

HISTORY 283: WAR IN THE MODERN WESTERN WORLD

Spring 2014 | Professor David Bell | TTh 11:00-11:50 | Classroom TBA
https://blackboard.princeton.edu/pucourse/HIS283_S2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course provides a survey of war in the Western world since the late Middle Ages. It will cover both “operational” military history (strategy, tactics, logistics, mobilization, etc.), and also the relationship of war to broad changes in politics, society and culture. Each week’s readings and lectures have an important battle as their centerpiece, but for each one we will be examining a series of questions. Who fought? Why did they fight? How did they fight? What were the consequences for their societies? Readings will include both primary sources and works of scholarship.

READINGS

The readings marked on the syllabus with an asterisk are available for purchase in Labyrinth, and can also be found on reserve in Firestone Library. The readings marked (CP) can be found in the Course Packet on sale at the Pequod store on University Place. A copy of the Course Packet will also be placed on reserve.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

Week 1. February 4-6: “Agincourt.”

Lectures: Introduction to the Course
The Renaissance/Medieval Background.

Readings: John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, pp. 13-35, 78-116.*
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*.*

Week 2. February 11-13: “Poltava.”

Lectures: The “Military Revolution”
The Age of “Cabinet Wars”

Readings: Peter Englund, *The Battle That Shook Europe*, pp. 11-16, 81-210 (CP).
David Bell, *The First Total War*, pp. 21-51.*

Week 3. February 18-20: “Fort William Henry.”

Lectures: Global Expansion and Naval Power
Early Wars of Empire

Readings: Ian Steele, *Betrayals*, pp. 1-148.*

Week 4. February 25-27: “Waterloo.”

Lectures: The Revolutionary Wars
Napoleon Bonaparte

Readings: Bell, *First Total War*, pp. 186-301.*
Keegan, *Face of Battle*, pp. 117-206.*

Week 5. March 4-6: “Balaclava.”

Lectures: Clausewitz
The Industrial Revolution in War

Readings: Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 75-123, 577-610 (CP).
Leo Tolstoy, *Sebastopol Sketches: December*, pp. 1-12 (CP).

Week 6. March 11-13: “Antietam.”

Lectures: The American Civil War
*** MIDTERM ***

Readings: James McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam*, pp. 1-156 (entire).*

Week 7. March 25-27: “The Waterberg”

Lectures: Wars of Empire
Towards World War I

Readings: Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, pp. 1-90, 159-196.*

Week 8. April 1-3: “The Somme.”

Lectures: The First World War, I
The First World War, II

Readings: Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, pp. 207-89.*
Susan Grayzel (ed.), *The First World War*, pp. 54-129.*

Week 9. April 8-10: “Stalingrad.”

Lectures: Totalitarianism and War
WWII: The Eastern Front

Readings: Anthony Beevor, *Stalingrad*, pp. 1-265.*

Week 10. April 15-17: “Omaha Beach.”

Lectures: WWII: The Western Front
WWII: The Pacific Theater

Readings: Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day*, pp. 175-278.*
John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, pp. 3-146.*

Week 11. April 22-24: “Hiroshima.”

Lectures: Nuclear War
Cold War

Readings: J. Samuel Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction*, 1-110 (entire).*
*** PAPER DUE IN CLASS APRIL 24 ***

Week 12. April 29-May 1: “Algiers. New York”

Lectures: After Empire
The Future of War

Readings: Gillo Pontecorvo (dir.), “The Battle of Algiers.” Film, 120 minutes.
Film is available online, through link provided on Blackboard.
Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pp. 340-421 (3-37, 139-64 optional).*

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Readings available for purchase at Labyrinth:

Beevor, Anthony, *Stalingrad*.
Bell, David. *The First Total War*.
Dower, John, *War Without Mercy*.
Grayzel, Susan, *The First World War*.
Keegan, John, *The Face of Battle*.
McPherson, James, *Crossroads of Freedom*.
Ryan, Cornelius, *The Longest Day*.
Shakespeare, William, *Henry V*.
Steele, Ian, *Betrayals*.
Walker, Samuel, *Prompt and Utter Destruction*.
Wright, Lawrence, *The Looming Tower*.

Readings in the Course Packet:

Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War*, pp. 75-123, 577-610.

Englund, Peter, *The Battle That Shook Europe*, pp. 11-16, 81-210.

Tolstoy, Leo, *Sebastopol Sketches: December*, pp. 1-12.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and participation: Lectures are the primary way for you to receive necessary background for the materials you will be reading; precepts are the main venue in which you will discuss your readings. Attendance—and *informed participation*—are both, therefore, crucial to this course. Altogether, class participation will count for 20% of the final grade.

Examinations: There will be a midterm as well as a final exam. The midterm, which will take place in class on Thursday, March 13, will count for 25% of the final grade. The final exam, which will take place during the regular final exam period in May, will count for 35% of the final grade.

Written assignments: There is one paper required, of approximately 6-8 pp., on a topic chosen from a list that will be distributed after spring break. It will be due in class on Thursday, April 24, and will count for 20% of the final grade. If you wish to write on a different topic, please consult with your preceptor.

Grades: Please note that the percentages given above are *guidelines only*. The final course grade will be determined by the instructors based on their overall judgment of the student's performance.

Courtesy: Students are expected to arrive in the classroom in time for the start of class, and to remain seated until the end. Given the potential for distraction, both of yourselves and your classmates, please do not use laptops, tablets or phones during lecture or precept. Notes should be taken by hand. If you have a medical reason for needing to take notes electronically, please see the professor.

Extensions and Examination Dates: Extensions of the paper deadline, and rescheduling of examinations, will be granted only in cases of illness or family emergency, and students will be expected to provide a note from their residential college dean in these cases. Extensions and/or rescheduling will not be granted to accommodate extracurricular activities or vacation travel plans, so please make sure to plan your travel accordingly.

PRECEPTS

To be announced

PROFESSOR AND HEAD PRECEPTOR'S OFFICE HOURS AND E-MAIL

Professor David Bell:
Dickinson Hall 303
609-258-1174

Office Hours:
To be announced

E-Mail:
dabell@princeton.edu.

Head Preceptor: To be announced