rhetorical strategies and persuasive tools are used. You will be asked to present the "language" of this particular war to the class and write an in-depth rhetorical analysis of at least two different news sources, as well as discuss your process, source selection and evaluation.

**Essay III** (200 points): **Creative and Critical Response (8-10 pages)**
Choose one of the creative pieces discussed in class (film, poetry, non-fiction) and analyze how the particular genre, style, aesthetic form re-contextualize, appropriate and disseminate war and violence. Is the artistic representation effective? What might it achieve and how, in contrast to more traditional forms such as daily news coverage? In addition to the essay, hand in your own creative response (choosing one of the genres) to a particular war and write a brief reflection on your genre choice, process and intention.

**Essay IV** (200 points): **Research Paper (8-10 pages):** In this final essay you will be asked to research a war that has either received a lot of historical attention or one that has been erased from collective consciousness. Your task here is threefold.
1) To investigate and critically discuss why this particular war has been either remembered or forgotten. Include critical theory and secondary sources (Your final bibliography should have between 6-10 citations)
2) Rhetorically analyze a particular war memorial/ commemoration and how it is effective in building collective memory (or not)
3) Outline a memorial/commemoration idea of your own

**Overall participation, attendance and presence in class** (150 points): Your regular attendance and participation is crucial to be successful in this class. Furthermore, I expect that you present, listen, reflect and feedback with respect and integrity. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Judgmental, disruptive or offensive behavior and language will consequent in dismissal from the class. As advanced thinkers and writers you are expected to make discerning comments on the readings and your peer's work. I will also ask that you bring in 2-3 written comments to class in response to your reading.

**Workshop** (50 points): Similar to class attendance, you will be graded on presence and overall participation. If you miss a workshop, come unprepared or don't have drafts of your work for your colleagues you will lose points in this section.

**Structure of the Seminar:** By definition, a seminar is “a course of specialized
graduate or undergraduate study under faculty supervision, in which ideas, approaches, and advances are regularly shared among participants.”

**Workshops:** All four essays will be workshopped and critically discussed by your peers. Make sure you bring in adequate copies of your drafts and are prepared to offer thoughtful comments on the work of your colleagues.

**Attendance:** A substantial part of your grade relies upon consistent class attendance and participation in seminar. Attendance will be taken every meeting time, and if you do not have the texts for the class, you will be considered absent. The WRTG 3020 course policy allows students to miss three classes without automatic penalty. Your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade for every absence after the allotment of three. Simply filling a seat in this course is not considered “attendance”; if you aren’t prepared for class discussion (you don’t bring the reading material, you are texting while others are speaking, you aren’t prepared to take notes, etc.) you will be marked absent. Unless you have a medical emergency, I expect that you contact a classmate for the information and assignments you missed.

**The Honor Code:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

**Disabilities**
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices

**Religious holidays**
Campus policy requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled assignments or required attendance. Let me know in the first two weeks of class if you will miss any scheduled classes/assignment due dates because of religious observances. See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

**Discrimination and harassment**
CU’s Policy on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been discriminated
against or sexually harassed should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.

**Colorado Commission On Higher Education Criteria for CO3**

1. **Extend rhetorical knowledge:**
   a) Use texts from rhetoric, discourse studies, communication, or related disciplines to extend understanding of rhetorical concepts to the discipline that is the focus of the course.
   b) Develop sophisticated strategies for critical analysis of several genres, for specified discourse communities. These communities may include professional or disciplinary discourse communities.
   c) Learn more sophisticated ways to communicate knowledge to appropriate audiences.
   d) Apply reflective strategies to the synthesis and communication of knowledge.

2. **Extend experience in writing processes:**
   a) Use multiple drafts.
   b) Hone strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   c) Learn to critique own and other’s work.
   d) Use a variety of technologies (writing and research tools).
   e) Learn to evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, credibility, reliability, and bias.

