

FALL 2005

GRC 311: The Movies Go to War

*All readings are from Richard Goff, Walter Moss, Janice Terry, and Jiu-Hwa Upshur, *The Twentieth Century: A Brief Global History*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002) (ISBN 0-07-234853-4). "REC" = readings that will help you make sense of the wars, but are not compulsory.

CLASS WEBSITE: <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/arens/warfilm>

Week 1: 1 September

TH Introduction to the Course:

- logistics, texts, films, requirements
- the question of representation

PART 1: Questions of Theory -- Setting up the problem

WEEK 2: 6, 8 September

TU How to Read a Film: The question of point of view

CLASS DISCUSSION: how to remember a war, how to represent a war -- the question of two memories juxtaposed

PART 2: World War I: The "War to End all Wars" (The Anti-War War?)

TH The "Facts" of the Western War: The End of a Way of Life

READ: Goff, Chapters 7 & 8

REC: Goff, Chapters 1, 2, & 3

CLASS DISCUSSION: the interest groups, motivations for participation

WEEK 3: 13, 15 September

TU Four Views of Heroism

The Blue Max (U.S. film)

Grand Illusion (French)

All Quiet on the Western Front (U.S. Film, German anti-war source)

Gallipoli (Australian)

CLASS DISCUSSION: You'll see one clip from each film. What does a hero look like in each, and whose war is it? Come into class with ideas about what perspective on the war each country would have.

PART 3: World War II : "The Good War" in the European Theater . . .

TH The War in Europe: Facts of the War

READ: Goff, Chapter 11, 12, 16 & 17

REC: Chapters 9 & 10

CLASS DISCUSSION: How World War I made World War II possible.

WEEK 4: 20, 22 September

TU Heroes: Stemming Nazi Aggression

Bridge at Remagen

The Longest Day

Where Eagles Dare

CLASS DISCUSSION: These three films were made when World War II was still a very live memory. How do we recognize an American war hero? Clips in class as basis for discussion.

****WORLD WAR I QUIZ CLOSED**

TH Soldiers as Victims (stereotypes of concentration camp internees)

Stalag 17

Hart's War

CLASS DISCUSSION: These two films both deal with US soldiers held as POWs (prisoners of war) in Europe. *Stalag 17* was made when the memory of WWII was fresh; *Hart's War*, long after. Can concentration or POW camps be represented metaphors?

****FILM PRÉCIS 1 DUE**

WEEK 5: 27, 29 September

TU Two Sides of One War: Unwilling Heroes

READ: Goff, Chapter 18

Das Boot (German film)

U-571

CLASS DISCUSSION: Submarine crews are in a different kind of war. What differences are there in stereotypes of various services?

PART 3a: . . in the East: Pearl Harbor and Beyond, The "Yellow Peril"

TH When the Sleeping Giant Rises

From Here to Eternity

Pearl Harbor

CLASS DISCUSSION: Both these films recreate the bombing at Pearl Harbor, the start of US participation in WW II. What differences in point of view are there in the attack sequences?

WEEK 6: 4, 6 October

TU POWs and the *Other*

READ: Goff, Chapter 13

King Rat (British film, based on a novel by James Clavell)

Bridge on the River Kwai

CLASS DISCUSSION: The treatment of POWs in the Pacific Theater was used to justify the bombing of Hiroshima. Do these Allies' films show the same war?

****WORLD WAR II QUIZ CLOSED**

PART 4. Aftermath

TH Still-Open Wounds from Europe

Open City (Italian film, the first made in Allied Zones)

Germany Year Zero

Best Years of Our Lives

White Christmas

CLASS DISCUSSION: Each of these films has a message of "normalization" required. What does each scene show about the on-going clean-up of the war?

WEEK 7: 11, 13 October

**TU Review for midterm
Set up project partnerships**

TH Midterm

PART 5. Rethinking WW II: Re-Presenting Victims, Not Heroes

WEEK 8: 18, 20 October

**TU *Normal People* . . .
Seventh Cross (Hollywood movie made from a leftist German novel of the war era)**

Schindler's List

CLASS DISCUSSION: Each film dramatizes victims and victimizers. What is the point of each?

