

IDIS 196.2: War & Peacebuilding in Film

Spring 2015

Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 pm

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Course Description:

In this class, designed for this year's Infocus Center of Investigation on War, Peacebuilding and the Just Society, we will see a film each week related to the Infocus themes. The purpose of the course is for us to discuss and investigate the way this year's Infocus themes and questions are portrayed in film, and to what purpose, as well as to gain deeper insight regarding the realities of war and peacemaking. Some readings will be provided, and energetic discussion will be required. Writing assignments in accordance with a .5 course will also be part of student learning.

CLASS MEETING TIMES: Tuesday evenings, 6:30 -- 9:30 P.M.

CLASSROOM: Dana Lecture Hall: HOSCI 202

TEXTBOOKS: None required

PREREQUISITES: None

Course Goals:

Through this course, students will:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of the costs of war and war preparedness.
2. Increase their ability to critically evaluate and challenge preconceived notions regarding the place of war and peacebuilding in our world.
3. Enhance their critical thinking skills to interrogate film, especially popular film, and the role it plays in shaping culture.
4. Work on skills to participate skillfully, with greater confidence and intellectual depth in discussion and debate about issues that are urgent, timely, controversial, and about which people have different views.

Course Requirements:

Overview:

This is a half course unit. In order to earn 0.5 credits for this course, **students will be required to attend six of 12 films and two lectures.** In addition to attending these events, students will be required to participate in post-film discussions, in online discussions, and to submit a series of short written reflections on the film topics/lecture presentations.

Film Viewing Requirements:

Students may elect to attend any six of the total number of films that are offered (see Film Viewing Schedule at the end of this syllabus). See the note below regarding choice of lecture presentations. They need not advise the faculty which film viewing/lecture they plan on attending in advance of their showing. Students may simply show up to the class on time (i.e., - no later than 6:30 P.M.), sign the class sign-in sheet, watch the film for its entire running time, and engage in the post-viewing discussion. Students are welcome to attend additional film sessions but will not receive extra credit points for attendance at those films. Likewise, students will not receive extra credit nor be able to substitute better grades for poorer grades by submitting additional online comments or reflective journals.

Although each film may be available for viewing on venues such as NetFlix™, students **must be present on the night of each film to receive credit for viewing that film and in order for the film critique to count for credit.** Students may be docked points for coming late to view a film, at the discretion of the course faculty. No student may be admitted to the film viewing ten minutes after class has begun (i.e., after 6:40 P.M.), as this may unfairly distract classmates.

Important Note regarding lecture presentations:

1) ***All students will attend the Friday morning keynote address on Mar. 27 given by Dr. Robert Meagher at the beginning of the conference at Moravian, "From War to Peace: Drawing on the Power of Dialogue and Narrative to Build a More Just Society in the Lehigh Valley." Please speak with your professor if you have a conflicting class about clearance to attend this important event at Moravian College. Also, all students will be required to come to class on Tuesday, Mar. 31st. See the note regarding Mar. 31st in the course schedule.***

2) ***Students will also attend one additional lecture, choosing between the others that are publicized in this syllabus. During Week 14 there will be no class and students are encouraged that week to attend the April 23 Thurs. evening lecture given by Dr. James Lawson.***

This means that students will attend 2 lectures and at least 6 films; the writing assignments remain the same whether you have attended a lecture or viewed a film.

Post-Film Seminar Discussion:

Each evening upon conclusion of the selected film, faculty will require students to engage in seminar discussion of the film. Each student must engage in the discussion in order to get full credit for being present the night of the film. In other words, if a student "shows up" for a given film but does not offer any oral feedback on a given night of filming, that student will receive a satisfactory grade for that evening, which is equivalent to a "C." Students who offer feedback subjectively considered by course faculty to be "generic" (e.g., "I liked this film. It reminded me of ____," "I hated this film. The main character was ____," etc.) will receive a "B" at best. Students who offer critical analysis of the film, regardless of opinion or viewpoint taken will receive an "A." Though many of our films are popular films created for mass distribution and viewing as "entertainment," for this class we will expect students to become more savvy and

thoughtful consumers of film. They will look for and discuss various techniques that are used to elicit various reactions, increase the film's entertainment attraction, and use self awareness to gauge and analyze their own responses. We will discuss why certain films were made at certain times, and how they are a part of larger cultural forces and dynamics.

Tumblr Reviews and Chats:

Every student will have the opportunity to contribute to the InFocus Tumblr blog: <http://mocoinfofocus.tumblr.com/> For one of the films (or lecture) you select to view, instead of a reflective essay, you will prepare a brief 'review' focusing on how the film (or lecture) addresses War and/or Peacebuilding. These reviews should be approximately 400 words. Copies of your review should be submitted to us through blackboard as well as posted to the Tumblr blog.

You may NOT prepare a review and a reflective essay for the same film/lecture. Your review is due no later than one week after viewing the film or participating in the lecture.

