

ENGL 258 – American War Literature
Fall 2016, Hendrix College

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Unserviceable (2009), Drew Cameron

The environment of war is the environment of life, magnified.

—Tim O'Brien

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1	Wed, 24 Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phil Klay, "After War, a Failure of the Imagination," <i>New York Times</i> (8 Feb. 2014) ➤ Michael Larson, "Stop Giving War-Veteran Novelists a Free Pass," <i>Salon</i> (11 Dec. 2012)
2	Fri, 27 Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kate McLoughlin, "War and Words" ➤ Sarah Cole, "People in War"
3	Mon, 29 Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Civil War stories and poems ➤ Reflection #1 due
4	Wed, 31 Aug	Crane, <i>A Red Badge of Courage</i> , chapters I-XI (3-72)
5	Fri, 2 Sep	Crane, <i>A Red Badge of Courage</i> , chapters XII-XXIV (73-142)
	Mon, 5 Sep	<i>Labor Day</i>
6	Wed, 7 Sep	Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> , Book I (3-78)
7	Fri, 9 Sep	Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> , Book II (81-159)
8	Mon, 12 Sep	Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> , Book III (163-233)
9	Wed, 14 Sep	Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> , Book IV-Book V (237-332)
	Thurs, 15 Sep	<i>The War Lover</i> screening 7-9pm Mills A
10	Fri, 16 Sep	<i>The War Lover</i> (film)
11	Mon, 19 Sep	Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chapters 1-3 (1-71)
12	Wed, 21 Sep	Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chapters 4-6 (72-153)
13	Fri, 23 Sep	Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chapters 7-10 (154-215)
14	Mon, 26 Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ writing day, optional conferences ➤ "Writing for Dr. V"
15	Wed, 28 Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Essay #1 draft due (bring full draft, <u>two</u> copies) ➤ peer in-class workshop
16	Fri, 30 Sep	conferences (Wed-Fri)
17	Mon, 3 Oct	Komunyakaa, <i>Dien Cai Dau</i> , "Camouflaging the Chimera" through "Roll Call"
18	Wed, 5 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Essay #1 due ➤ Komunyakaa, <i>Dien Cai Dau</i> "Fragging" through "Tu Do Street"
19	Fri, 7 Oct	Komunyakaa, <i>Dien Cai Dau</i> "Communiqué" through "Thanks"
	Mon, 10 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflection #2 due ➤ Komunyakaa, <i>Dien Cai Dau</i> "To Have Danced with Death" through "Facing It"
21	Wed, 12 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tim O'Brien, "How to Tell a True War Story" ➤ -----, "The Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong"
	Fri, 14 Oct	<i>Fall Break</i>

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22	Mon, 17 Oct	<i>The Quiet American</i> (film) screening TBA
23	Wed, 19 Oct	Van DeVanter, <i>Home Before Morning</i> , chapters 1-5 (11-74)
24	Fri, 21 Oct	Van DeVanter, <i>Home Before Morning</i> , chapters 6-12 (75-165)
25	Mon, 24 Oct	Van DeVanter, <i>Home Before Morning</i> , chapters 13-18 (166-242)
26	Wed, 26 Oct	Van DeVanter, <i>Home Before Morning</i> , chapter 19-Afterword (243-324)
27	Fri, 28 Oct	writing day, optional conferences
28	Mon, 31 Oct	➤ Essay #2 draft due <i>conferences Monday-Friday</i> ➤ peer workshops
29	Wed, 2 Nov	Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> , 1-73 (thru "By Virtue of")
30	Fri, 4 Nov	Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> , 74-156 (“Bully” thru “Dry-Humping”)
31	Mon, 7 Nov	Essay #2 due
32	Wed, 9 Nov	Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> , 157-225 (“Jamie Lee” thru “Billy and Mango”)
	Fri, 11 Nov 11:11 a.m.	<i>Optional</i> : Veterans' Day Reading @ Young-Wise Memorial Plaza
33	Fri, 11 Nov	Fountain, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> , 226 to end (“Raped” to end)
	Fri, 11 Nov	<i>Optional & Free</i> : Ang Lee, <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> (2016) Riverdale 10 Cinema, 2600 Cantrell Road, Little Rock, 7:00 p.m.
34	Mon, 14 Nov	Hamid, <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> , chapters 1-6 (1-92)
35	Wed, 16 Nov	Hamid, <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> , chapters 7-12 (93-184)
36	Fri, 18 Nov	Reflection #3 due. Be prepared to share.
37	Mon, 21 Nov	Film discussion: <i>Taxi to the Dark Side</i> screening TBA
	Wed, 23 Nov – Sun, 27 Nov	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
38	Mon, 28 Nov	Film discussion: <i>Standard Operating Procedure</i> screening TBA
39	Wed, 30 Nov	Film discussion: <i>The Hurt Locker</i>
40	Fri, 2 Dec	writing day, optional conferences
41	Mon, 5 Dec	➤ Essay #3 due ➤ short readings in class
	Tue, 6 Dec	Reading Day
	Fri, 9 Dec, 2:00 – 5:00	➤ Essay #1 or #2 Resubmission (optional) ➤ Reflection #4 due ➤ Course Evaluation