TH *Children Victims*

Tin Drum (German film from a novel by Günter Grass)

Au revoir, les enfants (French film)

Empire of the Sun

CLASS DISCUSSION: Children are swept up in the wars and forced into lives apart. What do they become? What cases are being made?

WEEK 9: 25, 27 October

TU *Soldier Victims: Rethinking the War*

The Ogre

Saving Private Ryan

CLASS DISCUSSION: These are two films made in the 1990s. They show unheroic soldiers and the insanity of war. What in each looks like earlier films, and what is new?

PART 6. Rewriting the History of WW II: Once Memories dim . . .

TH "Documenting" the Unthinkable, or What Never Existed

Mein Krieg (German documentary)

The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl

Max (international art film)

CLASS DISCUSSION: These three films span the space from documentary to mockumentary (*Max*, which completely fictionalizes Hitler's biography). What kinds of memory are reworked in each? What audience factors play in?

PART 7. Endgame: After the "Greatest Generation" Passes

WEEK 10: 1, 3 November

TU When the Details are gone: Two "Memorials" to War

Stalingrad (German film)

Enemy at the Gate (European movie with US star)

CLASS DISCUSSION: Both films are about Germany's devastating loss at Stalingrad - with huge casualties on both sides. What does each do to "package" the war for its respective viewers?

**** GROUP PROJECT POSTING DUE**

PART 8. The "Cold War": War as Governmental Lunacy, Spy versus Spy
TH The "Facts": From Russia through the "Korean Police Action"
READ: Goff, Chapters 20, 22, & 26

WEEK 11: 8, 10 November

TU Governments gone mad: Wars that aren't wars
Manchurian Candidate
*M*A*S*H*

CLASS DISCUSSION: *Manchurian Candidate* was so threatening it was essentially suppressed; *M*A*S*H* was about Korea, but made after Vietnam. How did the Cold War function at home (remember "duck and cover"), and how did these movies intervene?

TH Spy versus Spy: Manufacturing Threat
From Russia with Love ("Bond, James Bond")
Dr. Strangelove (British movie)

CLASS DISCUSSION: Both deal with saving the world from "the threat." What does each film, its super-heroes and super-villains, tell us?

PART 9. Vietnam: The Dirty War

WEEK 12: 15, 17 November

TU Asia after WW II
READ: Goff, Chapters 27, 28, & 29

TH Homefront: Vietnam and the Protests
Born on the Fourth of July
Berkeley in the 60s

CLASS DISCUSSION: How to speak to a divided nation about Vietnam.
****FILM PRÉCIS 2 DUE**

WEEK 13: 22, 24 November (+ Thanksgiving)

TU *Full Metal Jacket*
Apocalypse Now

CLASS DISCUSSION: These two films are about soldiers trapped in the insanity of an unwinnable war; both are made long after Vietnam. What do they tell the homefront about the war? Who are the "good soldiers" in these films -- compare these representations with older stereotypes.

TH Thanksgiving

PART 10: Be all that you can be: The New Armed Forces

WEEK 14: 29 November, 1 December

T "An Army of One"

READ: Goff, Chapter 31

Top Gun

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who is the new hero? Compare the film to armed forces recruitment today, and to earlier hero representations.

****KOREA, VIETNAM, COLD WAR QUIZ CLOSES**

TH US as the World's Policemen (Mideast and Africa)

READ: Goff, Chapter 15, 24, & 25

Black Hawk Down

CLASS DISCUSSION: What is the new army? What differences emerge in representing soldiers from the time of WW II and Vietnam?

WEEK 15: 6, 8 December

T Where the Real Wars Are: Media Realities

Three Kings

Wag the Dog

CLASS DISCUSSION: In these two films, Gulf and Balkan wars are used as excuses for other deeds to be done. What do you see in the visual grammar of each?

TH Closing discussion

****FILM TERMINOLOGY QUIZ CLOSED**

FINAL EXAM: *Thursday, 15 December, 9am to 12 noon*