OVERVIEW:
The U.S.A is a colossal military power. Arguably, the U.S.A. has always been a warlike nation since it won its independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain in a bloody, 10-year guerilla war, then conquered the North American continent from its indigenous peoples, waging war on Mexico and Spain in the 19th century. The U.S.A. had conquered whole parts of the globe by the end of the Second World War. As the leading superpower on Earth today, it is conducting major warfare inside the boundaries of four nations: Afghanistan, Pakistan (covertly); Iraq; and Syria. It is engaged in nuclear confrontation with North Korea and it is engaged in a naval confrontation with China in the South China Sea. It is engaged in remote drone air warfare in Pakistan, and in cyber-warfare against a host of nations, led by the Russian Federation. The US war in Afghanistan is now, at 17 years duration, America’s “Longest War.”
FOCUS AND MAJOR THEMES

Vital questions for our own day will be addressed throughout the course:

- When is it just to wage war?
- What is “total war” and does it involve civilians?
- How are Americans held accountable for war crimes, and which Americans should be held accountable?
- Who is the enemy? Is it ever just to kill noncombatant civilians?
- What are “just and unjust wars”?
- What is justice and injustice in either just or unjust wars?
- Is human emancipation the goal of war?
- What are the race, ethnic, class, and gender dimensions of warfare?
- Media and war (representations from propaganda to criticism, the free press in wartime, public “morale” and support for wars).
- What are human rights?
- How can remote-controlled weaponry, Artificial Intelligence/robotic weapon technologies conform to the “rules of war,” and how can they be controlled?
- What are the threats to democracy in war?

These are broad and enduring questions that have been dogging humanity for centuries of the modern era, and some are most ancient. Students will be expected to engage them critically, through multiple perspectives, and multiple genres of evidence and background interpretations. And, because the United States has fought so many wars, it is impossible to cover them all with sufficient respect for their complexity.

This course focuses entirely on four major US wars, in four units of the class:

**Unit 1: The Civil War (1861-1865)**
**Unit 2: The Second World War (1939-1945)**
**Unit 3: The Vietnam War (1961-1974)**
**Unit 4: The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan; and against “Terror,” and “Terrorist Organizations,” from 2001 to the present.**
In this course students will be asked to focus on the “experience” of these “total wars” from the perspectives of: **Civilians; Commanders; Soldiers; The Media**

In accordance with the USC Course Catalog description, this course will include a “comparative historical analysis of the American experience of war: war decision-making processes; evolution of strategy and tactics; the political, economic, and social effects of war.” But we will approach these vast topics through the lens of the four major perspectives of **citizens, commanders, soldiers, and the media.** In total wars, civilians are considered an essential part of the war effort: as workers in munitions factories that produce weaponry on industrial scales, and as targets of that weaponry. Citizen “morale” is also considered essential in total war, so the mass propaganda campaigns of each belligerent nation is integral to modern warfare. The heavy involvement of citizens is even more complicated by the democratic structure of the United States and other nations in the modern era: how do citizens become soldiers and commanders? When citizens of the adversary are targeted, who is held accountable? The “free press” is another major factor in the context of America’s “total war.” When is press reporting on a war critical and when is it censored for propaganda purposes? How can we tell the difference?

The materials for this course follow the focus of citizens, commanders, soldiers, and mass media: We shall study four major “genres” of evidence: 1) Print journalism or “war reporting”; 3) Memoirs and novels by soldiers, commanders, and civilians; 3) Films and television in both fiction and nonfiction; 4) Historical narratives and interpretations by historians and other scholars, to help us to understand the background and contexts of each war.

**Humanistic Inquiry (GE-B): Description & Learning Objectives**

We all are self-reflective and in war, perhaps more so than any other realm of human experience, we must reflect on what it means to be human and how we relate to one another. Studying such conflicts reveals how we understand ourselves and the world around us and it lays bare how our society envisions its present, past, and future. War involves some of the oldest questions in human culture: What are “human rights?” What is a “right to life?” Is killing ever justified? Who deserves to die in war and who does not? What is “terror?” What does “dehumanization” mean, and how have people in war justified denying others their humanity and their right to life.

