THE COURSE

“A study of works of literature and film which express a resistance to war. The course examines how the desire to articulate an anti-war position has engaged the artistic sensibilities and shaped the visions and modes of expression of selected writers and filmmakers.” Course Catalogue Description

In this course, much of our time will be spent exploring literature and film that express a resistance to war. However, we will also look at works that use literature and film to enable healing and nonviolent peacemaking. We will explore the content of the works in terms of the issues they raise, the role(s) that literature and film can play in response to war and violence, as well as examine the texts and films as artistic works in and of themselves. The format of the course will involve mini-lectures, films, presentations, and discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course you will:

- Explore a variety of expressions of resistance to violence and war in literature and film
- Expand knowledge of the ways that literature and film engage and transform audiences
- Develop skills in analyzing film and literature (intention, audience, context, stylistic devices)
- Investigate how literature and film can be part of peacebuilding processes in diverse settings
- Think critically and reflectively about our ability to comprehend peace and war.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS/TEXTS

Elie Wiesel. *Night*.
Tim O’Brien. *The Things They Carried*.
Chanrithy Him. *When Broken Glass Floats: Growing up under the Khmer Rouge*.

All films, lectures, discussions and presentations are primary course material.
EXPECTATIONS

Because of the nature and structure of the course, it is imperative that students participate regularly in class, watch all films, and complete – before Mondays’ class begins – ALL the reading for the week unless otherwise advised. The course outline below indicates required reading for each week.

Students are also expected to:
... attend all classes;
... mentally prepare some questions/thoughts/provocative assertions to bring to class;
... participate in class discussions;
... refrain from using distracting technological devices in the classroom (unless it’s for a presentation).

Participation, Attendance, Weekly responses to the texts

This is a relatively small class meeting in a room conducive to group interaction. Therefore, students will be encouraged to talk. We will do so in a respectful fashion with the understanding that all students bring particular insights and valuable differences to the context of the classroom. All students should come to class prepared to be called upon to remark on one or more elements of the past week’s readings that seemed to them to be worthy of comment, or of further elaboration or investigation. They should feel welcome to respond constructively to the observations and comments of their peers.

Please turn off all cell phones prior to the start of class unless it is an emergency (and then only in silent mode) and use laptops only for notes or to access readings (unless it is for your presentation).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Cite ALL sources (including internet sources) consulted for written and/or orally-presented work. Because of the seriousness of plagiarism and cheating students MUST familiarize themselves with the definitions of cheating and plagiarism and the related penalties. Students at the University of Waterloo are expected to be familiar with the University’s standards regarding academic honesty, and to avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an academic offence. See further notes below (p.7).

a. Quizzes and participation throughout the term: 20%
Regular quizzes will be administered over the term to ensure students keep up with their reading and are prepared to participate in the course. Readings for a given week are expected to be completed by the Monday class, and quizzes may be administered on Monday or Wednesday (or both). Quizzes will be made up of short questions. Your quiz with the lowest grade in the term will be dropped from the final grade. No accommodation will be made for missed quizzes or for students’ late arrival for quizzes, which might be administered at any time during the class.

b. Text-based critical reading (due dates will vary) – 10%
Regularly, a few of the students in the class will explain, in a well-prepared two minutes, what s/he might have written were s/he to write a four- to six-page paper meant to explicate a particular element s/he has identified as noteworthy in one of the works among the week’s readings. Noteworthy in what
Noteworthy in the sense that a particular feature of the work under consideration might provide a window through which we can more clearly apprehend what the work seems to be saying. The student might begin like this: “Were I to write a three- to five-page essay meant to enlarge my colleagues’ understanding of [a particular poem or story or suite of poems or segment of a larger text], I would explore/investigate “x” to reveal or illumine or demonstrate “y.” The student’s brief, coherent observation should serve to inform in particular ways the class’ understanding and appreciation of a particular text. These brief presentations, for which students will sign up early in the term, will be no more than 2 minutes long. (A two-minute presentation typed, double-spaced (using a 12-point font), occupies about one page of text, so it is very brief.

