

HIST 70603
Seminar in U.S. History:
The United States in the World Wars
Kara Dixon Vuic

Spring 2017
Reed Hall 135
Tuesdays, 1:00-3:40 PM

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Office Hours: MW 1-2 and by appointment

Course Description

Wars dominated American history in the twentieth century. The century began and ended with the U.S. military involved in wars on other continents. Men faced the possibility of required military service for much of the century, while military service shaped notions of citizenship for all Americans, whether they served or not. A wartime economy—even in times of peace—framed American businesses, labor, and politics. Military service played a crucial role in civil rights movements for African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and other marginalized groups. This seminar will consider the broad influence of wars and the military on U.S. society, politics, culture, and the military through a focused look at American involvement in World War I and World War II. The readings reflect recent trends in the history of the wars, especially trends that connect military history to social, gender, and cultural history.

Assignments and Grading

- ◆ **Participation** (35%) Informed, constructive participation in discussion is vital to the work of historians, and it is central to your performance in this course. I expect that everyone come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion about the week's readings, to draw connections between readings in the course and others in your field, and to consider the ways the course readings shape a broader historiography of the United States' involvement in the two world wars.
- ◆ **Leading Class Discussion** (10%) Everyone will help to lead class discussion for one book (not *War Time*). Your task for this assignment is three-fold: provide context and background, outline relevant historiography, and frame discussion. 1) At the beginning of class, the discussion leader will introduce the week's reading by providing useful background information on the author, her/his credentials and scholarly work, and professional reactions to the book. 2) Discussion leaders will also provide a brief synopsis of the historiographical debate into which the work fits. Bring to class for distribution a briefly annotated bibliography of approximately ten related works. You need not have read every word of every book you reference in this bibliography, but you do need to explain clearly the trends in historical writing about the subject. 3) Discussion leaders will then frame the class discussion by posing prepared discussion questions (which should be typed and submitted to me, along with your thoughts). Be sure to keep your questions open-ended so that we can collectively consider important elements of the work's thesis and evidence, its contributions to the historical literature, and its relationship to other works in the course.
- ◆ **Book Reviews** (10% each) Everyone will select two books to review (one before Spring Break, one after, and not the book for which you lead discussion). Reviews should follow the format of those in the *Journal of American History* or the *American Historical Review* and should address the following questions: What questions does the book address? What is

the author's argument, and how does s/he use evidence to establish that argument? How effectively does the author make her/his case? What are the book's strengths and weaknesses? Reviews are due in class on the day the book is discussed and should be 750 words.

- ◆ **Historiographical Essay (35%)** Everyone will select a topic related to the readings for the course and write a 5000-word essay that describes and analyzes its historiography. Your essay should describe the origins of the field of inquiry you choose, describe the major debates that have shaped its historical literature, analyze scholars' approaches to the field, and evaluate the reasons for major changes in historians' approaches to the field. Your essay should analyze at least six works (no more than one from this class), but it should do more than merely review each book you choose. Instead, your essay should compare and contrast the works you describe, evaluate how the authors approach the subject, consider the various ways the authors use evidence to establish their argument, and analyze the ways these works contribute to the broader historiography of your subject. You may choose any subject you wish, though you should meet with me early in the term to discuss your topic and the works you select. Essays are due the last week of class.

Course Schedule and Readings

- Jan. 17 Introduction
- Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011)
- Jan. 24 Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016)
- Michelle Moyd, "Creating a Sideshow: Local Experiences of the First World War in Africa," *First World War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2016): 111-30.
- Jan. 31 Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)
- Feb. 7 Adrian Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009)
- Richard S. Fogarty, "Gender and Race," in Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor, eds., *Gender and the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2017)
- Feb. 14 Andrew Huebner, "Love and Death in the Great War" manuscript
- Tammy M. Proctor, "Gender and Age," in Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor, eds., *Gender and the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2017)

- Feb. 21 Stephen R. Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill: How Veteran Politics Shaped the New Deal Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2009)
- Susan R. Grayzel, "The Baby in the Gas Mask," in *Gender and the Great War*, ed. Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger, and Birgitta Bader Zaar (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 127-43
- Feb. 28 Beth Linker, *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)
- Allison S. Fell and Susan R. Grayzel, "Women's Movements, War and the Body," in *Women Activists between War and Peace: Europe, 1918-1923*, eds. Ingrid Sharp and Matthew Stibbe (Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2017)
- March 3-4 "Was it a Great War? The Political and Social Consequences of World War I" LCpl Benjamin W. Schmidt Symposium on War, Conflict, and Society
- Friday, March 3, 5 PM dinner followed by reception and keynote
Saturday, March 4, 8:15 AM breakfast followed by two sessions and lunch
- Mar. 7** Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)
- Mar. 21 Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015)
- Mar. 28 James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Apr. 4 John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)
- Apr. 11 Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013)
- Apr. 18 Matthew L. Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)
- Apr. 25 John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010)
- May 2 Mary L. Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)