Aesthetics, Values, and Authority: The Art of War
The Honors College, Florida International University
IDH 3005/3006 ☼ Fall 2007/Spring 2008
Instructor: Juan Carlos Espinosa
Monday 2:00 PM - 4:45 PM ☼ Room: GL 250
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“Great battles change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, in armies and in nations.”
---Winston Churchill

“I find war detestable, but even more detestable are those who praise war without participating in it.”
---Romain Rolland

“True hunting’s over, no herds to follow
Without game, men prey on each other”
---Jane’s Addiction, Three Days (1988)

War has been part of the human experience since our beginning as a species. It has been waged with rocks, guns, and swords, as well as with symbols and ideas. In this course, we will study the phenomenon of war through cultural lenses. We will look at war as represented in the visual arts, film, television, photojournalism, music, and literature. We will also look at how our vision of war is being affected by new media and technology. Special attention will be paid to propaganda theory and questions of intent, medium, control, interpretation, and impact. Our work will be supported by readings in history, political science, and cultural studies, as well as by the viewing of films, television programs, and other visual media including video games. The class will also be visiting the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum to view their extensive collection of propaganda. Please note this class is not about Sun Tzu’s classic The Art of War.

During the first semester we will try to develop and use analytical, critical, and emotional tools to get an understanding of the phenomenon of war. In addition to our readings, discussions, and ruminations, we will closely follow current events. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan serve as the inescapable background for everything we do in our class.

Course Requirements:

The course will be conducted as a seminar. Students are expected to come to class prepared and participate fully in the discussions. Assignments must be submitted electronically and on time. All written work must consistently adhere to a writing style manual of the student’s choice (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, MLA, etc.) Attendance is mandatory and tardiness is unacceptable. All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of The Honors College and Florida International University.
Short papers and class presentations (30%)
Students will submit three short papers (of no more than four pages) on an assigned topic based on course readings and class lectures.

Group Project (20%)
Groups will select a topic in consultation with the instructor that builds upon class readings and discussions. The group will jointly write and submit a ten-page paper and present the project to the class during the last week of the semester. Multi-media presentations are encouraged.

Final Exam (30%)
Students will be given a take home final exam consisting of three questions. The questions will draw upon the readings and materials presented during the semester.

Class Participation (20%)
Class participation counts!

Required Texts and Materials:
Students will be required to purchase three books. Other readings, previews, or viewings listed in the class schedule are available on the class website: honors.fiu.edu/jc


PowerPoint presentations, films, and television programs may be available on the class website.

Class Schedule:
Please note that the class schedule is subject to change. One of the class sessions will take place at the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum, 1001 Washington Avenue on South Beach.

Aug 27  Introduction & Course Preview
         We are at War! Sharing personal experiences about Iraq
         Begin Reading Hedges

Sep 3   Labor Day – No Classes

Sep 10  Immersion and Gut Check
        • Chris Hedges, *War is a force that gives us meaning*
Sep 17  
**Art and Politics (Part 1)**  

Sep 24  
**From Cave to Cave**  
- David D. Perlmutter, *Visions of War: Picturing Warfare from the Stone Age to the Cyber Age*, Chapters 1 & 2, 6 – 8.  
- SHORT PAPER #1 DUE BY NOON TODAY

Oct 1  
**Convocation – No Classes**

Oct 8  
**Who Fights . . . And Why**  
- *Powers of Persuasion: Poster Art from World War II*, National Archives Collection, Washington, DC.  

Oct 15  
**Heartfield at The Wolfsonian-FIU Museum**  
Class will meet at The Wolfsonian, 1001 Washington Avenue, South Beach.  
- Preview PowerPoint presentation on Art, Propaganda and Fascism.  
- [John Heartfield Web Page](#)  
- SHORT PAPER # 2 DUE BY NOON TODAY

Oct 22  
**War at the Movies**  
- Class will be watching the film *Cinema Combat: Hollywood Goes to War* (101 minutes).  
- Preview movie trailers located at class website.
Oct 29  
**War in your Living Room: Vietnam and the Cold War**
- Discussion of television news and programs.
- Class will be viewing an episode of Star Trek.

Nov 5  
**War in Cyberspace: Internet, Blogs, Youtube, and Streaming Video**
Selections from the [Internet Archive](https://archive.org) and other web sources.
Browse through [Blogs of War](https://blogs.ofwar.com).

Nov 12  
**Veteran’s Day Holiday – No Classes**

Nov 19  
**Group Projects Work Day – Meet in Library**
SHORT PAPER # 3 DUE BY NOON TODAY

Nov 26  
**The War in Iraq**
- [Classroom Tools](#)
- [No end but victory](#)
- Film, TBA

Dec 3  
**Art and Politics (Part 2)**

Dec 10  
**Presentation of Final Projects**