In addition, over the course of the semester, every student will respond at a minimum of **Three** times to separate reviews posted by peers to the Tumblr blog. Your job is to "keep the conversation going" post-classroom discussions, and make at least one comment of substance for each of these three contributions. The comments and critiques offered need not be particularly lengthy to be considered substantive. Similar criteria used for grading post-film seminar discussions will be used to gauge grading for this assignment. It is a faculty expectation that students will express themselves using language that is readily understandable, not using acronyms typical in social media vernacular (e.g., no "LOL" or "OMG") and not vulgar (i.e., obscene language is not acceptable). Late postings will result in docked points at the discretion of course faculty. Postings that are made over a week after a film is viewed will not be accepted.

Reflective Journals:

Students must submit an electronic journal via the digital drop box on the course Blackboard site within the week post-viewing a given film. Each of these journals are due no later than 6 P.M. on the Monday following the date a film is viewed. Late submission will result in docked points at the discretion of course faculty. No journal will be accepted if it is submitted more than a week late.

Students should submit reflective journals using Microsoft Word. Each journal should address the following general points:

Journal Entries for Film Viewings

1. Why did you choose to view this particular film?
2. What was the perspective of the film regarding the reality of war? Did the film address peacebuilding at all? How or why not? What questions did the film raise for you? What questions do you have regarding the attempt of the film to persuade or portray war and/or peacebuilding? Why do you think this film was created?

3. Did you enjoy watching this film? Why or why not? Analyze your own reaction to the film: what does your reaction tell you? How might you become a more savvy consumer of films such as this?
4. Was there anything you think missing from this film that should have been addressed to further explain or describe the phenomenon that was the focal point of the film?
5. Identify one main “take-away” message you learned from viewing this film. Has this changed your view of war, peacebuilding, the meaning of justice? If so, how? If not, why not? What did you learn from this viewing, and the class discussion and your own reflection?

Journal entries should be approximately 750 words and written to college standards in terms of use of grammar and overall readability.

Journal Entries for Lecture Presentations

1. Take notes during the lecture, tracing the argument that is being presented. Then, as you begin your journal entry, in a few paragraphs, outline this argument.
2. How did the lecture address war and peacebuilding? What questions did it raise for you?
3. Did you enjoy the lecture? Why or why not? Analyze your own reaction to the lecture: what does your reaction tell you? How might you become better equipped to carefully listen and evaluate opportunities such as this?
4. Was there anything missing, that should have been addressed, or further explained?
5. Did the lecture challenge, add to, change or nuance your view of war, peacebuilding, the meaning of justice? If so, how? If not, why not?

Journal entries should be approximately 750 words and written to college standards in terms of use of grammar and overall readability.

EVALUATION:

The following are used to determine course grades:

6 Film Viewings and Discussions:	36% (6% Each)
7 Reflective Essays:	56% (8% Each)
1 Tumblr Review	4%
3 Tumblr Comments on Peer’s Reviews:	4%
Total:	100%

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability must contact Ms. Elaine Mara, assistant director of academic support services for academic and disability support, at the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty in all course-related assignments is an expectation of this course faculty. Plagiarism is the intentional use of another’s words or ideas as your own. Please note that

copying information from the Internet and presenting it as your own certainly constitutes plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will be prosecuted in accordance with policies outlined in the *Moravian College Student Handbook*.

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the course professors.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Tuesday, January 20th

Introduction to our course

Why We Fight: Prelude to War, Frank Capra, 1942 (52 min.)

Week 2

Tuesday, January 27th

Why We Fight, Eugene Jarecki, 2005. (98 min.)

Wednesday, January 28th: Michelle Alexander Lecture at Lehigh

Week 3

Tuesday, February 3rd

The Deer Hunter, Michael Cimino, 1978. (182 min.)

Week 4

Tuesday, February 10th

Lone Survivor, Peter Berger, 2013. (121 min.)

Week 5

Tuesday, February 17th

My Country, My Country, Laura Poitras, 2006. (90 min.)

Week 6

Tuesday, February 24th

Battle of Algiers, Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966. (121 min.)

Thursday, February 26th: Eric Michael Dyson Lecture at Moravian

Week 7

Tuesday, March 3rd

White Light/Black Rain, Steven Okazaki, 2007. (86 min.)

Week 8

Tuesday, March 10th: No Class Meeting - Spring Break

Week 9

Tuesday, March 17th

Sir! No Sir! David Zieger, 2005. (85 min.)

Week 10

Tuesday, March 24th

Friday, March 27th: From War to Peacebuilding Conference
Fri 9 am, lecture by Robert Emmet Meagher, Prosser Auditorium
Attending this lecture is a requirement of the class

Week 11

Tuesday, March 31st:

Important Note: All students are required to attend class this evening; we will hold class for 2 hours, from 6:30 -- 8:30 and use our time for engaged discussion about everything we have experienced thus far in the course. Note: This evening does NOT count toward total number of film viewings/lectures required by this course. We may arrange to have dinner together this evening over our discussion.

Week 12

Tuesday, April 7th

Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb, Stanley Kubrick, 1964. (94 min.)

Week 13

Tuesday, April 14th

The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert McNamara. Errol Morris, 2003. (83 min.)

Week 14

Tuesday, April 21st (no class this week)

Thursday, April 23rd: Lecture by James Lawson

Week 15

Tuesday, April 28th

Grave of the fireflies, Isao Takahata, 1988. (89 Min.)

