This class introduces the modern history of war and revolution through the medium of a special sort of “text”: feature-length historical films. Rather than use these films to construct a history of cinema, we will use them as evidence of contemporary historical “memory” -- that is, to show how modern cultures tell their histories to themselves. Like written texts, films can be “read” and interpreted to reveal not just the narrative of a subject but the point of view of an author, as well as the social or cultural concerns of the place and time in which they were produced -- and, then or later, viewed. By addressing historical themes in a mostly fictional (not documentary) format, our films will demonstrate how history can be “written” for a popular audience and how mass media can both shape and reflect a nation’s collective identity. Our focus will be mainly though not solely on modern European subjects, and our timeframe will extend roughly from the turn of the 20th century to the present day.

In highlighting the wars and revolutions of the modern era, our course will show the contradictory nature of traumatic experience. Ironically, some people choose to recall a time of great adventure or camaraderie, despite -- or because of -- the real tragedies they had faced. This is a sign of the frequent gulf between “memory” and history, or the distortions that occur when one tries to rewrite or erase painful remnants of the past. Wars and revolutions also interacted, one leading into the other -- all in a complex network of causal relationships, not a series of isolated events.

Our films will be drawn from among some of the best but often lesser-known cinematic achievements, to expand our knowledge of both the medium and the message. Discussion will target not just the historical content but also issues of style, including ways in which the medium differs from the written narrative form. The films will be shown on a weekly basis, outside of class time, supplemented by a range of readings to provide background and context. Writing requirements will include brief responses to class assignments plus a longer analysis of an additional film of the student’s choice. This final project, to include research into film reviews plus the historical context of the film’s authorship and production, will form part of a take-home final exam.

**Readings and films:** All course readings will be available via Blackboard. All class films will be shown outside of class time, on a schedule to be arranged. Attendance at the group showing is encouraged but is not mandatory for students who can arrange to see the films on their own, either at Woodruff Library or via Netflix or another private source.

**Course outline and assignment schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Introductory class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td>(Discussion) -- How to “read” a historical film</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>The French Revolution in Myth and Memory</td>
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<td>Read: “Revolution,” by Robert Gildea, in his <em>The Past in French History</em>, ch. 1;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>(Discussion) -- Film: <em>Danton</em></td>
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Jan. 26 World War I: “The pity of war”?

Read: “The Temporality of the July Crisis,” by Stephen Kern, in his *The Culture of Time and Space*;

“The Pity of War,” by Modris Eksteins, in his *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*.

Jan. 28 (Discussion) -- Film: *Oh, What a Lovely War*

Feb. 2 World War I in Myth and Memory


“All Quiet on the Western Front” and the Fate of a War,” by Modris Eksteins, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, April 1980.

Feb. 4 (Discussion) – Film: *Life and Nothing But*

Feb. 9 World War II: France under German Occupation


“In the Looking Glass: Sorrow and Pity?” by Stanley Hoffmann, introduction to film script of *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

Feb. 11 (Discussion) – Film: *The Eye of Vichy*

Feb. 16 World War II: Britain and the Blitz

Read: “Blitz: September 1940 to May 1941,” by Angus Calder, in his *The People’s War: Britain, 1939-1945*;


Feb. 18 (Discussion) -- Film: *Hope and Glory*

Feb. 23 World War II: Hitler’s War

Read: “Savage War: German Warfare and Moral Choices in World War II,” by Omer Bartov, in his *Germany’s War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, Ch. 1;


“German Killers: Behavior and Motivation in the Light of New Evidence,” by Christopher Browning, in his *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*.

Feb. 25 (Discussion) – Film: *Das Boot (The Boat)*
Mar. 1  The Nazi Revolution in Myth and Memory

Read: “Good Times, Bad Times: Memories of the Third Reich,” by Ulrich Herbert, in Life in the Third Reich, ed. Richard Bessel;

“German Women’s Memories of World War II,” by Annemarie Tröger, in Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars, ed. Margaret Higonnet.

