

MIT 3440F WAR FOR WAR

MEDIATION, MILITARIZATION AND CONFLICT

Course information: MIT 3440F, 2019 Fall term
Dr. Tim Blackmore, tblackmo@uwo.ca
Tue: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Thurs. 10:30-11:30, AHB 1B02
Office hours: Tue. 11:30-1:30 p.m., Thurs. 11:30-1:30 p.m.,
FNB 4019

During and after a war there exists a struggle to make meaning of what the war is about: a war for the war. Sifting through and determining the trustworthiness of information during wartime can be one of the most difficult tasks a citizen may face, particularly when the causes for and means of pursuing the war are ambiguous.



ART BY BANKSY

This course seeks to deepen students' ability to analyze a wide variety of both formal and informal, official and resistant texts dealing with issues of gender, class and race as they appear across a range of media including, but not limited to: nonfiction and fiction prose; blogs; documentary and fictional film; music; graphics; fine art; websites. Students will be asked to apply basic methods of close reading to all media, including deliberate propaganda. The student will be exposed to methods of interpreting texts in order to examine the forms, origins and purposes those texts could serve. The course compares three recent wars (Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq) in order to illuminate how information handling has progressed in the postmodern world. The course is aimed at developing and strengthening the students' own responses to and arguments about these issues. Analyzing vexatious texts and producing clear, thoughtful writings about them is the course's first and last job.

No prior knowledge of any topic is necessary; everyone is very welcome!

I know this doesn't look like a laugh-a-minute course, and you might worry I'm going to subject you to all kinds of horrors—I won't. I believe we need to have this discussion about how we act in the world, the ways we accept and applaud the use of force. If someone uses force in your name, it might be helpful to know what that means. I know this stuff is scary—let's deal with it together, okay?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To expose the student to a wide variety of media;
- To have students analyze and interpret various media on their own terms;
- To ask students to grapple with a variety of crucial topics that have no simple resolutions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- The student's written and oral analyses will gain strength through weekly practice;
- The student will become a more thoughtful writer by accomplishing a number of formal and informal writing tasks;
- The student's skills in interpretation and argumentation will increase through practice dealing with difficult material and being exposed to the basic tenets of propaganda;
- The student will gain basic information about the ways war can alter information as it is disseminated to citizens.

READING LIST:

1. Herr, Michael. *Dispatches*. Reprint edition. New York: Vintage, 1991. Print.
2. MIT 3440 Custom Course Materials (bookstore).
3. Sacco, Joe. *Journalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. Print.
4. Scranton, Roy, and Matt Gallagher, eds. *Fire and Forget: Short Stories from the Long War*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 2013. Print.

CK—Custom Course Materials (short excerpts and readings, including some poetry)

CKP—Custom Course Materials, Poetry section

VIEWING LIST:

1. Camargo, Christian. *The Hurt Locker*. Alliance Films. Film.
2. Cote, Luc. *You Don't Like the Truth*. Alliance Films. Film.
3. Couturie, Bill. *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*. HBO. Film.
4. Eastwood, Clint. *American Sniper*. Warner Home Video. Film.
5. Foulkrod, Patricia. *The Ground Truth*. Alliance Films. Film.
6. Greenwald, Robert. *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers*. The Disinformation Company. Film.
7. Labaki, Nadine. *Where Do We Go Now?* Mongrel Media. Film.
8. Morris, Errol. *Standard Operating Procedure*. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. Film.
9. Post, Ted. *Go Tell the Spartans*. HBO. Film.

THE READINGS AND VIEWINGS ARE DELIBERATELY LIGHT SO WE CAN FOCUS ON PROCESS.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. A modest in-class open-book midterm: 15%
2. Five 500-word informal logs to be handed in over the term, as indicated: 30%
3. Propaganda Assignment: 15%
4. 1000-word essay: 25%
5. Participation: 15%

**HELLISHLY LATE PAPERS:
PLEASE DON'T EMAIL THEM—
UPLOAD TO OWL USING DROPBOX.
MANY THANKS!**

TUTORIALS

Use the tutorials to engage all the issues you feel have been missed, what they mean to you. Don't let this chance go, don't let silence press you under, don't let fear stop you—life's too short! People look at that 15% and decide they can take the hit, then sit for the whole term and listen to other people.

Why? Do you have nothing to say? Really? I don't believe it. If you were Tweeting, what would you say?

COME IN AND SAY “HEY!”

Listen, what are you waiting around for? You feel shy and inhibited, afraid you don't have anything important to say? That pretty much describes **ALL** of us, especially internet trolls who flame people but can't leave the house.

YOU, yes **you**, are welcome in the office. This is your invitation. Don't wait for courage! Grab a friend, come in and make **THEM** talk—throw your **BFF** under the bus, but come in and sit with us, drink tea and have some form of baked good. I won't put you on the spot, I promise. And your fellow office-mates can be incredibly helpful and supportive.

NEED TO GET IN TOUCH? HERE I AM:

By phone: (519) 661-2111 ext. 88513

Email: tblackmo@uwo.ca

In person: 4019 FNB



A tip of the teacup to Alena Papayanis for the button!

