2014

205-10 Literature of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

David Reid
reid@xavier.edu

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Literature of the Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan

General course description:

“Literature of the Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan” will examine a variety of texts (including films) that approach the topic from different perspectives. Our texts include both fiction and nonfiction, and have been written by men & women, soldiers & civilians, journalists & embedded correspondents. The important goals of the course are:

• To develop a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of the wars -- the buildup and preparation, the daily experience of those on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the challenges faced by those returning home and the families and friends of those who do not;

• To gain a more enlightened sense of the human cost (and benefit) of these wars, both at home and abroad. An important part of this discussion will be whether – and under what circumstances – these wars may be justified. (Note: this course is not intended to be political or partisan per se; however, there will be times when these areas of investigation are integral to the discussion and are therefore unavoidable. The personal opinions of all will be respected.)

• To take from this course a heightened sense of obligation and, hopefully, empowerment with respect to our roles as citizens in a democratic society.

As this course is part of the Ethics/Religion and Society program and the Peace Studies minor, you will have the opportunity to apply ideas and concepts from philosophy and theology to the issues raised in our materials.

Required Texts:

• Castner, Brian. “The Long Walk”
• Fallows, James. “Blind Into Baghdad: America’s War in Iraq”
• Filkins, Dexter. “The Forever War”
• Finkel, David. “The Good Soldiers”
• Fountain, Ben. “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk”
• Junger, Sebastian. “War”
• Powers, Kevin. “The Yellow Birds”
• Scranton, Roy & Matt Gallagher (eds). “Fire and Forget”

Films:

• Bigelow: “The Hurt Locker”
• Ferguson: “No End in Sight”
• Heatherington: “Restrepo”
• Liman: “Fair Game”
### Attendance:

Although there will be lectures, this course is primarily discussion-oriented and interactive. Thus, your attendance is important, both to you and to your classmates. There will be frequent announced and unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class over material due that day. Obviously you need to be in class and on time to do well on these.

### Grade determination:

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<tr>
<td>“Essay” 1:</td>
<td>Participation:</td>
<td>Final exam:</td>
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<td>“Essay” 2:</td>
<td>Quizzes:</td>
<td>(including Essay 3)</td>
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### Course schedule:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/reading due</th>
<th>In-class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>M 1/13</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
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<td>The beginning: 9/11</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>M 1/20</td>
<td>MLK Day</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>M 1/27</td>
<td>Filkins: Parts One &amp; Two (pp. 11-135)</td>
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<td>Fallows: Intro (pp. ix-xxv), “The Fifty-First State?” &amp; “Blind Into Baghdad” (pp. 1-106)</td>
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<td>F&amp;F: Forward &amp; Preface (pp. vii-xvii)</td>
<td>Discuss readings 9/11 (cont.)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>M 2/3</td>
<td>Filkins: Part Two (pp. 136-188) &amp; Prologue (pp. 3-9)</td>
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<td>Fallows: “Bush's Lost Year” &amp; “Why Iraq Has No Army” (pp. 107-186)</td>
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<td>F&amp;F: Turner: “The Wave That Takes Them Under” (Ch. 4) &amp; Scranton: “Red Steel India” (Ch. 15)</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>M 2/10</td>
<td>Filkins: Part Two (pp. 189-271)</td>
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<td>F&amp;F: Skaskiw: “Television” (Ch. 8)</td>
<td>Discuss readings “Fair Game” (cont.)</td>
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<td>Powers: “The Yellow Birds” (pp. 1-48)</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>M 2/17</td>
<td>Powers: “The Yellow Birds” (pp. 49-226)</td>
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<td>Discuss reading “No End in Sight”</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>M 2/24</td>
<td>Filkins: Part Two (pp. 272-346)</td>
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<td>F&amp;F: Abrams: “Roll Call” (Ch. 13)</td>
<td>Discuss reading “No End in Sight” (cont.)</td>
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<td>Castner: “The Long Walk” (pp. 1-149)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>M 3/3</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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### Week 9  M 3/10
- Castner: "The Long Walk" (pp. 150-220)
- Finkel: "The Good Soldiers" (pp. 1-116)
- Discuss reading "The Hurt Locker"

### Week 10  M 3/17
- Finkel: "The Good Soldiers" (pp. 117-267)
- F&F: O’Brien: "Poughkeepsie" (Ch. 10)
- F&F: Kovite: "When Engaging Targets, Remember" (Ch. 157)
- Discuss readings "The Hurt Locker" (cont.)

### Week 11  M 3/24
- Finkel: "The Good Soldiers" (pp. 268-304)
- F&F: Buzzell: “Play the Game” (Ch. 7)
- Fountain: “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” (pp. 1-138)
- Discuss readings

### Week 12  M 3/31
- Fountain: “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” (pp. 139-307)
- Discuss reading

### Week 13  M 4/7
- Junger: “War” (pp. 1-168)
- Discuss reading “Restrepo”

### Week 14  M 4/14
- Junger: “War” (pp. 169-278)
- F&F: Janis: “Raid” (Ch. 6)
- Discuss reading “Restrepo” (cont.)

### Week 15  M 4/21
- Junger: “War” (pp. 169-278)
- F&F: Fallon: “Tips for a Smooth Transition” (Ch. 2)
- Klay: “Redeployment” (Ch. 3)
- Slater: “New Me” (Ch. 9)
- Van Reet: “Big Two-Hearted Running Creek” (Ch. 12)
- Discuss readings Profile presentations

### Week 16  M 4/28
- F&F: Siegal: “Smile, There Are IEDs Everywhere” (Ch. 1)
- Gallagher: “And Bugs Don’t Bleed” (Ch. 14)
- Kalinowski: “The Train” (Ch. 5)
- Discuss readings Profile presentations Review for exam

### Final exam  M 5/5