

## Sociology & Ethics of War

## Spring 2008 Elective

Soc 410/510 **Sociology and Ethics of War** (4 credits) Spring 2008 Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 – 11:50 AM Dr. Fromherz

“This is a just war.” “This is a war of aggression!” Perhaps there is no topic more likely to engender passionate rhetoric than that of war. It is truly a matter of life and death—and a matter of post-traumatic stress, with countless other impacts on individuals, societies and ecosystems. This lecture/discussion course looks at both the social context and the ethical justifications which lead to war—e.g. the just war tradition, notions of a “holy war,” vital interests, and numerous other claims.

We shall consider the societal dynamics that figure into the preparation and mobilization for war; such complexities as nationalism, ideological formation, the military-industrial complex, doctrines of national security, geo-political and economic calculations, portraits of “the enemy,” and concern to defend “the common good.”

**Our goal is to enrich our understanding of the social phenomenon of war and how war relates to complex webs of meaning and action; how war relates to economic systems, social institutions, religions, cultural patterns, worldviews and the collective psyches of peoples.** We shall do so by examining and discussing: diverse theories of war, passionately held points of view, specific conflict cases, ethical arguments about war, dispassionate social analyses of war and society, and poignant personal stories—with testimonies from Remarque and Herr, with thinkers such as Clausewitz and Thucydides, Barbara Tuchman and Sun Tzu, Barbara Ehrenreich and Vandana Shiva, through a host of voices from antiquity through modernity, and with the help of sociologists, social ethicists, novelists, soldier-poets and artists (think of Leo Tolstoy, Wilfred Owen, Susan Griffin, or Pablo Picasso...*Guernica*). While focused on the sociology and ethics of war, we will include insights and arguments from many disciplines and angles of vision. Thoughtful—and sometimes disturbing—reflections on war may transcend many genres and analytical boundaries. It was Sherman, a military general holding claim to the field of “theology and ethics”—who said—thereby intent on justifying the burning of Atlanta: “war is hell.” In our course, we shall hear from victims of war and participants in battles...who have survived “hell.” Think, for example, of Kurt Vonnegut’s Slaughterhouse Five, or the powerful story by Iris Chang, The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II.

Professor: Frank A. Fromherz, Ph.D., Religion and Society/Social Ethics, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley (with Robert Bellah, UC Berkeley, mentor during my doctoral studies; my dissertation focus: a socio-historical and ethical case study of religious leadership, conscience, the common good, the just war, and the ethics of nonviolence as a way of life)

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For individual meetings with students: we can arrange ahead so as to meet when I am on campus—Tuesdays or Thursdays (hours available: Noon to 1:45 PM); please email or call to arrange, several days ahead please.

**Sociology and Ethics of War—Required Books** (available via PSU Bookstore):

All Quiet on the Western Front, by Erich Maria Remarque

Dispatches, by Michael Herr

The Great War and Modern Memory, by Paul Fussell

Arguing About War, by Michael Walzer

Passionate Declarations: Essays on War and Justice, by Howard Zinn

The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic, by Chalmers Johnson

**Sociology and Ethics of War—Calendar Outline of Themes and Assignments:**

NB: For each class session, please carefully read the specified book assignment in advance; come prepared for both lecture and discussion. Class begins promptly at 10 AM; please arrive on time.

Tuesday, April 1      Opening Session      Theme: The Sociology and Social Ethics of Our War Stories—How have our own lives, and the lives of people we know, been affected by war? Bring your experiences and the stories of others; no reading assignment for this first session

Thursday, April 3      Theme: On War and Justice—Dialogue with Howard Zinn and others

Please read in advance: Passionate Declarations, by Howard Zinn, pages 1-105

Tuesday, April 8      Theme: Law, Justice and War—Continued dialogue with Zinn and others

Please read in advance: Passionate Declarations, pages 106-301

Thursday, April 10      Theme: Ethical Arguments about War—Dialogue with Michael Walzer and others

