COURSE SYLLABUS

A. Text List

- Texts Available in UW Bookstore

  Stollworthy, The Oxford Book of War Poetry (Oxford)
  Homer, The Iliad (Penguin)
  Anon., Beowulf (Norton Critical)
  Shakespeare, Henry IV (Penguin)
  Crane, The Red Badge of Courage (Norton Critical)
  Mowatt, And No Birds Sang (Bantam)
  Heller, Catch 22 (Dell)
  Miller, Canticle for Leibowitz (Bantam)

- Texts Available on Reserve in Dana Porter Library

  Hemingway, Vignettes from In Our Time
  "Soldier's Home"
  "Big Two-Hearted River"

B. Course Description

As the official description in the Undergraduate Calendar puts it, English 108N "studies the experience of war and attitudes toward it as revealed in literary works from different historical periods." The historical periods covered by the course begin with the Classical era of ancient Greece and end with visions of the future; these periods are specified below in the Schedule of Topics. The literary works examined in the course, with the important exception of our opening work, come largely from literature in English; most of them are by British, Canadian, and American writers.

Because of the passion and the variety of responses which war has always evoked, the topic of war provides an appropriate focus for an English course with a thematic emphasis. John Stollworthy's opening statement in his Introduction to The Oxford Book of War Poetry suggests some of the directions which our thematic explorations will take: "there can be no area of human experience that has generated a wider range of powerful feelings than war: hope and fear; exhilaration and humiliation; hatred—not only for the enemy, but also for generals, politicians, and war-profiteers; love—for fellow soldiers, for women and children left behind, for country (often) and cause (occasionally)" (WP, p. xix).
In our thematic explorations, we will also direct questions like the following at the literary works we examine: In this work, and in its culture, what (and why) is war? In this work's context, what are the causes and the motives of war? What are the consequences and the effects of war? Who (and what) is the warrior or the soldier? Who are the survivors and the victims? How and why and to what extent do literary treatments of and attitudes toward war change over time?

The goals of the course include exploring with you the ways in which writers from many periods examine and respond to the human experience; introducing you to the study of literature at the university level; giving you a sense of the span of literature over time; examining the variety of literary forms and types which the assigned readings provide (epic poetry, lyric poetry, drama, novel, short story, future fiction, personal memoir); and helping you to learn to write about literature.

C. Course Requirements

All students are required to read all of the assigned literary works; to participate, and be prepared to participate, in class discussions; to write and submit three essays (an 800-word paper on The Iliad or Beowulf, to be assigned on 19 January and due on 2 February; an 800-word paper on 1 Henry IV, to be assigned on 9 February and due on 2 March; a term paper of about 1500-2000 words, to be assigned on 26 February and due on 2 April); to write a one-hour midterm test on the material from Homer through Drayton on 9 February; and to write a three-hour final examination on the material of the course as a whole during the April examination period.

D. Schedule of Topics

* Introductory -- January 3, 5

* The Classical Era -- January 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19

  Homer, The Iliad

* The Early Middle Ages: The Anglo-Saxon Period -- January 22, 24, 26

  Beowulf
  "The Battle of Brunanburh" (WP, p. 19)
  "The Battle of Maldon" (WP, p. 23)
The Sixteenth Century Looks Back at the Later Middle Ages --
January 29, 31, February 2, 5, 7

Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV
Drayton, "To the Cambro-Britons, and their harp, his Ballad of Agincourt" (WP, p. 37)

The Nineteenth Century -- February 12, 14, 16, 26, 28

The Napoleonic Wars

Wordsworth, "November 1806" (WP, p. 78)
Wolfe, "The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna" (WP, p. 83)
Barlow, "Advice to a Raven in Russia" (WP, p. 84)
Mickiewicz, "The Year 1812" (WP, p. 86)
Hugo, "Russia 1812" (WP, p. 88)
Tyutchev, "At Vschizh" (WP, p. 90)
Browning, "Incident of the French Camp" (WP, p. 91)
Hardy, Selection from The Dynasts (WP, p. 92)
Byron, Selection from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (WP, p. 95)

The Crimean War

Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (WP, p. 115)
Thackeray, "The Due of the Dead" (WP, p. 119)

The American Civil War

Whitman, "Beat! Beat! Drums!" (WP, p. 121); "Come up from the Fields Father" (p. 122); "Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field one Night" (p. 124); "The Wound-Dresser" (p. 125); "Reconciliation" (p. 127)
Melville, "The Portent" (WP, p. 127); "Ball's Bluff" (p. 128); "Shiloh" (p. 129); "The College Colonel" (p. 129)
Crane, "Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind" (WP, p. 131); The Red Badge of Courage

The Twentieth Century -- March 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 26

The Great War (WWI)

Brooke, "Peace" (WP, p. 162); "The Dead" (p. 162); "The Soldier" (p. 163)
McCrae, "In Flanders Fields" (WP, p. 165)
Yeats, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" (WP, p. 174)
Sassoon, "They" (WP, p. 176); "The Hero" (WP, p. 176)
Thomas, "Rain" (WP, p. 179)
Rosenberg, "Break of Day in the Trenches" (WP, p. 184); "Dead Man's Dump" (p. 185); "Returning, We Hear the Larks" (p. 187)
Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (WP, p. 188); "Dulce Et Decorum Est" (p. 188); "Futility" (p. 193); "Strange Meeting" (p. 193)
Hemingway, Vignettes from In Our Time; "Soldier's Home"; "Big Two-Hearted River"

* World War II
  Mowatt, And No Birds Sang
  Heller, Catch 22
  Reed, "Lessons of the War" (WP, p. 254)
  Lewis, "All day it has rained..." (WP, p. 257)
  Eberhart, "The Fury of Aerial Bombardment" (WP, p. 275)
  Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" (WP, p. 277)
  Fogel, "Shipment to Maidenek" (WP, p. 301)
  Hecht, "More Light! More Light!" (WP, p. 303)
  Hill, "September Song" (WP, p. 317)
  Voznesensky, "I am Goya" (WP, p. 318)

* Vietnam
  Levertof, "What Were They Like?" (WP, p. 323)
  Kinnell, "Vapor Trail Reflected in the Frog Pond" (WP, p. 324)
  Mezey, "How Much Longer?" (WP, p. 325)
  Atwood, "It is Dangerous to Read Newspapers" (WP, p. 326)
  Mitchell, "To Whom It May Concern" (WP, p. 327)
  Fenton, "Dead Soldiers" (WP, p. 328)

* Visions of the Future -- March 28, 30, April 2
  Wilbur, "Advice to a Prophet" (WP, p. 337)
  Stafford, "At the Bomb Testing Site" (WP, p. 338)
  Porter, "Your Attention Please" (WP, p. 339)
  Miller, Canticle for Leibowitz

E. Calculation of Course Grade

* Essays
  Paper #1 -- 12% (due 2 February)
  Paper #2 -- 12% (due 2 March)
  Paper #3 -- 26% (due 2 April)

* Exams
  Midterm -- 15% (9 February)
  Final -- 35% (April)