Courses in humanistic inquiry encourage close engagement with works of the imagination— in words, sights, and sounds—understanding what it means to live another life and to see over the horizon. We will cultivate a critical appreciation for the sources of understanding about the American experience of war, in very different genres: Journalism, memoirs, fiction and documentary films, historical interpretations. For every source, we will learn to identify the conditions context of its production and meaning. This array of sources will allow us to see these wars from multiple viewpoints. The required materials for this course are chosen to represent a broad range of perspectives, ideologically, socially, culturally. We shall emphasize the importance of evaluating ideas from multiple perspectives, reading critically, and writing persuasively though balanced, analytical use of evidence and grounded interpretations of “meaning.” They will also help us explore language as a medium of artistic expression and communication – war films are more than stories, they can be forms of propaganda and they can reveal society’s views on war. Humanistic inquiry courses seek to understand traditions that
create different cultures—their concepts, values, and events in history—and see them in relation to one another. This course approaches this by looking at how cultures define themselves by “othering” those they encounter. We will look at this especially through the role of race. We will explore how race created divides in the Civil War and how Americans deployed it during the Second World War to erase the humanity of the Japanese. This course emphasizes forms of representation, from memoirs to films, and methods of interpretation, adopting broad perspectives that are chronological, disciplinary, and cross disciplinary. Students will immerse themselves in arts and letters to think about how war defines their own place in history and in contemporary society, and inquire into our shared futures.

Learning Objectives

USC’s Humanistic Inquiry program will introduce you to a broad range of courses and ways of thinking that will take you beyond the specialization of your major and significantly extend your ability to understand the human world and your place in it. The program will help you achieve six principal learning objectives.

In Humanistic Inquiry courses you will:

Courses in the GE Humanistic Inquiry category prepare students to:
1) Reflect on what it means to be human through close study of human experience throughout time and across diverse cultures. This course stretches from 1860 to today and while it focuses on America, its premise is how Americans relate to the diversity within their own nation as well as between to the United States and other nations and cultures through war.
2) Cultivate a critical appreciation for various forms of human expression, including literature, language, philosophy, and the arts, as well as develop an understanding of the contexts from which these forms emerge. The course looks at journalism, memoirs, and film to understand how Americans thought about and processed war.
3) Engage with lasting ideas and values, like war, peace, violence, and justice, that have animated humanity throughout the centuries for a more purposeful, more ethical, and intellectually richer life.
4) Learn to read and interpret actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write and speak persuasively through written assignments and discussion.
5) Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions on complex issues like war and justice, which are of critical importance in today's global world
6) Learn to collaborate effectively through traditional and new ways of disseminating knowledge.

Having successfully met the learning objectives, you will have acquired both practical skills and more intangible competencies. You will master strategies for finding, reading and understanding relevant information from different genres, for analyzing complex problems, for making and evaluating compelling arguments, and for preparing effective presentations. You will become a clearer thinker and a stronger writer. You will know how to situate current events and ideas in the right historical and cultural context to be able to make better decisions. You will gain new insights and be inspired. You will be ready for a life of learning and creativity.
COURSE FORMAT:

Lectures:
Prof. Ethington will deliver lectures every Monday and Weds. Attendance is required, because the explanatory and contextual material presented will be indispensable for making sense of the assigned course materials.

Discussion Sections:
The discussion sections of this course are an important component of the course, counting for 30% of your grade. In these sections, you will be in groups small enough to engage in collaborative learning about the course materials and the lectures.

Course Assessments:
Written Assignments (total 22 pages), Mid-Term, and Participation:
The writing assignments for this course are designed to focus your energies on learning how to develop short but effective critical interpretations of issues by comparing and contrasting sources, genres, and perspectives. The written assignments are also designed to keep us focused each week on the material and questions being addressed. To accomplish these goals, there are only two kinds of written assignments: weekly 150-word critiques, One in-class (Blue Book) Mid-Term, and one Final Paper (12 pp.)

