War and its Aftermath

War brings brutality, death, upheaval, and trauma. Participants and survivors attest to the horror and disruptions of war and its aftermath….and yet war is seemingly a constant taken up by every generation in one form or another. In our colloquium this semester, we will explore narrative representations of war and the attendant questions that surround attempts to give it meaning. Historians, novelists, playwrights and poets of antiquity, many of whom were themselves fighters and survivors, worked to bring the war home, literally and figuratively, through storytelling. Whatever their motives, writers of war stories aim to transform violence and suffering of war into an aesthetic, emotional or intellectual experience.

We begin with Homer’s epic poem the *Iliad* which will serve as a template for the questions and problems posed by war and by representations of war. First in circulation as malleable oral poetry and later codified as a text, the *Iliad* was revered throughout the divided and warring societies we lump together as ‘ancient Greece.’ Its cultural currency was so great that tragedians, historians and philosophers reckoned with its influence throughout antiquity, well into the era of the Roman Empire with its unending wars of expansion, and beyond.

Even today, the *Iliad* holds relevance and we can look to Charlotte Higgins’s recent article as a prompt for the sorts of issues we will tackle in all of our texts: “…*The Iliad* tells us that war is both the bringer of renown to its young fighters and the destroyer of their lives. It tells us about post-conflict destruction and chaos; about war as the great reverser of fortunes. It tells us about the age-old dilemmas of fighters compelled to serve under incompetent superiors. It tells us about war as an attempt to protect and preserve a treasured way of life. It tells us, too, about the profound gulf between civilian existence and life on the front line; about atrocities and indiscriminate slaughter; about war's peculiar mercilessness to women and children; about friendships and sympathies across the battle lines. It tells us of the love between soldiers who fight together. Most of all, it tells us about the frightful losses of war: of a soldier losing his closest companion, of a father losing his son.”

* Charlotte Higgins  [https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jan/30/iliad-war-charlotte-higgins](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jan/30/iliad-war-charlotte-higgins)
Readings
All texts are required and are available at the Wesleyan RJ Julia Bookstore on Main Street. Many of these works can be bought in good second-hand condition at RJ Julia or online for an inexpensive price, but you must purchase the same translations and editions of the texts listed below so that we’re all on the same page for class discussion. (*ISBNs for all books are provided on Moodle so that you may purchase the entire list yourselves.*)

Some readings will be provided as .pdf documents on the class Moodle site. Please download and print.

Each reading assignment must be completed before class discussion and brought to class in hard-copy form. The use of laptops, smartphones, iPads, etc., in class will not be allowed unless granted special permission through Accessibility Services or approved for pedagogical purpose.

Schedule of Readings and Papers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Homer, <em>The Essential Iliad</em> Introduction, Books 1,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Homer, <em>The Essential Iliad</em> Books 3, 6, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Homer, <em>The Essential Iliad</em> Books 12, 16, 19</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Homer, <em>The Essential Iliad</em> Books 22, 23, 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td><em>Enuma Elish</em>.pdf on Moodle (please print and bring to class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>“Book of Joshua” in <em>Oxford Study Bible</em></td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>“Ajax” in Sophocles, <em>Four Tragedies</em></td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Euripides, <em>Iphigeneia in Aulis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>PAPER 1 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>“Philoctetes” in Sophocles, <em>Four Tragedies</em> (Rosh Hashanah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Euripides’ <em>Trojan Women</em></td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>Thucydides <em>On Justice, Power, and Human Nature</em> pp. 1-37</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>(Yom Kippur—No Class )</td>
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W 10/16  Plato, Republic Books 1-2

M 10/21  Fall Break: no class meeting, but read for Wednesday 10/23

W 10/23  Plato, Republic Books 3-4,

R 10/24  Master Class with Diane on her translation of Trojan Women. 4:30 pm in the COL library.  ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

M 10/28  Plato, Republic Book 8 + class debate: “justice is the advantage of the stronger”

W 10/30  Livy, The Early History of Rome  pp. 29-62

F 11/01  PAPER 2 DUE


W 11/6   Virgil, The Aeneid Books 1-4

M 11/11  Virgil, The Aeneid Books 5-8

W 11/13  Virgil, The Aeneid Books 9-12

M 11/18  “Gospel of Mark” in Oxford Study Bible + post temple Judaism and early Christianity TBD

W 11/20  “Gospel of Mark” in Oxford Study Bible + post temple Judaism and early Christianity TBD

M 11/25  Josephus from The Jewish Wars .pdf on Moodle (please print and bring to class)

W 11/27  THANKSGIVING BREAK

M 12/2   Augustine + Aristotle  TBD

W 12/4   Seamus Heaney, The Cure at Troy

W 12/11  Mock Comprehensive Written Examination
Assignments

Moodle Posts

The night before every class, two pre-selected students will be responsible for submitting on Moodle a short question about the assigned reading for that class on Moodle. These questions should be thoughtfully composed and are intended to stimulate discussion. We will give all questions careful consideration and aim to begin each class by discussing them. Questions are to be submitted before midnight the day before each class.

In-Class Presentations

Each student will deliver a five-minute in class presentation on a topic relevant to that day’s discussion. The goal of this assignment is to help the class better understand the author or context for the topic under discussion but also to help you develop your skills for oral presentation.

Papers

Aside from the assigned reading, in-class presentation, Moodle posts, and taking part in class discussion, you will be required to write three papers (1300-1500 words) on topics of your choice that explore in further detail an issue raised by our readings. Your discussion in each paper should be focused on specific texts and tightly argued.

We will only accept papers that are uploaded to Moodle, in the following format: “241-yourlastname-1” for the first paper, then -2 and -3 for the next two. Late papers will not be evaluated. There is no final examination for this class. Thorough written evaluations are a substitute for letter grades at the end of the semester and missing papers will be recorded in these evaluations. Your continuation in the COL major depends on your performance in these evaluations.

Disability Resources

Wesleyan is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and are typically not provided retroactively, please contact Dean Patey at your earliest convenience in Disability Resources (located in North College, Room 21) or call 860-685-2332 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.