Students are encouraged to use whatever notes and props they think will contribute to making their observations compelling and likely to stimulate others’ thinking about the text in question. What they say should be precisely focused, effectively supported, meticulously rehearsed, and articulately delivered. The reporting student will hand in a brief outline of her/his remarks, with a useful title and a “thesis statement” or one-sentence summary of his/her observations.

The pedagogical goal of these short presentations is to encourage students to read thoughtfully and to share their questions and insights with their peers. Students are urged to be very specific and to avoid generalizations of every kind.

Grading for these presentations will take into account the significance and value of the central idea, the clear articulation of this central idea, the structure, coherence, pacing of the piece, including a finely-crafted (however brief) introduction and conclusion; the effective use of concrete illustration; and, of course, the effective delivery of the student’s ideas: distinctiveness, impact, creativity, etc.

c. Major Project Proposal: 10%
A one-page Major Project Proposal, including a thoughtful and pointed statement of the central theme or argument, and, in addition, an Annotated Bibliography of research resources is due the day of the major project workshop in which you participate: February 11 or February 13.

The proposal consists of a thoughtfully developed statement delineating with precision the subject of the student’s project and the general shape/direction the project is likely to take. Failure to submit the Major Project Proposal on time and to participate in the Major Project Proposal Workshop will result in a grade of “0”. More details about the proposal and workshop will be provided in class.

d. Major Project: 35%
Completed projects are due March 18, with an automatic grace period up to the beginning of class, March 25. The Major Project may take one of the following forms:

ONE A thoughtfully-focused, coherent, carefully-documented analytical research essay (of 2700-3000 words) that identifies and explicates (some of) the work of a creative writer or artist or film maker (or web-site or organization or institutional event) who/that has created or employed art to express a desire for peace. As the course demonstrates, numerous writers and artists have devoted their creative energies to the cause of peace. The texts on this course engage only a few of these. From the anti-war drawings of Goya’s “Disasters of War” (ca. 1820) to Picasso’s “Guernica” (1937), from Aristophanes’ antiwar play Lysistrata (410 BC) to Tanovic’s No Man’s Land (2001), visual and literary artists have sought to objectify and comment upon humanity’s propensity to try to resolve disputes by violent means. Students are invited to use
the internet or print sources to locate artistic activities in the cause of peace, and to formulate and compose a critical assessment of one such effort.

TWO Feature narrative films are sometimes promoted as “anti-war.” On closer examination, however, many mainline feature films that purport to be “anti-war” do not in fact function as statements against war and violence. Students are invited to research and write a thoughtfully-constructed and well-documented essay of 2700-3000 words in which they explicate some of the challenges facing the film-maker who would want to make a forceful and credible visual narrative statement in favour of peace. Please note: this is not an invitation to write a film review, but to engage in an investigative, analytical exercise.

THREE Students who might be interested in preparing (alone, or in a group of two or three) a video-based project (ie, in essence, you’d be making a video of some sort rather than writing a paper) should make their wishes to pursue this option clear by week three of the term.

FOUR Students who prefer to prepare a project that is more conventional, in a scholarly sense, are welcome to compose a research paper (which makes explicit use of at least five peer-reviewed scholarly resources) that offers a fresh reading of any of the course texts, from the perspective of literature-and-peace. The paper should be 2700-3000 words in length. Any such reading must have a clear and limited focus; general commentary of the sort one would find in reviews is not acceptable. Students are advised to explore in depth a particular aspect of a given text, paying attention to how the literary text in question addresses issues related to a quest for peace.

Students are not permitted to treat the same author or text in both a class presentation and a major project.

e. Final Exam – Integrative Essay (25%)
This assignment consists of an essay for the final exam. This assignment will invite students to reflect on how the readings, films, class discussions, and their independent research have informed their own understanding of the quest for peace through the arts of literature and film. Students will be expected to comment on selected film and print course texts, as well as on any other material presented in the class. The specific “topic” for this essay will be made available to students several days ahead, to allow them time to integrate their thinking. The essay will be written in class during the exam period.