Weekly 150-word Critiques (10 pp total), 40% of course grade:
Due at the beginning of Section every week, these one-page (150 word) weekly assignments serve to prepare every student for the discussion in that section. For each week, students are asked to 1) Pick a theme from the lectures or readings, 2) compare and contrast three perspectives, from three different genres of evidence assigned from that week: a) film; b) memoir/eyewitness; and c) historiography; and 4) write informal reflections on how the three genres and/or perspective clash or align, and what you learned about that issue through these materials. These will be graded and returned weekly, so your performance can easily be tracked throughout the course. These will be graded on the basis of a “good faith effort” rather than on exacting standards of evidence and proof. These are intended to be thoughtful reflections. Due Midnight, Thursdays: submit via Blackboard.

Mid-Term (15% of course grade)
We will conduct a Mid-Term assessment, in the form of an in-class Blue Book exam, consisting of one short essay and several short answer questions.

Final Paper (12 pp). (35% of grade)
Chose a theme from our major themes on the “American experience of war:” Compare the current Afghan/Iraq/Syria Middle-East/Terror warfare with previous three wars studied in this class. Use evidence from all four wars, Conclude on similarities and differences. Due on the day assigned for final exam for this class, at 5 pm. Submit via Blackboard.


**Participation (in Discussion sections) 10% of course grade.**
Discussion sections require participatory, collaborative learning. This will be assessed by the level of your participation. Full attendance is necessary to participate, but participation is more than just attendance. We expect you to be able to discuss the week’s assignments, having adequately prepared by completing your weekly 150-word critique.

**Required Screenings and Readings:**

This course uses film, both fiction and non-fiction, as a major required source material. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCREENING ALL ASSIGNED FILMS ON YOUR OWN TIME. THESE ARE NOT SCREENED DURING CLASS.** Treat every assigned film as though it were an assigned reading. There will be copies of most non-public domain films on reserve in Leavey Library, but all films are also available via numerous streaming services, from Amazon and Netflix to Hulu and other platforms. Getting access to some of these films may incur minor costs, less than $5 per film. A guide to gaining access to all of the films will be distributed at the beginning of class.

**Required Film Screenings (These are not screened during class: Students must allocate time to screen these films outside of class period):**

6) *Casablanca* (Dir Michael Curtiz, Warner Bros, 1942). Release Dates: November 26, 1942 (Hollywood Theatre); January 23, 1943 (United States)
8) *Why We Fight, Prelude to War* (Dir. Frank Capra, 20th Century Fox, War Activities Committee of the Motion Pictures Industry). 53 mins.
10) *Letters from Iwo Jima* (Dir Clint Eastwood, 2006). 141 mins.
13) *Apocalypse Now* (Dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1979) 147 mins.
14) *Hearts and Minds* (Dir Peter Davis, 1974). 112 mins.
15) *Platoon* (Dir Oliver Stone, 1986). 120 mins.
18) *Taxi to the Dark Side* (Dir. Alex Gibney, 2007) 106 mins.
Required Reading: Books, Chapters, and Articles:

Books in Bold are available for purchase at the Bookstore, or by any means you wish to acquire the books. It is strongly recommended that you own, rent, or possess in some way, each of these books. The Instructor will make a maximum effort to have each book set up on Leavey Reserves. Be aware however, that there may only be one copy on Reserve so availability may be very unpredictable.

Reading Assignments by Unit:

Unit 1: The American Civil War, 1861-1865


Chapter 3, “A Just War?” Pp. 32-45
Chapter 4, “Death and Destruction in the Civil War,” pp. 46-64.

