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PSC 336.01: Causes War

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Political Science 336
Causes of War

Autumn, 2001
Office: LA 349
Office hours:
10-11 MWF or
by appt.

Text: Jeremy Black, War and the World

This course is concerned with armed conflict as a social phenomenon. It does not involve analysis of battles, campaigns or military history. Instead several aspects of war as human endeavor are considered. For our purposes armed conflict may be defined as the organized, systematic and persistent use of force for defined objectives. The course is organized in a chronological fashion and generally follows the outline of the textbook. The focus is upon the changing nature of armed conflict and the role it plays in society.

Requirements:

There will be two hourly exams - October 5 and November 9 each counting for 20% of final grade. The comprehensive final is scheduled for December 20 from 8:00-10:00 counting for 30% of the final grade.

An additional assignment is a review essay on a novel or three movies each having armed conflict or the military as a central theme. The purpose of the essay is to explore in a specific fictional context the way in which different aspects of war are treated. Of course, not all of the topics listed below are treated in each movie or novel. You will need to identify the author's perspective or point of view. Is war viewed as heroic? Are comradeship or attributes of command stressed? Choose a subject for review and submit the title for approval by October 1. The paper is due December 10.

Topic Outline:

1. The place of war in history
Read: Chapter 2
2. Ancient warfare
3. War and the early modern period
Read: Chapter 3

4. War and economics
Read: Chapter 4

EXAM # 1 - OCTOBER 8

5. War and technology
Read: Chapter 5
6. War and revolution
Read: Chapter 6
7. Sociology and psychology of war
Read: Chapter 7

EXAM # 2 - NOVEMBER 12

8. War and the state
Read: Chapter 8
9. Leaders and followers
10. Modern war
Read: Chapter 9

FINAL EXAM - DECEMBER 20 - 08:00-10:00

Note: September 24 is the last day to drop classes or change grading option.