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Course Description

The purposes of this course are: (1) to explore America's complicated relationship with its military history through narrative expressions of that relationship; (2) to introduce you to the interpretation of literature at the college level; and (3) to practice and improve your abilities to write an academic essay.

Course material will cover the spectrum of literary and narrative expression by including prose fiction, prose nonfiction, poetry, and film. Most of the texts we will study were written over the past 100 years, though we will dip back into the nineteenth century. Because this course also aims to introduce you to the reading and interpretation of narrative in a more general way, we will discuss topics that do not directly engage depictions of war, topics such as narrative technique, literary inheritance, class, gender, and race.

In order to gain as much from this course as possible, you must actively engage the course content. So while some lectures by the professor will certainly occur, student interaction—with the stories, with classmates, with the instructor, with your own imaginations and critical eye—will constitute the primary course activity. For class, you may be asked to work with a small group to interpret a work; you may be to bring a prepared comment on the day's reading; you may be asked to do some in-class writing; etc. Outside class, you will engage the texts through quizzes, three analytical essays, and four short reflection pieces. As this course fulfills the college's W1 writing requirement and as I am committed to your success, we will spend a good deal of time working on your essays, including peer workshops, instructor conferences, and a resubmission opportunity.

Note that while this is a course in literary history, much of our discussion will be about what literature is about—namely, the human condition, across the full spectrum of its glory and ugliness: violence, sexuality, sexual violence, gender, racism, misogyny, politics, money and class, religious belief and disbelief, etc. We are all expected to treat these subjects with their due sensitivity.

Texts

- ☒ selected stories, poems, essays
- ☒ Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)
- ☒ Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)
- ☒ Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)
- ☒ Yusef Komunyakaa, *Dien Cai Dau* (1988)
- ☒ Linda VanDevanter, *Home Before Morning* (1983)
- ☒ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)
- ☒ Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (2012)
- ☒ films: *The War Lover* (1962), *The Quiet American* (2002); *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007); *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008); *The Hurt Locker* (2008)