OFFICE HOURS:

I'm in the office to see you, not to buy stuff on ebay or something. Come chat about whatever intrigues you (or all of us who are there) at these times:

Tuesday 11:30-12:30 p.m., Thursday 11:30-1:30 p.m.

If none of these times are good, we can make an appointment for another time. **PLEASE** Don't let inconvenience put you off from getting in touch, or approaching me about course issues.

ELECTRONICS POLICY: Please turn your phones **off** during class. It's rude for everyone to get your phone call. Laptops—mostly going to be on social media, shopping, dating? Could you please sit at the back so you don't disturb others? **Many thanks for that!**

LATE POLICY:

5% per day missed, including weekends. Late papers must be submitted to me in person, or uploaded to OWL, which will time stamp them. The mark keeps dropping until it hits zero. Extension? tell me in writing one week ahead. The best thing to do is just to tell me what the problem is: I'll listen much more sympathetically that way, I promise.

ATTENDANCE:

The schedule is subject to change without notice: **YOU** are responsible for keeping up to date with any changes. I expect to see you in class. Participation runs like this: 80%: thoughtful commentary, discussion, writing, lots of attendance; 70%: moderate discussion, good attendance; 60%: some discussion, steady attendance; 50%: but why? 40%-0: Who are you? (Don't laugh, it happens!)

ABOUT THOSE LOGS...

4

LOGS ARE ALL ABOUT RELAXATION and thought. Each week I will send out thoughts and ideas, places you might start, use them or toss them, think about the text, then just start writing. Let your writing go for about 500 words (it can be more). Your direction is fine—the log suggestions aren't to be answered or "proven."

A LOG IS NOT AN ESSAY. No formal structure is needed. I don't correct grammar or spelling, although I do want to see relatively clean documents. Get used to rereading the final paper so you've checked it over for spelling and obvious problems. Also, OMG please please please fam, no text language if u get me 2 hrd 4 mi 2 rd lolz ugh bae can't even....

THE WHOLE THING ABOUT logs is not to conserve time or engage in word or sound bites, but to let time out, let the clock wind down, let the language and thoughts flow, let the connections make connections. People often note "I'm on a tangent now," but as far as I'm concerned, in logs there are no tangents. Follow the tangents, and then the tangents that spring from them.

SO NOW YOU'RE GOING TO be all nervous about trying to give me what you think I want; it's such a game to figure out what the professor wants, eh? How tiresome! Let's see if we can avoid that. Remember that the logs will only ever have two readers: you, and me. So you can address me directly, write to me as if you were writing a letter: "Well Tim, I saw ____ and it made me think of ____ that reminded me of...."

IN THE LOGS, IT'S YOU. There's no proving anything here. In the logs, you decide what's right and wrong. It doesn't matter what I think about it, or whether I agree. These aren't my logs, they're yours. Instead, it's about you getting out your voice, getting hold of the way you write, the way you think, and then going as deeply as possible with those thoughts, following them to their underground labyrinths.



Doonesbury by Garry Trudeau

THE HARDEST THING ABOUT LOGS IS THE BACKSPACE key. You sit there and start writing, and then look at it, wonder if it's okay, and the deleting begins. But why? Write a couple of pages, be generous! Words are cheap (they say—whoever "they" are). So spend some. **Don't look back and don't delete.** And if you can't keep your hand off the delete key, then write by hand. Some people love the process of writing with pen on rich paper.

THE LOGS AREN'T INDIVIDUALLY WORTH A GRADE. Somewhere in the term I collect all the logs and grade them. **KEEP ALL THOSE LOGS I HAND BACK!** But what I'm looking for is not a particular thing—it'll be the whole arc you've drawn from the first log, which may be tentative and worried, to the last, more comfortably written logs. Be the log!