Unit 2: The Second World War: 1939-1945


Unit 3: The Vietnam War: 1962-1974


Unit 4: The U.S. Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, 2001-Present


Selections from Al-Jazeera,

“Heavy fighting in Ghazni as Afghan forces battle Taliban
Residents and local officials say Taliban fighters captured much of the key city, but the army claims to be in control.” 12 August 2018

“US general takes over command of forces in Afghanistan
The handover comes after a time in the 17-year war that saw little progress by Afghan or US forces against the Taliban.” 2 Sept 2018

Selections from The New Yorker

  https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-have-we-been-doing-in-afghanistan

• Steve Coll, “The Unblinking Stare: The drone war in Pakistan.”
  https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/11/24/unblinking-stare

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE: UNITS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Readings/Screenings</th>
<th>Written Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>SURVEY OF AMERICA AT WAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>7 Jan</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>10 Jan</td>
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<td>Introductions.</td>
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<td><strong>UNIT 1: CIVIL WAR 1861-1865</strong></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>14 Jan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>17 Jan</td>
<td>Weekly 200-word Critique.</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>21 Jan</td>
<td>NO CLASS --- MLK DAY</td>
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<td>Weds</td>
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<td>Read:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>CIVIL WAR</td>
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| Mon 28 Jan | **Read:** Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, selected chapters, first half, approx. 100 pp. total.  
**Screen:** *The Civil War (Dir Ken Burns, 1990). Episode 2: A Very Bloody Affair (1862)*. 129 mins. |

| Friday | Weekly 200-word Critique. |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>CIVIL WAR</th>
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| Mon 4 Feb | **Read:** Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, selected chapters, second half approx. 100 pp.total.  
**Screen:** *Lincoln* (Dir. Steven Spielberg, 2012). 150 mins. |

<p>| Friday | Weekly 200-word Critique. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Friday</th>
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<th>Weekly 200-word Critique.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>UNIT 2: WORLD WAR II</strong></td>
<td><em>(1939-1945)</em></td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>WORLD WAR II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weds</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
<td>John W. Dower, <em>War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War</em>, Chaps 1-3 (75 pp total)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Screen:</strong></td>
<td><em>Letters from Iwo Jima</em>  (Dir Clint Eastwood, 2006). 141 mins.</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Weekly 200-word Critique.</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>WORLD WAR II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>18 Feb</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
<td>John W. Dower, <em>War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War</em>, Chaps 4-7 (103 pp total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weds</td>
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<td><strong>Screen:</strong></td>
<td><em>Target Tokyo</em> (Dir William Keighley, Narrated by Ronald Reagan, U.S. Government, First Motion Picture Unit, 1944). 22 Mins.</td>
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<td><em>Why We Fight, Prelude to War</em> (Dir. Frank Capra, 20th Century Fox, War Activities Committee of the Motion Pictures Industry). 53 mins.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
<td><strong>WORLD WAR II</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mon</strong></td>
<td>25 Feb</td>
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| **Weds** |   | **Read:**  
**Screen:**  
*Flags of Our Fathers*  
(Dir Clint Eastwood, 2006) 135 mins. |
| **Friday** |   |   |
| **Week 9** | **WORLD WAR II** |   |
| **Mon** | 4 Mar |   |
| **Weds** |   | **Read:**  
URL TBA.  
Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo (1944)  
Martha Gellhorn, *The Battle of the Bulge:*  
Carl Mydans, “My God! It’s Carl Mydans”:  
John P. Marquand, *Iwo Jima Before H-Hour:*  
Bombardment of Iwo Jima: February 1945, pp. 619-633  
Robert Sherrod: The First Three Days. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Weekly 200-word Critique</th>
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**SPRING BREAK**

Mon 11 Mar

Weds

Friday

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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>VIETNAM</th>
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<td>Mon 18 Mar</td>
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**Read:**
Tim O’Brien, The Things They Carried, first half. (approx. 110 pp total)

**Screen:**
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<th>Week 11</th>
<th>VIETNAM</th>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>25 Mar</td>
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<td>Weds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Tim O’Brien, <em>The Things They Carried</em>, second half. (approx. 110 pp total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen:</td>
<td><em>Hearts and Minds</em> (Dir Peter Davis, 1974). 112 mins.</td>
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<th>Week 12</th>
<th>VIETNAM</th>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>1 Apr</td>
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<td>Weds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen:</td>
<td><em>Platoon</em> (Dir Oliver Stone, 1986). 120 mins.</td>
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**Unit 4: The U.S. Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, and “Terror,” 2001-Present**

