

Syllabus

Hist 388-B01: Approaches to European Military History

Summer 2010, B Session, George Mason University

INSTRUCTOR: Mark R. Stoneman, Ph.D.

CLASSES: Mon. and Wed., 7:20–10:00 p.m., Robinson B 124

OFFICE HOURS: Mon. and Wed., 6:15–7:00 p.m., Robinson B 373B

MASON USERNAME: mstonema

COURSE SITE: <http://hist388b01su10.pbworks.com/>

Description

This course examines manifold approaches to the military history of Europe. On one hand, it is a historiography course about military history's questions, methods, and assumptions. On the other hand, it is an overview of the varieties of history that focus on war and the military in their societal context. In part, we will consider military history's location within academic history more generally, as well as its relationship to military education and even the mainstream book market. In the main, though, we will focus on the varieties of academic military history and its many areas of research, including, for example, how battles were fought, how soldiers experienced those battles, how war and war planning looked in staffs and cabinets, the position of peacetime militaries in their societies, the effect of war on civilian societies and economies, the implications of gender studies for military history, and images of soldiering and war aimed at youth. We will also address some of military history's controversies, including the role of technology in effecting historical change.

This course is intended for anyone interested in history. It assumes no prior knowledge of military history, though a basic knowledge of European history would be helpful. The course will be based on readings and discussions, not lectures. It requires the active participation of each student. Part of the time we will read articles and books in common, and other times students will read individualized assignments and discuss their findings with the class. In this way we will leverage our numbers to learn more as a group than we could as individuals. We will concentrate on secondary sources, though we might occasionally look at primary source excerpts that shed light on the historiography.

Requirements

Course grades will be determined by the following five components according to the percentages that follow them:

- Class Participation (attendance, 2 book presentations, class discussions) 20%
- Book Review 1 (3–4 pages) 15%
- Book Review 2 (3–4 pages) 20%
- Book Review 3 (3–4 pages) 20%
- Annotated Bibliography (20 or more items) 25%

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you miss a class, you must email me the reason, and I will provide you with additional articles or chapters that you will need to read and summarize for me. This kind of makeup work can happen only for *one* class, and you must complete it within one week of the absence.

Any further absences will adversely impact your grade. The only exception would be a *documented* illness or medical emergency, in which case you must email me when it happens and provide attestation

in the next class. In turn, I will provide makeup work for each documented absence and a deadline by which it must be completed.

There will be a ten-minute break about halfway through each class. I will make a note of anyone who does not return to class afterwards. Mandatory attendance means for the whole class, not just the first part. Leaving early will adversely impact your grade. So will coming late to class.

Grading

All requirements earn a letter grade of between an A and an F. When I record these grades in my records, however, I convert them to numbers thus: A = 95% (occasionally higher for particularly excellent work), A- = 92.5%, A-/B+ = 90%, B+ = 87.5%, B = 85%, B- = 82.5%, B-/C+ = 80%, C+ = 77.5%, C = 75%, C- = 72.5%, C-/D+ = 70%, D = 65%, F = 55%, and not submitting an assignment = 0%.

I calculate course grades according to the weighting in the “Requirements” section above. The cutoff for an A in the course is a 93% average, for an A- a 90% average, for a B+ an 87.5% average, for a B an 83% average, for a B- an 80% average, for a C+ a 77.5% average, for a C a 73% average, for a C- a 70% average, and for a D a 60% average.

Late Work

Late work submitted during the semester will be marked down by as much as five percentage points per day. No late work will be accepted after July 28th.

Honor System

Academic honesty is essential not only to the success of the course, but also to your academic and professional careers. Hence, you are expected to know what plagiarism is and abide by the GMU Honor System and Code at <http://www2.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>. Unfortunately, I regularly catch and report violations of this code in student papers. If you are at all unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please talk to me.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring an academic accommodation should see me immediately and also contact the Office of Disability Services at <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or (703) 993-2474.

Communication and Course Updates

Course updates, articles, and directions for assignments will be posted to the course wiki at <http://hist388b01su10.pbworks.com/>. You are expected to visit it regularly.

