War and Memory in Twentieth Century France

History 43.338
Fall 2014
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Professor Patrick Young
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:15-10:45, Thursdays 12:30-1:45, and by appointment
Course Website: http://continuinged.uml.edu/online

Course Description

This course will explore the individual and collective trauma of modern warfare, as that was experienced in France both during and after the country’s three main wars of the twentieth century. We will above all consider how the experience of modern war has been negotiated in culture---in personal and collective memory, in gender identities and relationships, and in a great variety of written and visual texts. The course begins with World War I as the first fully modern “total war”, waged in large measure on French soil and involving an unprecedented mobilization of French resources and civilian population. The course’s second unit will focus on France’s “strange defeat” at the hands of German Nazism in 1940, and the country’s subsequent occupation, division and highly conflicted experience of collaboration/resistance during the so-called années noires (“dark years”). Its third and final unit will deal with the 1954-1962 War of Algerian Independence, and with the protracted violence and political fractiousness that were intrinsic to that conflict. Our main focus throughout will fall upon the challenges of coming to terms with modern war experience, whether during or after the actual conflict. To that end, the course will maintain an interdisciplinary approach encompassing critical consideration of not only historical texts, but also literary memoir, film, popular culture and architectural media such as war monuments and cemeteries.

Course Objectives

This course aims at enabling students to:

- better understand the historical impact of modern warfare in the twentieth century, in France and in the world more broadly
- employ tools of analysis from multiple disciplines in analyzing the personal and historical workings of memory
- refine specific skills in interpreting visual and literary texts as historical sources
- demonstrate measurable improvement in their writing

Course Texts

The following are required texts for the course. They are available at the University bookstore, and should be purchased there or online as soon as possible.
Supplementary readings and other vital materials such as image files will be housed on the course website. Films and film clips for the course will be made available by weblinks and/or put on reserve at the Media Center in O’Leary Library.

**Course Texts**


**Course Requirements**

**Unit Essays and Shorter Written Work (80%)**

These will correspond to each of the three main units/periods we will be covering in the course, and will require that you synthesize multiple forms of historical evidence, as well as information from reading, lecture/class discussion and the course website.

I will provide the assignments at the very beginning of each unit, in order that you may use them to guide your note taking and begin thinking out your essay well in advance.

**Class participation (20%)**

*Please note:* Late written work cannot be accepted unless arrangements are made with me in advance of the due date. Written work should also be submitted directly to me in hard copy format. The penalty for lateness is one-half letter grade per day. Let me know as soon as possible if you anticipate difficulties in handing in an assignment in time.

**On Class Discussion and Participation:**

This course has a discussion-based format, and requires active student participation. A formal requirement of that participation is that students assume responsibility for being a primary discussant for two classes of their choosing at some point over the course of the semester. In line with that duty, students are required to submit a one to two-page summary of that day’s reading in advance to me via email, along with any questions of their own they may wish to raise for discussion.

The primary discussant work will be combined with a grade for daily participation, to produce an overall class discussion grade. Lateness and/or incomplete preparation for the discussion will lower the
participation grade, as will any more than three absences. It goes without saying as well that phone usage and texting are strictly forbidden during class.

**Schedule of Classes**

9/4 Course introduction: Defining the Problem, Defining the Terms

**Unit One: France and la Grande Guerre**

9/9 Background: Turn of the Century France and the Road to War

- *France and the Great War*, chapter 1
- Roland Dorgelès, “That Fabulous Day”, course website
- Emilie Carles, *A Life of Her Own*, chapters 6-7, course website

9/11 The Home Front and French ‘War Culture’

- *France and the Great War*, chapter 2
- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, 1-77
- Image file, ‘French war culture’, course website

9/16 Gender Roles and Identities in Wartime

- Charles Rearick “French Identities in the Crucible of War”, from *The French in Love and War*, course website
- James McMillan, “World War I and Women in France”, from *Total War and Social Change*, course website
- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, 78-175

9/18 The Soldiers’ War

- *France and the Great War*, chapter 3
- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, 176-225

9/23 Soldiers’ Memories and Memoirs

- Louis Barthes, *Poilu*, selections, course website
- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, 226-300

*worksheet due*

9/25 Moving on From “Victory”

- *France and the Great War*, chapters 4-5
- Antoine Prost, “War Memorials of the Great War”, course website

9/30 War Monuments and Museums in the 1920’s
view image file, “French War Monuments and Memorials,” course website
Jay Winter, “War Memorials and the Mourning Process”, from Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning, course website
George Mosse, “The Cult of the Fallen Soldier,” from Fallen Soldiers, course website

*worksheet due

10/2 War and Film, “War Films”
view “Les Croix de Bois” (“Wooden Crosses”) dir. by Raymond Bernard (1932), on reserve at O’Leary Library Media Center

10/7 Confronting Old and New Battles: Renoir’s “La Grande Illusion”
view “La Grande Illusion” (“Grand Illusion”) dir. by Jean Renoir (1937), on reserve at O’Leary Library Media Center

*worksheet due

Unit Two: Les Années Noires: France and World War II

10/9 France’s “Strange Defeat”: Causes and Consequences
Charles De Gaulle June-July 1940 speeches, course website
Marshall Pétain’s Message to the French People, October 11, 1940, course website
Kedward, Occupied France, chapter 1

*Unit One Paper due

10/14 Occupation and the Vichy Regime
Kedward, Occupied France, chapters 2-3
Robert Gildea, “Cohabitation” and “Bread” from Marianne in Chains, course website

10/16 Everyday Life in Wartime France
Richard Vinen, “Frenchwomen and Germans,” from The Unfree French, course website

10/21 Experiences, Dilemmas and Memories of Resistance
Kedward, Occupied France, chapters 4-5
Albert Camus, “I Am Fighting You…..”, course website
Lucie Aubrac, excerpt from Outwitting the Gestapo, course website

*worksheet due

10/23 Ambiguities of the Liberation
Marguerite Duras, The War, 3-68
Claire Duchen, “Crime and Punishment in Liberated France: The Case of the *femmes tondues,*” course website

*worksheet due*

10/28 The “Vichy Syndrome”: French Memory of the War Years

10/30 Breaking the Mirror? “The Sorrow and the Pity”
    “Le Chagrin et la Pitié” (“The Sorrow and the Pity”), dir. by Marcel Ophuls (1968), on reserve at O’Leary Library Media Center
    Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, “The Broken Mirror”, course website

*worksheet due*

11/4 The Holocaust in France, and in French Memory
    Richard Vinen, “Jews, Germans and French”, from *The Unfree French*, course website
    François Hollande, “The Crime Committed in France, by France,” course website

11/6 A “Haunted Past”: Recent Dilemmas of Memory and Justice
    Robert Paxton, “The Trial of Maurice Papon”, from *New York Review of Books*, course website
    or
    Richard Golsan, “The Trial of Paul Touvier”, from *Vichy’s Afterlife*, course website

**Unit Three: The ‘War Without Name’: The Algerian Conflict and its Aftermath**

11/13 Historical Origins of the “Algerian Conflict”
    Martin Evans and John Philips, “Forced Marriage: French Algeria 1830-1962,” course website

*Unit Two paper due*

11/18 Ethical Dilemmas of Political Violence
    Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence” from *Wretched of the Earth*, course website
    Jean-Paul Sartre, preface to *Wretched of the Earth*, course website
    Albert Camus, “The Guest”, handout

11/20 Algerian Experiences and Perspectives on Political Violence
    Mouloud Feraoun, *Journal 1955-1962*, selections, course website
    Assia Djebar, *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, selections, course website
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<td>Murray Smith, <em>The Battle of Algiers: Colonial Struggle and Collective Allegiance,</em> course website</td>
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<td>The “Question” of Torture</td>
<td>Henri Alleg, “The Question”, course website</td>
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<td>Martin Evans, “Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran: The Case of French Conscription from the Algerian War”, course website</td>
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<td>Alec Hargreaves, “Generating Migrant Memories”, course website</td>
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*Final Paper due*