3. **Develop understanding of writing conventions:**
   a) Select appropriate format for different writing tasks.
   b) Apply genre conventions ranging from structure and
   3. Deepen understanding of writing conventions.
   a) Select appropriate format for different writing tasks.
   b) Apply genre conventions ranging from structure and
   3. Extend mastery of writing conventions.
   a) Select and adapt genre conventions for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   b) Use specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation appropriately.

4. **Demonstrate comprehension of content knowledge at the advanced level through effective communication strategies, including:**
   a) Ability to compose messages for specific audiences and purposes.
   b) Ability to communicate to the variety of audiences in disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   c) Ability to adapt content and style to respond to the needs of different audiences and rhetorical situations in disciplinary or specialized discourse.
Tentative Schedule (Course Matter Subject to Change)

Unit 1: How Do We Justify Violence and War

Week 1: Introductions

M 8/25
Intro and syllabus

W 8/27
Have read: Thucydides "Melian Dialogue"

F 8/29
Have read: http://public.wsu.edu/~hughesc/why_men_love_war.htm

Week 2: Rising Up and Rising Down

M 9/1 no class (Labor Day)

W 9/3
Have read: Vollmann's "Three Meditations On Death" (1-19)

F 9/5
Have read: Vollmann's "Moral Calculus"; From "Definitions for Lonely Atoms" (54-76)

Week 3: The Act of Killing

M 9/8 The Act of Killing (1st half)

W 9/10 The Act of Killing (2nd half)

F 9/12 Have read: Sontag's Chpt. 1 Regarding the Pain of Others

Week 4: Drafts


W 9/17 Workshop

F 9/19 Workshop

Unit 2: How Do We Report and Document War?

Week 5: Rhetorical Analysis

M 9/22 Due: Ethical Autobiography
Have read: Katz's "Ethics of Expediency"

W 9/24
Have read: "The Other Side of The Conflict" (www.warscapes.com/conversations/other-side-conflict-conversation-anna-badkhen);

F 9/26 Have read: Manjoo's "Trusting Your Senses: Selective Perception and 9/11";
Bring in newspaper articles/have presentation topic determined
Week 6: Propaganda and Selective Perception

M 9/29 Have read: Willard Price: "America's Enemy No 2"

W 10/1 Have read: "Images of the Enemy"

F 10/3 Workshop findings
Present media findings/ Comparing News Sources

Week 7: Tracing the Argument

M 10/6 Have read: "Why Gaza Fought Back" (http://zcomm.org/znetarticle/why-gaza-fought-back/)
Have read: John Berger's "Seven Levels of Despair"

W 10/08 Analysis of ads WW2

F 10/10 Workshop

Week 8: Presentations

M 10/13
Presentations

W 10/15
Presentations

F 10/17
Presentations

Unit 3: How do we aestheticize war?

Week 9: The Art of War

M 10/20 Have read: Lingis' "The Art of War"
Due: Essay II

W 10/22
Have read: Nelson's "The Art of Cruelty"

F 10/24
Thin Red Line

Week 10: Representation

M 10/27 Thin Red Line

W 10/29 Have read Levinas "Face"

F 10/31 Selections From Standing Down

Week 11: Poetry and War

M 11/03 Have read: Carr's excerpt 100 Notes on Violence; Reznikoff's Holocaust
W 11/05 Have read: Adnan's excerpt *In the Heart of the Heart of Another Country*; Excerpt's from Ouredinek's *Europeana*

F 11/07 Have read: from *Standing Down*

**Week 12: Drafts**

M 11/10 Workshop

W 11/12 Workshop

F 11/14 Due: Essay III

*Unit 4: How do we remember and forget war?*

**Week 13: Visit Memorial Site**

11/17 Have read: Gomez- Barris "Ice and Political Heat"

11/19 Sebald's "On the Natural History of Destruction"

11/21 Research instruction/ Bibliography

**Week 14: Fall Break**

**Week 15: Revisions**

M 12/1 Present Bibliography

W 12/3 Workshop

F 12/5 Workshop

**Week 16: Revisions**

M 12/8 Conferences

W 12/10 Conferences

F 12/12 Last Essay due!