LECTURE	TOPIC	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	DUE
1 SEP. 5	Vietnam 1: Background		
2 SEP. 10	Vietnam 2: What Is a Close Reading?	<i>Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam</i> (film), Tim O'Brien "How to Tell a True War Story," "Speaking of Courage," "Notes" (CK) ¹ Casey, "A Bummer" (CKP) ²	
3 SEP. 12	Vietnam 3: The War on Film, from Hollywood and Beyond	<i>Go Tell the Spartans</i> (film), Barth "A Letter", Haldeman "Air Support," Ritterbusch "Search and Destroy" (CKP)	LOG 1
4 SEP. 17	Vietnam 4: New War, New Journalism	<i>Dispatches</i> part 1, "Colleagues" (187-249), Ritterbusch "Taking the Easy Way" (CKP)	KEEP LOGS I HAND BACK!
5 SEP. 19	Vietnam 5: Black Blood, White War?	<i>Dispatches</i> part 2, Herr (158-161, 180-181), Wallace Terry, <i>Bloods</i> (CK), Al Santoli "A Black G.I." (CK), Ritterbusch, "Winning Hearts and Minds" (CKP)	LOG 2
6 SEP. 24	Vietnam 6: Ethics and Law	<i>Dispatches</i> part 3, "Khe Sanh" (86-166), Ehrhart "A Relative Thing" (CKP)	
7 SEP. 26	Vietnam 7: Postmodern War	<i>Dispatches</i> part 4, "Breathing In," "Breathing Out" (3-69, 250-260), Haldeman "Brass," "DX"	LOG 3
8 OCT. 1	Vietnam 8: Women at War, as Always.	Selections from Lynda Van Devanter's <i>Home Before Morning</i> (CK), Susan O'Neil "What Dreams May Come," "Prometheus Burned" (CK) Barth "Office of the Dead" (CKP)	
9 OCT. 3	Vietnam 9: War, Ethics, Law	Hasford, <i>Short Timers</i> (128-131) (CK), Van Devanter, "It's Too Easy" (CKP), Casey "Sweetheart," Dusty "Hello, David," McMahon, "Knowing" (CKP)	MIDTERM
10 OCT. 8	Propaganda 1: Some Definitions	Vigil "Commander in Chief" (CKP), "Ritterbusch "Conversation"	
11 OCT. 10	Propaganda 2: The Look of Hatred	Van Devanter, "TV Wars" (CKP), Casey "On Death"	LOG 4
12 OCT. 15	Propaganda 3: Moving Images		

¹ CK=Course Kit

² CKP=Course Kit Poetry Section

LECTURE	TOPIC	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	DUE
13 OCT. 17	Iraq 1: Background 1: Gulf I, 1991, Gulf II, 9/11, ISIS	Ted Janis "Raid" (in F&F) ³ , Turner "Caravan" (CKP), Sacco "War Crimes Trials" in <i>Journalism</i>	PROPAGANDA PAPER
14 OCT. 22	Iraq 2: Background 2: Mission Accomplished?	Fountain <i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i> (CK), Van Devanter "Middle East Montage" (CKP)	
15 OCT. 24	Iraq 3: Imperial Grunts	Gavin Kovite, "When Engaging Targets, Remember," Phil Klay, "Redeployment," Colby Buzzell, "Play the Game" (all in F&F), Joe Sacco, "Complacency Kills," "Down! Up!", Weigl, "Burning Shit" (CKP)	
16 OCT. 29	Iraq 4: Women (Still) at War	Kayla Williams, <i>Love My Rifle More Than You</i> (CK), Holmstedt, "Little Dee with a Big Gun" (CK), Furey "Camouflage," Tran "The Women Next Door" (CKP)	LOG 5 PLEASE HAND IN ALL LOGS
17 OCT. 31	Iraq 5: Other Women, Same War?	Riverbend <i>Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq</i> (CK), Ritterbusch "Thê Miêu" (CKP), Joe Sacco, "Chechen War, Chechen Women."	
NOVEMBER 4-8	READ AT REST, PERHAPS?		
18 NOV. 12	Iraq 6: Rape Culture	Cynthia Enloe, <i>Nimo's War, Emma's War</i> (CK) Montoya, "I Wasn't Carrying a Knife..." in Helen Benedict, <i>The Lonely Soldier</i> (CK), McDonald "Every Night is Footsteps" (CKP), Weigl "Song of Napalm" (CKP)	
19 NOV. 14	Iraq 7: Heroes?	<i>American Sniper</i> (film), <i>You Don't Like the Truth</i> (film), Barth "Longinus in Vietnam," Erhart "Hunting" (CKP)	ESSAY
20 NOV. 19	Iraq 8: Victims & Perpetrators	<i>The Hurt Locker</i> (film), Mariette Kalinowski "The Train" (F&F) Turner "The Hurt Locker" (CKP)	
21 NOV. 21	Peace 1: Women's Work at War	<i>Et Maintenant, On Va Où? (Where Do We Go Now?)</i> (film)	
22 NOV. 26	Peace 2: Another World's Economy	Marilyn Waring, selections from <i>Counting for Nothing</i> (CK), Nancy Collins "Iphigenia" (CK)	
23 NOV. 28	Peace 3: Otherness	Ursula Le Guin "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (CK)	
24 DEC. 3	Iraq 9: Other Heroes	<i>The Ground Truth</i> (film), Ford "Phước Điền" (CKP) Andrew Slater "New Me" (F&F)	
25 DEC. 5	Iraq 10: Upgrading Postmodern War	<i>Iraq for Sale</i> (film) Turner "Here, Bullet"	
26	Iraq 11: Ethics v. 2.0 Rebooted	Joe Sacco "Trauma on Loan," Tara McKelvey's "One of the Guys" (CK), <i>Standard Operating Procedure</i> (film), Turner "Dreams from Malaria Pills" (CKP)	

³ F&F=Fire and Forget, Roy Scranton and Matt Gallagher, Eds.

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Fall 2019

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the

semester, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwoom/mentalhealth/>

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility

Information:

www.accessibility.uwo.ca

[/_](#) Writing Support

Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/learnin

[g](#) Indigenous Services:

<http://indigenous.uwo.c>

[a/](#)

International and Exchange Student

Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/int Career

Centre at Western:

www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.