READING/CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (January 7 and 9) INTRODUCTION to the course.
BRING TO CLASS on Jan 9: a hard copy of a short (less than one page) description of peace from a literary work (look for a poem, an excerpt from a play, short story or novel).

WEEK 2 (January 14 and 16) – work from World War I
READ:
• Wilfred Owen. 1917-1918. Dulce et Decorum Est; Apologia Proemate Meo; Disabled. All three poems are from The First World War Poetry Digital Archive, University of Oxford (www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit) and posted on LEARN.

WEEK 3 (January 21 and 23) – Short stories
READ:
SCREENING: Two Soldiers, 40' (2003)

WEEK 4 (January 28 and 30) – WWII and genocide
READ:
• Elie Wiesel’s Night
• Bertolt Brecht poem “When Evil-Doing Comes like Falling Rain” (LEARN) http://www.legacy-project.org/index.php?page=lit_detail&litID=125
SCREENING: Night and Fog, 31' (1955)

WEEK 5 (February 4 and 6) – the nuclear age
READ:


SCREENING: If You Love This Planet, 28’ (1982)

**WEEK 6** (February 11 and 13)
MAJOR PROJECT WORKSHOP: details forthcoming in class

**READING WEEK**

**WEEK 7** (February 25 and 27) – fiction of Vietnam
READ: Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*.

**WEEK 8** (March 4 and 6) – genocide (ii)
READ: Chanrithy Him *When Broken Glass Floats*, pp.27-200.

**WEEK 9** (March 11 and 13) – on the road to peace
READ: Chanrithy Him *When Broken Glass Floats*, preface (pp.13-25), and pp.248-330.
SCREENING: Clips from The Power of Forgiveness, 78’ (2007)

**WEEK 10** (March 18 and 20) – film as part of nonviolent social change
SCREEN IN ADVANCE: The Imam and the Pastor 39’ (2006) – the film is on reserve at ITMS, which is located in MC 1052 and the office hours are 8am to 4:30pm
SCREENING: An African Answer, 38’ (2010)

***** Major Project ***** due anytime from March 18 and March 25

**WEEK 11** (March 25 and 27) – arts and nonviolent social change
READ:

SCREENING: Favela Rising, 80’ (2005)
Major Projects not handed in before class on March 25 will be counted as late (see note on late penalties below).

**WEEK 12** (April 1 and 3)

April 1 – guest speaker - film and social change (Peace it Together)  
READ: TBA

April 3 – Picking up loose ends

**NOTES FOR YOUR ATTENTION:**

Cross-listed course: Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70. In addition, consult http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

**ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**
Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Departure from the Terms of the Syllabus

There is a substantial amount of flexibility built into the structure of this course; therefore, any student’s request to depart from the terms of this syllabus will be considered only if accompanied by a physician’s letter, or equivalent. Failure to deliver a presentation on the date for which a student signs up will result in a grade of “0” unless the student provides formal medical documentation, or equivalent.

Standard Practices with Respect to Illness

“A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the ‘University of Waterloo Verification of Illness’ form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from the Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/verification.htm.”

Assignment Late Penalties:

Please note that late assignments will be automatically assessed a penalty of 5% (same penalty for the first 24 hour period) with an additional 2% penalty assessed for every additional day the assignment is late. A valid medical document is required for illness as noted above. If you are concerned about an assignment, do come and talk to me in advance of the deadline.

Religious Holidays/Examination Scheduling

In the event that a student requires an alternative test time on religious grounds, the Academic Dean of Conrad Grebel must to be notified within one week of the test or examination date.

Cancellation of Classes due to Weather

Conrad Grebel University College follows University of Waterloo’s policies on cancellation of classes due to severe weather. If UW’s classes are cancelled, then Grebel’s are as well. Local radio stations announce cancellations. Information can also be found on the UW home page.

Refreshments

The self-serve coffee bar Common Ground is located in what is currently left of the College Atrium (up the stairs from the 1300 classrooms). Hours of operation are 8:30-4:30 Monday to Friday. Tea and coffee are also available in the cafeteria.