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Requirements

- ☞ *Class Participation*: Class participation is mandatory. Attendance, tardiness, and **active** participation will be reflected in your class participation grade.
- ☞ *Quizzes*: The goals of random quizzing are (1) to reward you for doing the absolutely necessary work of the course; (2) to assess the engagement of students who do not participate as actively in class discussion; and (3) to foster class discussion by ensuring everyone has the raw material at their command. Quizzes will be random, unannounced, and short. They will cover basic facts only—not interpretation. Depending on how many quizzes are given, I will drop your lowest graded quiz or two from your final total quiz score (*this includes zeros for quizzes missed for absences, excused or otherwise*).
- ☞ *Reflection Essays #1-3*: These are short pieces, ungraded except for assessment of general effort (of ideas and prose quality). This is space for you to entertain ideas by exploring one idea more fully, by drawing connections between or among ideas and texts, and by considering these ideas beyond the texts. Follow the general format guidelines below, except use 1 ½ line-spacing for at least two full pages and no more than three.
- ☞ *Reflection Essay #4*: Submitted at the end of the semester, this essay will be graded as a formal piece of writing, a finished work shareable with the world. The general idea is the same as with the other reflection essays in that it allows you to step outside of strict interpretation to discuss more broadly the significance—even the personal significance—of our studies. An assignment description will be provided.
- ☞ *Analytical Essays*: Assignment descriptions will be distributed during class. You are not required to do any research for the essays, though you may if you like. You might also bring knowledge from other courses to bear. As the best way to become better writers and interpreters of literature is to do what professional writers do—revise and rework your papers—you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit one of the first two essays.
- ☞ *Extra credit*. One additional reflection essay (of the #1-3 variety) may be submitted. It must engage with some relevant outside “text”—a film, a performance, a reading, etc. The professor will determine how the extra credit will apply. Depending on the student’s circumstances, it might, for example, cancel a poor quiz grade or replace an unsatisfactory reflection essay (#1-3). It can be submitted any week you do not have another written assignment due.

Grades

Class Participation	10%	Reflection Essays #1-3	10%
Quizzes	10%	Reflection Essay #4	10%
Three Analytical Essays	15%, 20%, 25%		

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Other Policies

- ☒ Drinks are permitted. No food. No hats for religious or medical purposes. No tees without sides.
- ☒ *Electronic devices*: E-readers for course material are permitted, except for cell phones. You can bring e-readers and laptops/tablets to class. A few cautions: (1) Do not use e-readers for convenience at the expense of active reading. You are still expected to take notes, highlight passages, add comments, etc. (2) Laptops/tablets can be used in class *as e-readers*. Do not abuse this privilege. I want to see faces, not screen backs. You all owe yourselves time away from a screen. Plus nothing is better for active reading than underlining and annotating paper copies, and taking notes by hand.
- ☒ The syllabus is subject to revision as the course progresses.
- ☒ *Disabilities*: It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student who needs accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In order to receive accommodations, students with disabilities are directed to contact Julie Brown in Academic Support Services at 505-2954 or brownj@hendrix.edu.
- ☒ *Email*: Email will be used to contact the entire class for communicating changes to the syllabus and other matters. Check your Hendrix account daily.
- ☒ *Academic Integrity*: Intellectual dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the academic integrity statement and policy in the student handbook. Frequently, errors in documentation and attribution are not deliberate attempts to pass another's ideas and words off as one's own, but rather misunderstandings of how to give that other person sufficient credit. Please consult with me on any potential confusion so we can avoid problems.
- ☒ *Late essays*: Late essays are not accepted. If you have extenuating circumstances, you must consult me at least one week prior to the paper's due date (except in the case of actual emergencies, of course). Otherwise, you will lose half a grade for every day it is late. The clock begins ticking when class starts the day the essay is due.
- ☒ *Essay Format*: All submitted essays must follow the MLA style:
 - ☒ MLA format: 12 point font with serifs. 1" margins all around. No cover sheet. No folders. Attach pages with a staple (unstapled papers will not be accepted). Page numbers must appear in the upper right corner of each page except the first (use "Insert Page Number"; do not do this manually on every page!). All papers must have a title and a "Works Cited" section. Note that MS Word often has 1.5" left margin, and often inserts an extra space between paragraphs. You will have to change these.
 - ☒ Exceptions to MLA format: Single-space the name/course/date/professor information on the first page. 1.5-space for block/indented quotations. If you have room, add your entire "Works Cited" section at the bottom of your last page.
 - ☒ MLA documentation: MLA calls for parenthetical documentation, not footnotes or endnotes. Consult any recent English handbook, the *MLA Handbook* in the library, or an online guide. *Rule of thumb*: *Given the context of the surrounding passage and the bibliography listing, include the absolute minimum amount of information necessary within the parentheses.*