Mar. 3  (Discussion) – Film: The Nasty Girl

Mar. 8, 10  No Class -- Spring Break

Mar. 15  Looking Back at Revolution in Russia

Read: “1917: The Russia We Lost?” by Walter Laqueur, in his The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union;

“Glasnost and the Reemergence of the Stalin Question,” by Kathleen E. Smith, in her Remembering Stalin’s Victims: Popular Memory and the End of the U.S.S.R.

Mar. 17  (Discussion) – Film: East/West

Mar. 22  The Algerian Revolution and Post-Colonialism

Read: “The Algerian War in French Collective Memory,” by Antoine Prost, in War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century, eds. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan;


Mar. 24  (Discussion) – Film: The Battle of Algiers

Mar. 29  Mao and the Cultural Revolution in China

Read: “Youth: Coming of Age in the Cultural Revolution,” by Steven W. Mosher, in his Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese;

“Female Infanticide in Modern China,” by D. E. Mungello, in his Drowning Girls in China: Female Infanticide since 1650.

Mar. 31  (Discussion) – Film: To Live

Apr. 5  Chile from Allende to Pinochet and After

Read: How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic, by Ariel Dorfman (selection);

Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America, by Tina Rosenberg (selection);

“Rebirth of a Nation,” by Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, in their A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet.

Apr. 7  (Discussion) – Film: No [the referendum against Pinochet in 1988]
April 12  Ostalgia: Memories of the Fall of the Wall

   Read: Jokes of the (Not So) Humorous Struggle Against Communism in Hungary, by A. Fazekas, ed. (selections);

   The German Comedy: Scenes of Life After the Wall, by Peter Schneider (selection).

April 14  (Discussion) -- Film: Good-Bye Lenin

April 19  Project statement and bibliography due for final film analysis

April 21  Final thoughts

Written Assignments:

In addition to the reading assignments, you will be asked to write brief critical responses (approximately 3 to 4 pages for each set) to ANY THREE SETS of weekly assigned readings. These essays should comment on the main points of the readings, draw comparisons and contrasts where relevant, evaluate any points of controversy, and raise questions appropriate for class discussion. These essays will be due in class the day of the discussion of the assigned readings; they are intended to help you to prepare for the discussion, not to repeat on paper what has already been said in class.

A second type of writing assignment is a brief film comment and critique (approximately 3 to 4 pages) on ANY ONE of the films shown in class. The student(s) who prepared the written commentary on the assigned film will help to lead the class discussion on that film. The essay should analyze the film in its historical context, drawing on materials from the reading assignments as well. Comparisons or contrasts to other films previously shown in class, or otherwise familiar to the student, are also welcome. These essays will be due in class the day of the discussion of the film.

A third type of written assignment is a longer film commentary, as part of the take-home final exam, based on an additional film of the student’s choice. A list of suggested films will be provided by the instructor early in the term. This essay, of approximately 5 to 6 pages, will expand on the format of the shorter film commentary by adding sources such as film reviews, interviews with the screen writer or director, and other similar materials to show the intentions behind the making of the film and the ways it was received by the public in or outside of the country in which the film was made. A brief statement of the project, with a short bibliography of at least three supplemental references, will be due before the end of the term. The take-home final exam will be due by the date and time set by the Registrar for the final exam in this class: Tuesday, May 3, by 3:00 p.m.

Attendance is expected at all classes. In the event of any missed class BEYOND ONE, regardless of the reason, the student will prepare a short written report on the readings or film assigned for that day. This report will not count toward the writing assignments otherwise required for the class.

Grading: The grading will be weighted approximately as follows: discussion, 20%; reading responses, 20%; short film critique, 20%; take-home final exam, 40%. Proper grammar and writing style will figure in the grading of all written work. The Honor Code will apply.

Office Hours: Tuesdays / Thursdays 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., or by appointment
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   E-mail: kamdur@emory.edu