

Justice & International Affairs—War at Home & Abroad

Phil 3760, Fall 2018

T-TH, 10:45am – 12:05pm, Location TBA

Instructor Erin Beeghly, erin.beeghly@utah.edu

Course description: This course examines war and its effects—at home and abroad—from a philosophical perspective. It is organized around historical snapshots of war—which range in time from Ancient Greece to the early 21st century Middle East. These snapshots, on one hand, focus on the “theaters” of war. But they inevitably draw us back to the larger effects of war for people outside war zones: civilians at home who may or may not support these conflicts, family and friends of soldiers, veterans returning from war, and people displaced by war, i.e., refugees. As a class, we investigate the philosophical questions surrounding the conflicts described in these snapshots. For example, is there such a thing as a just war? What makes a war unjust, when and if it is? What are the ethical costs associated with war? When—and why—are civilians or soldiers morally obligated to resist? What, if anything, do we owe to refugees—and to soldiers returning home? Students will examine these questions with an eye towards questions of gender, social class, race, and ethnicity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Theoretical goals:

Students will understand:

- Historically significant theories of just and unjust war.
- Historically significant theories of civil disobedience and its justification (or lack thereof) in particular cases.
- Legacies of violence & trauma in the lives of soldiers, veterans, and refugees.
- Ways in which sexism and racism have shown up in the military
- Ethical dilemmas faced by soldiers in warzones

Practical goals:

Students will improve their ability...

- to read and interpret philosophical & literary texts.
- to recognize and evaluate arguments
- to communicate ideas clearly in speech and writing
- to engage respectfully with conflicting points of view

GRADES & ASSIGNMENTS

Evaluation in this course is based on:

1. Participation & Attendance
2. Weekly journal entries/key word entries
3. Group presentation
4. Two exams

COURSE MATERIALS & TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Required to Buy:

1. **Turning point clicker.** (You can use your phone as your clicker if you download an app; physical clickers are also available at the book store. Even if you use your phone, you must purchase a license.)
2. **Three books:**
 - [Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, ISBN: 978-0199753635](#) Note: please buy the Burian & Shapiro translation. There are many different translations available but you need this one (see link for correct edition) for class. **YOU WILL NEED THIS TEXT IMMEDIATELY. BUY BEFORE CLASS STARTS**
 - [Brian Turner, *Here, Bullet*](#).
 - [Paisley Rekdal, *Broken Country: On Trauma, Crime, & The Continuing Legacy of Vietnam*](#).

All other required materials will be available on Canvas.

Note to students: the full syllabus with deadlines & dates, etc. will be posted by mid-August. There might be slight changes in the reading but this is basically it. Be forewarned that we will be discussing highly-charged topics including suicide, sexual violence, killing, torture, racism, sexism, and other topics.

Part 1: Historical Reflections on War & Its Ethical & Political Significance

Readings:

Sophocles, *Agax*
Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
Plato, *Euthyphro*
Plato, *Crito*
Plato, *The Republic*, Excerpt
Origen, *Contra Celsium*, Excerpt
St. Augustine, *City of God* & Excerpts from Letters
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Excerpt

Part 2: Contemporary Reflections on War & Its Ethical & Political Significance

Course materials/readings:

Michael Hunt (ed), *The Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History From American and Vietnamese Perspectives*, Excerpts
Paisley Rekdal, *The Broken Country: On Trauma, A Crime, and the Continuing Legacy of Vietnam*
Brian Turner, *Here, Bullet*
James E. Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War*, Excerpt
Michael Walzer, *Just & Unjust Wars*, Excerpts
Hugo Bedau, "On Civil Disobedience"
Kimberley Brownlee, "Civil Disobedience"
Phil Klay, "What We're Fighting For"
Jen Percy, "We Kill Ourselves Because We are Haunted"
Heidi Squire Kraft, *The Docs: A Graphic Novel*, Excerpt
Hiubin Amee Chew, "Why the War is Sexist and Why We Can't Afford to Ignore Gender Anymore"
Louise Pederson, "Objections to Women in Combat Positions"
Barry Lam, "Be a Man" (Podcast)
Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag"