



War and Terrorism in Popular Culture

ENGL 246
Summer 2016
Georgetown University
MTWR 5:45 – 7:45 p.m.
Maguire 102

Instructor: Ellen Gorman
Office: 334 New North
Office Hours: By appointment
E-mail: elg27@georgetown.edu

Required Texts

Culture, Crisis and America's War on Terror, Stuart Croft
Incendiary, Chris Cleave
Rewriting 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the "War on Terror", Anna Froula
Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk, Ben Fountain

Films/Video (On Reserve/Gelardin Media Center):

Bloody Sunday (2002); *Dr. Strangelove* (1964); *Homeland* (Season 1, 2011); *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012)

Additional readings (handouts and online)

Course Description:

How are war and terrorism reimagined and imbricated into popular culture? What are the effects of aestheticizing violence? This course will examine the proliferation of artistic forms that seek to address the issue of war and the attendant concern about terrorism in America by looking at contemporary conflicts and their impacts on texts including literature, film, television, video, song lyrics, and poetry.

In this course you will be asked to read and then to think critically about what you have read. You will also be asked to articulate and make claims about your interpretations in your writing, and participate in collaborative discussions and peer response sessions.

The overall frame around any of our inquiries in this course is the development of critical thinking and writing skills. You will be asked to write two formal papers: a critical essay and a researched critique of texts of your choice. Due dates are indicated on the schedule but are subject to change. Papers should conform to MLA-style format and be typed, double-spaced, in a 12-point font, and paginated with the author's name on each page on the top right hand side. For more specific information see the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

Response papers are focused on a text of your choice from the syllabus, and should be no less than two full, double-spaced pages (going over on to a third to be sure) and can exceed the minimum length. Respond to and engage with the text, and make at least two connections to other texts on the syllabus in the course of your response. Your voice in these papers is informal.

All students are encouraged to avail themselves of the free services at the University's Writing Center:
<http://www.georgetown.edu/departments/english/writing/wcenter.html>.

Sensitive Material

At times this semester we will be discussing events and issues that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may always do so without academic penalty. (You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually.)

List of assignments and percentage of grade

Paper #1/Media Critique	25%
Paper #2/Researched Argument	30%
Response Papers (3)	15%
Quizzes (2)	10%
Participation	20%

General Policies

Grading

Papers will be due in class on the due date. Grades for papers one day late will be dropped one full grade; papers two days late will be dropped two full grades. A grade of "No Credit" will be given for papers later than two days late. Papers cannot be submitted by E-mail unless specified by the instructor.

Participation

Keep in mind that class participation will count for 20% of your grade; participation includes contributing to class discussions, in-class writing assignments and peer review sessions, and regular attendance (attendance is mandatory in the summer sessions unless excused by the instructor).

Two quizzes constitute 10% of the grade and will not be announced beforehand.

No laptops will be allowed during class sessions unless approved by instructor. No phones period; use of phones in class = zero participation credit.

University Policies

All Georgetown University policies, as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin, will be observed:
<http://www.georgetown.edu/undergrad/bulletin/>.

All students are required to be aware of the University's Honor Code regulations:
<http://www.georgetown.edu/undergrad/bulletin/regulations6.html#standards>.

SCHEDULE

July 11	Introduction; review of syllabus
July 12	Definitions/Language/Media: Look up OED definitions of "war" and "terrorism"; Excerpt from <i>What Terrorists Want</i> – Louise Richardson (handout); CBC Radio, Scott Vrooman on the use of the word terror: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cf3uaeHPC5s Watch <i>The Stephen Colbert Report: "ISIS Militants in Iraq"</i> – Youtube; "Why calling the Charleston shooting terrorism is important to so many people" – Dara Lund, Vox.com (online); "Guns kill more people. So why does terrorism get all the attention?" – Tom Diaz, <i>TheWashingtonPost.com</i> ; "Why Boston bombings are labeled terrorism but mass shootings like the one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. are not" – Joseph Straw, <i>TheNewYorkDailyNews.com</i> ; "American Airlines Passenger Questioned for Doing Math" – The Daily Show, <i>ComedyCentral.com</i> (video)
July 13	Post 9/11 - Crisis: "The Spirit of Terrorism," Jean Baudrillard (excerpt/handout); "Language, Media and War: Manipulating Public Perceptions" – Yahya R. Kamalipour,