Please read in advance: Arguing about War, pages ix-81

Tuesday, April 15      Theme: Specific War Cases in Our Time—Continued dialogue with Walzer and others

Please read in advance: Arguing about War, pages 85-191

Thursday, April 17 Theme: The Sociology, History and Literature of War—Exploring the insights of Paul Fussell and others

Please read in advance: The Great War and Modern Memory, pages 3-154

Tuesday, April 22 Theme: Communities of Memory—Fussell and others on the power of memory; and its role in the sociology and ethics of war

Please read in advance: The Great War and Modern Memory, pages 155-342

Thursday, April 24 Theme: A Story of War—Reading Erich Maria Remarque

Please read in advance: All Quiet on the Western Front, pages: all

Tuesday, April 29 Theme: Another Story of War—Reading Michael Herr

Please read in advance: Dispatches, pages 3-158

Thursday, May 1 Theme: What Can We Learn from Personal Journals of War?

Please read in advance: Dispatches, pages 158-260

Tuesday, May 6 War Film, to be shown (Selection TBA, will be announced ahead)  
No reading assignment

Thursday, May 8 Theme: The Military-Industrial Complex

Please read in advance: The Sorrows of Empire, pages 1-130

Tuesday, May 13 Theme: The Iraq Wars

Please read in advance: The Sorrows of Empires, pages 131-253

Thursday, May 15 Theme: A Sociological and Social Ethical Dialogue with Chalmers Johnson (with reference to his trilogy, which includes Blowback and Nemesis as well as The Sorrows of Empire)

Tuesday, May 20 Theme: Integrating Many Dimensions—Toward a Sociology and Ethics of War

No reading assignment (but see the list of recommended readings below)

Thursday, May 22 Theme: Integrating Many Dimensions—continued lecture and discussion

No reading assignment (you should be working, each week at this point, on your analysis and reflection paper, and the class sessions can provide opportunities to focus questions and discussion on ideas related to your paper; see below)

Tuesday, May 27 Theme: The Conscience of a Nation—Exploring the notion of a collective conscience and its significance for a society's capacity to transcend patterns of militarism AND to sustain a morally sound approach to national security

No reading assignment (continue working on your paper; and review the course readings in preparation for the final exam)

Thursday, May 29      Theme: The Conscience of a Nation—continued lecture and discussion

No reading assignment (again, see the list of recommended readings as your time permits)

Tuesday, June 3      Theme: Aspects (on the question of war) We Have Not Yet Considered

No reading assignment (bring your draft paper as basis for class discussion)

Thursday, June 5      Submit Your Paper—and Provide a Brief Report in Class

Week of June 9-14      Final Exam (closed book, in-class exam, short essay questions)

### **Requirements:**

All undergraduate and graduate students are required to read, analyze and critique the six designated books (see above). All students must research and write a paper—an analysis and reflection on the topic of war (professor will discuss specific criteria early in the course). For undergraduates, this paper must be no less than 10 pages and no more than 15, including notes and bibliography. For graduate students, this paper must be no less than 20 pages and no more than 25 pages, including notes and bibliography. All students are required to take the final exam in class on the date—TBA (during finals week). Graduate students are asked to also read from two books and two journal articles in the sociology of war and likewise in the social ethics of war (your task is to do the research to find quality works by researchers working in these fields today—and bring the insights from these readings to class discussions; try to find work that is of special interest to you—research that relates questions of war to other areas of interest that you study, for example, war and questions of social inequality, war and foreign policy, war and the sociology of knowledge, war and the sociology of religion...).