The first time you visit the wiki, you will need to set your password. Once you are in, please first click the “My PBworks” tab to set your email preferences. I do not recommend getting updates more than once an hour, because otherwise you will get email for minor updates too. Indeed, one or two email updates per day should be plenty. Or you can choose to get no email updates and instead simply check the site several times per week.

You also need to check your Mason email account regularly, because I will use that to communicate with students individually.

To contact me, please email me from your Mason account. If your question concerns something on the wiki, you may also use the wiki’s comments feature, if you prefer, but please limit comments to questions that might be relevant to other students too. Otherwise use email.

Assigned Readings

There are two books that all students in the class are required to have. We will be discussing these in the first part of the course, so get your hands on these titles right away.

- Michael Howard, *War in European History*, updated edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) [ISBN 978-0-19-954619-0]
- Stephen Morillo with Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006) [ISBN 978-0-7456-3391-6]

Each student will also present two books on topics and reading assignments to be determined after the course begins. This process is described in the schedule below; see the notes for June 16–28 and July 7.

There will also be a number of articles that we read in common. There will be a group of related articles on June 23, and there will be single articles, as needed, for the “Selected Topics” in the last eight classes. I will announce articles for the “Selected Topics” after the individual book assignments have been made.

We might also look at some primary sources on an ad hoc basis, but these will not require any prior preparation. Instead, we will read and discuss them together in class.

Schedule

6/7	M	INTRODUCTION
6/9	W	OVERVIEW OF WAR AND SOCIETY IN EUROPE (1) – Reading: Howard, pp. ix–xii, 1–53.
6/11	F	<i>Last day to drop class <u>without</u> tuition penalty.</i> <i>Also the last day to add. Students who add after the course begins must consult classmates on material they missed. Students who add after 6/9 must also submit a summary of assigned reading for that day. This summary is due via email before the next class, and it may <u>not</u> be recycled for the first book review.</i>
6/14	M	OVERVIEW OF WAR AND SOCIETY IN EUROPE (2) – Reading: Howard, pp. 54–116. – Besides discussing the reading, we will talk about research strategies and resources.
6/16	W	MILITARY HISTORIOGRAPHY (1) – Reading: Morillo, pp. 1–43. – Besides discussing the reading, we will begin mapping out the eight “Selected Topics” for our last eight class sessions.
6/18	F	<i>Last day to drop class, albeit <u>with</u> tuition penalty</i>
6/21	M	MILITARY HISTORIOGRAPHY (2) – Reading: Morillo, pp. 44–116. – Besides discussing the reading, we will finish mapping out the eight “Selected Topics” and divide them amongst the class, each student taking two. – Review of Howard or Morillo due via email, after class but before morning.
6/23	W	MILITARY HISTORIOGRAPHY (3) – Reading: “Total War” articles on course wiki. (Read all articles in the folder for this day.) – Identify three viable books for your first topic before you come to class, so that we can finalize the first set of individual reading assignments for all students in the class. You will only have to read one of these books, but we need some choices, in case there are problems with quality, overlap, or availability.
6/28	M	SELECTED TOPICS (1) – Students assigned for this day will present their books, and we will discuss them. Length of presentations will be announced after the size of the class is known.

- Students who present their books today must submit book review via email within two days.
 - In addition to having book presentations and discussions based on those, we might discuss one article that everyone reads. I will decide on any articles for the “Selected Topics” days after we have determined individual book assignments.
- 6/30 W SELECTED TOPICS (2)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
 - Bibliography topics due via email *before* class. Look for my response during same week, in case a change is necessary.
- 7/5 M *No Class: Federal Holiday*
- 7/7 W SELECTED TOPICS (3)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
 - In addition, we will determine the second reading assignment for each student, following the procedure used on 6/23. That means, bring in three viable choices for your second topic.
- 7/12 M SELECTED TOPICS (4)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
- 7/14 W SELECTED TOPICS (5)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
- 7/19 M SELECTED TOPICS (6)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
- 7/21 W SELECTED TOPICS (7)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
- 7/26 M SELECTED TOPICS (8)
- Same procedure as on 6/28.
- 7/28 W *No Final Exam or Class Meeting*
- Your bibliography project is due tonight, before midnight, via email.