- Global Media Goes to War* (handout);
 “ObamaNation” – Part 3: Lowkey feat. Lupe Fiasco, Malcolm X, Tupac, M1 and Black the Ripper), Lyrics, *RapGenius.com* and Video for Part 3 – YouTube;
 9/11 Documentary, History Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLXiH45wi4Y>
 “Post-9/11 Generation: Millennials Reflect On Decade Since Terrorist Attacks” – Amanda Fairbanks, *HuffingtonPost.com*; Growing up in terrorist times - *TheWashingtonPost.com*
- July 14 Read Croft: Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2;
 Watch “Osama bin Laden has Farty Pants – South Park, November 7, 2001 (Hulu.com);
 “Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)” – Toby Keith:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc>
 “The Proud” – Talib Kweli: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFSiM874Jxg>
 “An Open Letter to NYC” – Beastie Boys: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LitOrlOi9SA>
 Graffiti.org – 9/11 Tattoos/Murals/Graffiti;
 Jon Stewart, Response to 9/11 - *The Daily Show*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Xcmc2AZ6ZE>
- July 18 **Domestic Terrorism:**
 Read Froula, Introduction and Chapters 1 – 4;
 ‘I Think About It Daily’: Life in a Time of Mass Shootings – *TheNewYorkTimes.com*;
 An expert on right-wing terrorism explains the militia movement behind the Oregon takeover – *Vox.com*;
 FBI Ads Showing Islamic Terrorists Called ‘Racist’ by Critics” – Kyle Becker, *Independent Journal Review*;
 “How the War on Terror has Militarized Police” – Arthur Rizer and Joseph Hartman, *The Atlantic.com*;
 “Troops referred to Ferguson protesters as ‘enemy forces’, emails show” – Joanna Walters, *TheGuardian.com*; Orlando, race, and the meaning of terror, Terrell Starr, *Fusion.com*;
 “Dallas Police Shootings Not Being Investigated As Terrorism” – Ali Watkins, *Buzzfeed.com*
- July 19 Screen *Homeland*, first four episodes;
 “Homeland TV Series Offers Critique on Real-Life Terrorism and What Constitutes Patriotism” – Video – *HuffingtonPost.com*; The Dark History of Defending the ‘Homeland - *TheNewYorkTimes.com*;
 “How sensationalist TV stories on terrorism make Americans more hawkish,” Shana Gadarian, *TheWashingtonPost.com*; “The ‘24’ Effect” – Matt Bai, *News.Yahoo.com*;
Four Lions – Trailer, YouTube; **response paper 1 due**
- July 20 **Collateral Damage**
 Screen *Zero Dark Thirty*; “Torture and *Zero Dark Thirty*” – David Bromwich, *TheHuffingtonPost.com*;
 “Are Drones Obama’s Legacy on War on Terrorism?” – Ari Shapiro, NPR (online);
 “Lupe Fiasco: ‘Obama is the biggest terrorist’” – YouTube,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28MwXpy8uh8>
 “Superhero movies have become an endless attempt to rewrite 9/11” – Todd VanDerWurff, *Vox.com*; “See John Oliver Explain Why the U.S. Needs to Stop Fighting Terror With Torture” – Shaya Mohajer, *Takepart.com* (article and video – online)
- July 21 Read *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*;
 “America’s Team” – Geoff Dyer, *TheNewYorkTimes.com*;
 Watch one episode of *Coming Home*, *Lifetime.com*;
 “‘American Sniper’ is Almost Too Dumb to Criticize” – Matt Taibbi, *RollingStone.com*
- July 25 Read *Incendiary* 1 - 111; “Fantasy Terrorism” – *Spikedonline.com*;
 “Artist Mark Sinckler Defends 7/7 Bomb Mural” – *BBC News.com*;
 “How 9/11 changed fiction: After the unthinkable”, *TheEconomist.com*
 “We’re All Guilty of Dehumanizing the Enemy” - Sebastian Junger, *TheWashingtonPost.com*
- July 26 Read *Incendiary*, 112 – 237; “Reality Bites” – Alfred Hickling, *The Guardian.com*;
 “Incendiary: The Book that Became Too Hot to Handle” –
 Vanessa de la Torre, *TheWashingtonPost.com*; Trailer for “Who Wants to be a Terrorist” – YouTube;
 France’s Diminished Liberties - *TheNewYorkTimes.com*

“Army Artists Look at the War on Terrorism” –
http://www.history.army.mil/books/wot_artwork/wot_artbook.html
response paper 3 due

August 10

Fear/Privacy/Democracy

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Government Surveillance” (YouTube);
Eric Holder says Edward Snowden performed 'public service' with NSA leak;
“Why We Get the Police State We Deserve” – Nick Gillespie, *TheDailyBeast.com*;
“Must Counterterrorism cancel democracy?” – David Cole, *TheNewYorkReviewofBooks.com*

August 11

Last class

August 15

Final paper due (in my box in the English Dept, 306 New North, by 4 p.m.)