Class participation is important: regular attendance (only excused absences will be permitted, and no more than three of these total) and, during discussion time, active participation—careful listening and thoughtful contributions (note: any question, no matter how much you might think it to be of little value, is of real value; questions spark curiosity and inquiry, so please know that questions and thoughtful comments are most welcome; just be sure to pay heed that all students have opportunities to participate). Frequent absence from class will result in a much lower course grade. Reason: my whole approach to teaching and learning (I bring nearly three decades of experience to this work of exploring the meaning of war, justice, and society) depends significantly upon your active participation—listening, engaging, exploring ideas together. Your curiosity, experience, reflective analyses and class participation will benefit all of us.

### **Recommended Readings and Other Sources:**

I highly recommend one key source (though there are many others you could explore as well) which provides an extensive bibliography and which situates the study of war in the context of sociology and political science as a whole: [The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology](#), ed. Kate Nash and Alan Scott. In the field of social ethics and war, the list of pertinent texts and journals is huge (just google☺). One could cite a very long list of books, films, journal articles.... Instead, I shall simply highlight here below some of the sources that continue to influence my own understanding and multi-disciplinary approach to this sobering topic:

For Whom The Bell Tolls (*Por Quien Doblan Las Campanas*), Ernest Hemingway (I first read this in Spanish, back in 1972, when I was living in Spain, among people who had fought on both sides of the Spanish Civil War, so I had occasion to ask them about the novel and whether Hemingway had described the conflict in terms they could recognize; we will begin the course with this story of my encounters with veterans of that civil war)

A History of Warfare, John Keegan

The Just War: An American Reflection on the Morality of War in Our Time, Peter Temes  
Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes

The Prince, Machiavelli

The Nation-State and Violence, Anthony Giddens

Coercion, Capital, and European States, Charles Tilly

Political Writings, Max Weber

Post-Military Society, Martin Shaw

The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert Tucker

New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era, Mary Kaldor

States, War and Capitalism, Michael Mann

The Passion of the Western Mind, Richard Tarnas

The Story of American Freedom, Eric Foner

Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture, William Leach

The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution, Carolyn Merchant

Ethics and Belief, Peter Baelz

The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri

Civilization and Its Discontents, Sigmund Freud

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany, William Shirer

Addicted to War, Joel Andreas

City of God, Augustine

The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Dino Bigongiari

The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman

On the Home Front: The Cold War Legacy of the Hanford Nuclear Site, Michele Stenehjem Gerber

Right and Wrong: Basic Readings in Ethics, Christina Hoff Sommers

*Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler

The Guns of August, Barbara Tuchman

The March of Folly, Barbara Tuchman

Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles, Anthony Swofford  
 Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War, Barbara Ehrenreich  
 The Peloponnesian War, Thucydides  
 The Power Elite, C. Wright Mills  
 Every War Has Two Losers (William Stafford on Peace and War), ed. Kim Stafford  
 War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning, Chris Hedges  
 On War, Carl von Clausewitz  
 Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit, Vandana Shiva  
 The Art of War, Sun Tzu  
 Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy, Noam Chomsky  
 Guns, Germs, and Steel; The Fates of Human Societies, Jared Diamond  
 Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Jared Diamond  
 A Chorus of Stones: The Private Life of War, Susan Griffin  
 All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror, Stephen Kinzer  
 Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala, Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer  
 From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity, Leo Braudy  
 Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations, Michael Walzer  
 Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory, Lisa Sowle Cahill  
 Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation, Roland Bainton  
 Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World, Karen Armstrong  
 Why Nations Go To War, John Stoessinger  
 War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy  
 Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil, Hannah Arendt  
 Victims of Groupthink, Irving Janis  
 Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America, Garry Wills  
 Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution, Louis Kriesberg  
 Of War and Love, Dorothee Solle  
 War, Peace, and the Social Order, Brian Fogarty  
 In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace, The United Methodist Council of Bishops  
 The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, National Conference of Catholic Bishops  
 Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society, Stanley Hauerwas  
 Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence, Mark Juergensmeyer  
 Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire, Chalmers Johnson  
 Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic, Chalmers Johnson  
 The Radicalism of the American Revolution, Gordon Wood  
 The Coming of the French Revolution, Georges Lefebvre (trans. By R.R. Palmer)  
 The Iliad, and The Odyssey, Homer  
 Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, John Womack, Jr.  
*Las Venas Abiertas de America Latina*, Eduardo Galeano  
 Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, Dee Brown  
 Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq, Thomas Ricks

Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World,  
 eds. E.J. Dionne, Jean Bethke Elshtain and Kayla Drogosz  
 Army 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War, David Axe  
 Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, From the Great War to the War on  
 Terror, Michael Burleigh  
 Shooter: The Autobiography of the Top-Ranked Marine Sniper, Jack Coughlin and Casey  
 Kuhlman, with Donald Davis  
 Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons, Joseph Cirincione  
 Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present, Michael Oren  
 Making War in the Name of God, Christopher Catherwood  
 Beyond the Wild Blue: A History of the United States Air Force, 1947-2007  
 House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power, James Carrol  
 Sociology of War and Peace, Colin Creighton and Martin Shaw  
 The Political Sociology of War, Alan Scott (This essay is found within the Blackwell...)  
 Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology, Kate Nash and Alan Scott  
 Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al  
 Qaeda (not available until June, 2008), Mark Juergensmeyer  
 The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced By War, Andrew Bacevich  
 Encyclopedia of Religion and War, Palmer-Fernande  
 Holy War, Jihad and Crusades: Remaking Modernity, Politics, History and Sociology,  
 Julia Adams, Elizabeth Stephanie Clemens, et.al.  
 Feminist Methodologies for International Relations, ed. Brooke Ackerly, Marcia Stern,  
 et.al.

Other texts will be noted during lectures and discussions. As said above, the list is far  
 from comprehensive. I have tried to note sources that have influenced my own study of  
 war. During our course together I will note various websites, films, journals, and other  
 sources. I shall welcome your suggestions. One could spend several lifetimes reading  
 about war and never complete a comprehensive “review of the literature.” We—or,  
 some “we” in particular—just seem to keep producing more and more bloody occasions  
 for socio-historical study. We will look for patterns and trends across history and  
 geography. Ancient and persistent, indeed, is war, but among the great variety of aspects  
 within the broad subject, here are a few (do please begin to create your own list of topics  
 and questions to explore):

The state of war and the state of nature  
 Civil war  
 Religious wars  
 Class wars  
 The rights of war  
 Military arts and the military profession  
 War and one alternative: nonviolent conflict resolution  
 War, international law, international treaties, Nuremberg, Geneva conventions....  
 Kant, Hobbes, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Freud, Nietzsche, Hobbes, Augustine,  
 Aristophanes, MLK, Jr., Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt...the United Nations....  
 War and ecology

Rwanda, Congo, Sudan, war and ethnic violence....

Arms trade

War and genocide

The “War on Terror”

Mercenaries and the privatization of war

War and globalization

War and imperialism

War and popular self-defense

War and the common good

War and the conscience of the individual

War and “the clash of civilizations”

War, modernity, and postmodernism

Conscientious objection

War tax-resistance

War and civil disobedience

Conscription

War and music

War and patriotism

War and ritual

War and sacrifice

War and glory

War and the hero

War and plunder

War and mythology

War and sexism, racism, elitism....

War and revolution

Unconventional war and terrorism

Counterinsurgency

War and intelligence

National security doctrines—rhetoric and practice

War and disinformation

War and propaganda

War and culture

War and socio-biology

War and displacement

War and disarmament

War and finding a lasting peace

Bring your notes based on careful reading, your thoughts and ideas to our discussions each Tuesday and Thursday morning. If you have questions regarding this course, its goals and expectations, please contact me (via phone or email, as indicated above).

Thank you, Frank Fromherz

*“...warfare and poetry have been intertwined for centuries. The Iliad. The Aeneid. Samurai poetry. El Cid. Gilgamesh.”* -- Susan Griffin, from A Chorus of Stone.