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<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, “Terror,” 2001-Present</th>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>25 Mar</td>
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<td>Weds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, Eds. <em>Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and</em></td>
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</table>
|     | Screen:  
|     | *The War Tapes* (Dir. Deborah Scranton, 2006) 137 mins.           |

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<th>Friday</th>
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<th>Weekly 200-word Critique.</th>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, “Terror,” 2001-Present</td>
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| Mon    | 15 Apr | Read: Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman, Eds.  
|        |     | Screen:  

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<th>Friday</th>
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<th>Weekly 200-word Critique.</th>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, “Terror,” 2001-Present</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Mon    | 22 Apr | Read: Selected Articles and newscasts from Al-Jazeera America(in English); The New Yorker; Fox News, TBA (approx. 80 pages total)  
| Weds   |     | Screen:  
|        |     | *Taxi to the Dark Side* (Dir. Alex Gibney, 2007) 106 mins.         |

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<th>Friday</th>
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<th>Weekly 200-word Critique.</th>
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Final Paper: 12 pp. Chose a theme from our major themes on the “American experience of war:” Compare the current Afghan/Iraq/Syria Middle-East/Terror warfare with previous three wars studied in this class. Use evidence from all four wars, Conclude on similarities and differences.

Student Integrity and Plagiarism

The Instructor of this course is committed to maintaining a zero-tolerance enforcement of the USC standards of academic integrity. All detected instances of plagiarism, cheating, or falsification shall be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs. Penalties can result in the assignment of a “F” and a permanent record in your transcript of having been found guilty (if so) of academic dishonesty. PLEASE DO NOT RISK THIS SEVERE PENALTY. STUDY THE STANDARDS BELOW VERY CAREFULLY, BECAUSE THE INSTRUCTOR AND THE TAS WILL HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE.

From [https://dornsife.usc.edu/usc-policies/#plagiarism](https://dornsife.usc.edu/usc-policies/#plagiarism)

“The USC reference guide, Trojan Integrity, provides a comprehensive explanation of how to identify and confront academic dishonesty among students. The guide also outlines the necessary steps for formally reporting plagiarism or cheating by a student, if his or her behavior merits such action.

Within the USC academic community, the more egregious acts of academic dishonesty – purchasing papers, cheating on exams, copying lab reports – are generally rare, yet it is the responsibility of the instructor to be alert to such possibilities and to create a learning environment in which such acts are openly discouraged and, if identified, appropriately punished. More likely, however, an instructor will encounter more subtle acts of academic dishonesty, many of which are conducted unwittingly by students who have yet to gain the necessary tools of effective research or proper time management.

It is the role of all instructors, therefore, to educate students on what constitutes cheating and plagiarism, to set a clear policy for how academic dishonesty will be handled, and to teach the value of maintaining academic integrity in one’s work. Examples of academic dishonesty, as
outlined in SCampus, include the following:

**Plagiarism:**
- Submission of someone else’s work as one’s own, whether the material is paraphrased or copied verbatim.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers.
- Unauthorized collaboration:
  - Submission of material that has been edited or revised by another person that results in substantive changes in content or style.
  - Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework, or other assignment.

**Cheating:**
- Any use of external assistance in the completion of an academic assignment and/or during an examination (unless permitted by the instructor), including communicating with fellow students during an exam, allowing another student to copy from an exam, possession or use of unauthorized notes, calculator, or other materials, and any instruments that can convey exam answers, such as cell phones.
- Submission of altered work after grading, including changing answers after an exam or assignment has been graded and returned.
- Obtaining for oneself or for another person a solution to homework or other assignments, or a copy of an exam or exam key without the expressed consent of the instructor.
- Using an essay, term paper, or project in more than one course without permission of the instructors of both courses.
- Taking a course or completing any coursework for another student, or allowing another individual to take a course, or complete coursework in one’s stead.

**Falsification:**
- Submitting material for lab assignments, class projects, or other assignments that is wholly or partially falsified, or otherwise does not represent work undertaken by the student.”
SUPPORT SYSTEMS :  WHOM TO CONTACT

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu
USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu