

# *Art in a Time of War*

TCXG 404a

Winter 2007

Instructor: Beverly Naidus

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 7-9:15 pm      Location: WG 308

Office Hours: Tuesday, 3-4:15 pm and by appointment

Location: CP 333 (or en route to Pt. Defiance Ferry)

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## **Course Summary**

With every war there have been artists who have used their art to express feelings and thoughts about war. At this particular moment there is a veritable explosion of socially engaged art addressing this topic. We will look at both historical and contemporary examples of such art, examine popular visual media and how it frames war and violence, and make art about personal stories and community stories. Our readings will raise questions about the purposes and futility of war to solve problems, and how art might prompt our society to visualize new ways of resolving conflict.

## **Course Objectives**

- To explore a conceptual approach to art making
- To strengthen formal skills and knowledge of visual grammar
- To experience hands-on collaborative art processes
- To be exposed to a wide variety of contemporary art forms including site-specific installations, culture jamming, posters, graphic narratives, and photo-text work.
- To develop facility with the terms INTENTION, AUDIENCE and CONTEXT when discussing the goals of an artwork
- To become familiar with a variety ways of understanding the topic of war as it relates to art and to contemporary society
- To encourage critical thinking in relation to the art making process and the topics discussed

## **Course Requirements**

- Journal – for biweekly drawings/photos/stories/notes for projects or in relation to the topic of war, conflict resolution, and peace. Also notes on readings should be entered in the journal as well as notes on presentations and class discussions. The Journal will be graded twice – once at midterm, and again at the end of the quarter. There should be a minimum of 2 entries per week.
- Reading: Assorted articles available on e-reserve and online articles. If you need help finding e-reserve online please let me know.
- Assigned war story piece, graphic narrative, and poster project – both in class projects and work done at home
- A collaborative, site-specific project that explores some aspect of war and peace in relation to community

- A research project presented orally (7-10 minutes) on an artist whose work addresses the topic of war or peace. It is recommended that you choose an artist from the list at the end of this syllabus. If you choose someone else, you will need my approval before you begin research. Remember that it will be easier to research an artist who is well recognized nationally or internationally. Research can be done on the web, but **MUST** include 3 journal articles (electronic journals can be found by logging in the UW library e journals area – common search engines are JStor and Project Muse, but there are many others). A bibliography must be sent to me via email before the oral presentation is given. Students will be graded based on the depth of understanding of the artist’s work, the ability to engage the audience with the subject matter, and sufficient research.
- A short paper (1200 words) about one “anti-war” film listed at the end of the Bibliography
- Class participation is essential and unexcused absences will affect grades. Attendance is extremely important in studio art classes. It will be difficult to make up the work outside of class, and your insight and participation during discussions are a critical part of the class. We all learn from each other's perspectives; and if you miss class, you will miss learning from these insights. Missing more than three class meetings during the quarter, regardless of the reason, will have a negative effect on your class participation grade.

### **Grades and Self-evaluation**

Students will turn in their journal for midterm evaluation (due Feb 1st). A midterm self-evaluation statement is required. The self-evaluation should reflect on the student’s participation in class discussions, his or her art process in relation to collaborative and individual work, and the insights culled from writing, reading and research. A list of questions to answer will be posted on Blackboard.

Students are required to share their studio projects during group feedback sessions and to participate in the discussions about their work.

All assignments are assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Familiarity with visual grammar in relation to the student’s intention
2. Ability to be inventive both with content and form, and to take risks
3. Attention to craft and process - Work created with little attention or care will be graded accordingly
4. Responsiveness to suggestions to strengthen projects

Grades will be weighted in the following way: War Story Collage: 10%, Midterm Journal: 10%, Graphic Narrative: 20%, Oral Presentation: 10%, Collaborative Work: 10%, Poster Project: 20%, Participation: 10%, Final Journal: 10%,

Grades will be given according to the grade point system rather than letter or percentage grades. They will be posted at Blackboard. For information about the grading scale go to this website: [http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading\\_Sys.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading_Sys.html)

### **Supplies**

An un-lined (blank), hard-bound journal (7”x 9” minimum), miscellaneous scavenged materials (for collaborative project), drawing materials (this will vary depending on the student’s interest and experiences. Options are pen and ink, graphite, charcoal, etc.), collage materials (available in class), a digital camera (they can be borrowed from media services) or traditional film camera, a thumb, jump, or removable drive or CDS for saving files, Adobe Photoshop (or any other digital imaging program that saves files as jpgs and tiffs – Photoshop is by far the most versatile of these programs). Photoshop can be

purchased online (at educational software sites) or through the bookstore (with student discount) or a free trial version can be downloaded online for 60 days (although the winter quarter lasts 70 days) from the Adobe website.

Aside from the Mac computer and scanner in our classroom, there are open labs with Macs, scanners and printers in WG 108, SCI 105 and the Multimedia Lab is MAT 251. Technicians are available to help you with your project in our classroom for 10 hours per week (exact hours will be announced in class) and in the Multimedia Lab (M-Th only). Your lab fees pay for all printing in the Arts Lab. The inks and paper are archival.

It is not necessary to use computers for any of the assignments in this class.

## **Calendar**

**Jan 9** - Introduction to course and instructor. Discuss syllabus and goals of course. Slide show. Exercise: Pair with another classmate. Tell a story about an experience with war – either from your own perspective or that of a friend, family member or neighbor. You can talk about someone you know who went to war, your own experiences as a soldier or working in the military, someone who was involved with peace work, your own alienation from the topic and why, etc. The partner who is listening will make notes about the story. The notes will be used to create a text for a photo/text project. Work with partner to distill a few lines of text to be used in a photo/text piece. Reading of poems of Thich Nhat Hanh and William Stafford.

**Homework:** Read Claude Anshin Thomas article. Make notes in journal for class discussion. Select 2 photos or objects that represent conflict or violence when juxtaposed together. We will work with your story combined with the metaphor of the images/objects you choose in class. **MAKE SURE TO BRING THE OBJECTS AND IMAGES TO CLASS.**

**Jan 11** – Discussion of visual grammar. What makes an image disturbing, what makes it peaceful? What makes someone attracted to it? Introduction to Photoshop. Scan images and objects and juxtapose story within the image.

**Homework::** Begin first draft of War Story work. Continue to read Claude Anshin Thomas.

**Jan 16** – Share photo text first draft. Discuss Thomas.

**Homework:** Bring in magazine advertisements that are selling safety, patriotism, security, nationalism, and nostalgia besides the product. Rework War Story piece. Read Sontag's **Regarding the Pain of Others** essay

**Jan 23** – Media Literacy workshop. Photocollage exercise.

**Homework:** Read Eve Ensler's **Insecure at Last** and more Sontag.

**Jan 25** – Feedback on war story (1<sup>st</sup> project). Discussion of Photography and War. Discuss Sontag, possibly Ensler. Visit [http://www.thememoryhole.org/war/coffin\\_photos/dover/](http://www.thememoryhole.org/war/coffin_photos/dover/)  
<http://www.thememoryhole.org/war/wounded/>

**Homework:** Rework first draft.– either an autobiographical piece or a third person study, looking at the process of looking at war. READ Eve Ensler's **Insecure at Last**.

**Jan 30** – Review more first drafts. Discuss graphic narrative project. Look at **Palestine, Maus, Persepolis**, and various children's drawings of war. Discussion of Ensler. Work in class.

**Homework:** Work on graphic narrative. Read Howard Zinn's **Artists in a Time of War**

**Feb 1** - Work in class. Discussion of Zinn.

**Homework:** Finish first draft of graphic narrative and rework war story piece. . Read articles in **YES Magazine**: John Mohawk, Bill Weinberg, and Riane Eisler's articles

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1170>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1173>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1167>

**Feb 6** - Discussion of 1<sup>st</sup> draft of graphic narrative and reworked war story piece. Discussion of Mohawk, Weinberg and Eisler's articles

**Homework:** Write self-evaluation and bring in projects. Begin research for presentation about artist.

**Questions for self-evaluation:**

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. This typed self-evaluation should be emailed to me by Wednesday evening. Each question can be answered with a short paragraph (2-5 sentences).

1. How have the discussions about war, peace, violence, militarism, surveillance, and security helped you to develop your opinions on this topic?
2. What is one aspect of the reading or media we have seen that has opened your eyes to new ways of thinking about the topic?
3. How did the media literacy exercise help you connect with the topic of the course?
4. How do you think the two visual art projects are helping you to develop or depict your point of view?
5. How do you feel you are growing in terms of your skill level?
6. What do you feel has been one of the most important things you have learned about your creative process so far this quarter?
7. How do you feel about your participation in class discussions?

Submit your answers via email before Feb 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Artist Oral Presentation:** Present a few examples (minimum of 5 images, maximum of 10) of the artist's work that deals with these topics: war, peace, power, nationalism, surveillance, safety, and/or violence and discuss the meaning of the work and questions that you may have about it.

After reading 3 articles by art writers or critics, summarize what you think that these writers feel are the intentions of the artist's work. **YOU MUST USE SOURCES OTHER THAN THE WEB** for this presentation – a bibliography is required and must be submitted!

Offer us a rough bio about the artist - it would be good to know where and when the artist was born, where or if s/he went to school, what class background the artist has, whether s/he teaches somewhere and what you think or what s/he says provoked him or her to be an artist who is dealing with the topics s/he is dealing with.

In your conclusion, suggest a question that the class might want to respond to regarding the work.

Presentation format can be in power point or you can just project scanned images of the artist's work on the large screen. Do NOT read your presentation from the screen - read from notes instead. While you are speaking, make sure there are images for us to look at. You will be given 10 min. max. to speak.

**Feb 8** – Midterm evaluation conferences. Documentary videos from Media Education Fdn will be screen in class.

**Homework:** Rework 1<sup>st</sup> drafts. Read **War is Peace** essay by Arundhati Roy  
<http://www.zmag.org/roywarpeace.htm>

**Feb 13** - Poster project begins. Slide show and poster display. Discuss Roy.  
[http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/~lcushing/temp\\_files/TGP.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/~lcushing/temp_files/TGP.html)  
<http://www.politicalgraphics.org/home.html>

**Homework:** Poster project. Reading Reading from **Postmodern War** by Chris Hables Gray.

**Feb 15** – Instructor away. Watch film and write 1200 word essay on the film – questions to be posted on blackboard.

**Homework:** - Finish 1<sup>st</sup> draft of poster project. Read Carol Becker’s essay from **Surpassing the Spectacle**

**Feb 20** – Present 1<sup>st</sup> draft poster project. Turn in film paper. Discussion of collaborative, site-specific projects: installations, interventions and performance. Discuss Gray and Becker.

**Homework:** Rework poster project.

**Feb 22** – Oral Presentations on artists. Discussion of collaborative, site-specific projects: installations, interventions and performance. Begin brainstorming.

**Homework:** Rework projects and collaborative work.

**Feb 27** – Oral Presentations on artists. Continue collab project.

**Homework:** Rework projects and collaborative work.

**Mar 1** – Orals Presentations on artists. Work Session.

**Homework:** Rework projects and collaborative work.

**Mar 6** – Install collaborative work and feedback session.

**Homework:** Finish all drafts/journal.

**Mar 8** – Critique of final drafts. Turn in journals.

**Mar 13** – Return of Journals. Final discussion.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Andrews, Julian, and Moore, Henry, **London's War: The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore**, Lund Humphries Publishers, 2002

Baigall, Matthew and Williams, Julia, **Artists Against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists' Congress**, Rutgers University Press, 1986

Becker, Annette, **Otto Dix Der Krieg/the War**, 5 Continents, 2004

Becker, Carol, **Surpassing the Spectacle**, Rowman and Littlefield, 2002

Brett, Guy, **Through Our Own Eyes: Popular Art and Modern History**, Library Company of Philadelphia, 1987

Bruckner, D.J.R., **Art Against War: Four Hundred Years of Protest in Art**, Abbeville, 1984

Eisler, Riane, “*Spare the Rod*”, **Yes Magazine**, Winter 2005

Eberle, Matthias, **World War I & the Weimar Artists: Dix, Grosz, Beckmann**, Yale, 1986

Ensler, Eve, **Insecure at Last: A Political Memoir**, Villard, 2006

Goodman, David, “*Hell No: America’s Soldiers Speak Out Against the Iraq War*,” **Mother Jones**, December 2004

Goya, Francisco, **Disasters of War**, Dover, 1968

Gray, Chris Hables, **Postmodern War**, Guilford Publications, 1998

Hanh, Thich Nhat, **Being Peace**, Parallax, 1987

Hedges, Chris, **War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning**, Anchor, 2003

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**Leon Golub and Nancy Spero: War and Memory** (catalog), MIT List Visual Arts Center, 1995  
McConnell, Carolyn, **“Finding a Way Home,”** Yes Magazine, Winter 2005  
McCormick, Ken, and Perry, Hamilton, **Images of War,** Orion Books, 1990  
Mohawk, John, **“The Warriors Who Turned to Peace,”** Yes Magazine, Winter 2005  
Roy, Arundhati, **An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,** South End Press, 2004  
Rubin, Susan Goldman, **Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin,** Holiday House, 2000  
Sacco, Joe, **Palestine,** Fantagraphics, 2002  
Satrapi, Marjane, **Persepolis,** Pantheon, 2003  
Sontag, Susan, **Regarding the Pain of Others,** Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002  
Spero, N, Golub, Leon, & Storr, Robert, **Nancy Spero: The War Series 1966-1970,** Charta, 2004  
Spiegelman, Art, **Maus: A Survivor’s Tale,** Pantheon, 1993  
Stafford, Kim(ed), **Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace & War,** Milkweed, 2003  
Thomas, Claude Anshin, **At Hell’s Gate: A Soldier’s Journey from War to Peace,** Shambala, 2004  
Vidal, Gore, **Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace,** Nation Books, 2002  
Walker, Alice, **We are the Ones We’ve Been Waiting For,** New Press, 2006  
Zinn, Howard, **Artists in Times of War,** Seven Stories Press, 2003

### Websites

<http://www.rabble.ca/>  
<http://www.peacemagazine.org/index.html>  
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[http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/ethics/basics/perlman\\_psychological-dimensions.htm](http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/ethics/basics/perlman_psychological-dimensions.htm)

<http://www.counterpunch.org/wolman12082003.html>

**FILMS (for essay)**

Grave of the Fireflies, Dr. Strangelove, Das Boot, All Quiet on the Western Front, Paths of Glory, Catch 22, Grand Illusion, King of Heart, Land and Freedom, Slaughterhouse Five, Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War, Hijacking Catastrophe, Judgement at Nuremberg, Gallipoli, The Great Dictator, Salvador, Full Metal Jacket, Born on the Fourth of July, Red Badge of Courage, Breaker Morant, Gandhi, Johnny Got His Gun, Wag the Dog, M.A.S.H., Testament, The Day After, War Games, Night and Fog, The Killing Field, The Cuckoo

<http://worldfilm.about.com/cs/toppicks/tp/antiwar.htm>

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/listmania/list-browse/-/1TMFOV7JRIW99/104-5792679-1597565>

<http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/issues/peace-&-war/start/antiwar-movies-books/>

<http://www.addinginsulttoimagery.net/ashley.htm>

Artists for Oral Presentations (more artists will be announced, but google these artists for images/journal articles and decide on whose work you would prefer to research – it is good to claim your artist quickly – only one student can research each artist)

Honore Daumier, Francisco Goya, Kathe Kollwitz, Pablo Picasso, Jose Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siquieros, John Heartfield, George Grosz, Otto Dix, Ben Shahn, Peter Blume, Josep Renau, Jacob Lawrence, Ed Kienholz, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Eva Cockcroft, Seymour Chwast, Sam Wiener, Ben Sakoguchi, Art Spiegelman, Martha Rosler, Lincoln Cushing, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Judy Baca, Mark Vallen, Peter Kennard, Sue Coe, Deborah Lawrence, Erika Rothenberg, Yong Soon Min, Joe Sacco, Marjane Satrapi, Josh MacPhee