

## War and Cinema

Spring 2017

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### Course Description

This course investigates the relationship of cinema and war around the world from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Film has been integral to shaping public consciousness of military events as they unfold and the public memory of wars after the guns have fallen silent. The course looks at both feature films and non-fiction: we will watch government propaganda, commercial entertainment films and independent documentaries. Topics to be addressed include representations of ally and enemy; the aestheticization of violence and war as spectacle; the role of sound; the ethics of targeting. This is a class on the history of war, and the history of cinema; no prior knowledge of either field is assumed.

### Course Materials

All of the films we see have English subtitles. Films may be watched on reserve in Avery Fisher, or watched privately. All course readings can be accessed on NYU Classes.

### Course Requirements

Students will write one 7-8 pp paper (25%, conference paper length), and one 15-20 pp final paper (60%). Students will also do several brief presentations. These factor into the grade for course participation (15%) as do attendance and intervention in class discussions of readings and films.

### Schedule of Course Meetings and Readings

**Jan 23**      **Introduction:**  
*The Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein, 1925) DVD 9704

**Jan 30**      **Tool Kit**  
Ben-Ghiat, "War and Cinema"  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruth-benghiat/war-and-cinema-its-complicated\\_b\\_6726410.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruth-benghiat/war-and-cinema-its-complicated_b_6726410.html)  
Sorlin, "War and Cinema: Interpreting the Relationship"  
Christensen and Haas, "The Political Analysis of Movies"  
Rosenstone, "Revisioning History"

Eberwein, *The Hollywood War Film*, 11-13, 42-55  
Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 1-35

**Feb 6**

**World War I**

*La grande illusion* (Renoir, 1937) DVD 2128  
Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *Understanding the Great War*,  
15-44  
Kramer, "Prisoners in the First World War" (only read that article)  
Vincendeau, *The Great Escape*  
Wilcox, *Combat and the Soldier's Experience*  
Sheehan, *Jean Renoir's Grand Illusion*  
Sorlin, *Film in History*, 145-158  
Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 369-393 (optional)  
Virilio, *War and Cinema*, 1-4, 14-21, 24-30

**Feb 13**

**The Imperial War Film**

*Gunga Din* (Stevens, 1939) DVD 2853  
Ben-Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema*, 1-20  
Jaikumar, *Cinema at the End of Empire*, 1-12  
Chowdry, *Colonial India*, 9-17, 154-159, 167-181  
Callwell, "Small Wars"  
Gywnn, "Imperial Policing"

**Feb 20**

**No Class**

**Feb 27**

**World War II**

*A Pilot Returns* (Rossellini, 1942) DVD 42319  
*Why we Fight: Prelude to War* (Capra, 1942), clips DVD 5678  
Ben-Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema*, 243-266  
Basinger, *The World War II Combat Film*, 15-22, 73-82  
Slocum, "Cinema and the Civilizing Process"  
Culbert. 'Why We Fight'

**March 6**

**World War II Resistance Film**

Rossellini, *Rome Open City* (1945) DVD 28262  
Pavone, *Civil War*, 29-53  
Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, 33-53  
Bravo, "Armed and Unarmed Resistance"  
Stephan and Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works"

**March 13     Spring Break**

**March 20     Anti-Colonial Resistance**

*The Battle of Algiers* (Pontecorvo, 1966) DVD 4659  
Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 232-233, 238-246, 251-260  
Porch, *Counterinsurgency*, 152-156, 172-200  
O'Leary, "The Battle of Algiers at Fifty"  
Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1-21  
(refer back to Bravo and Stephan)

**Short Paper Due**

**March 27     Cold War**

*The Manchurian Candidate* (Frankenheimer, 1962) DVD 2034  
Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 1-4, 26-39, 54-62, 70-77, 82-84  
Carruthers, "The Manchurian Candidate and the Cold War  
Brainwashing Scare"  
Sorlin, "The Cinema: American Weapon for the Cold War"

**April 3       Vietnam**

*Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979) DVD 69  
Boulanger, "PTSD"  
Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, 1-6, 91-136  
Dittmar and Michaud, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, 1-15, 145-158  
Department of Defense, *Why Vietnam?* (1965)  
Loehr, "The Fresh Kill"

**April 10     The Balkan War**

*No man's land* (Tanovic, 2001) DVD 2914  
Kosmidou, *European Civil War Films*, 92-99, 109-116  
Gow and Tilsley, "The Strategic Imperative for Media  
Management"  
Gibbs, *Do No Harm*, conclusion  
Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno*, x-14

**April 17     Civil War in Lebanon**

*Lebanon* (Maoz, 2009), clips DVD 42768 BLU  
*West Beyrouth* (Doueiri, 1998) VCA 10774

Hochberg, "Soldiers as Filmmakers" (parts on *Lebanon*)  
Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 232-263  
Khatib, *Lebanese Cinema*, xvii-xxv; 25-28; 34-36; 48-50; 57-68

**April 24      The Iraq War**

*American Sniper* (Clint Eastwood, 2015) DVD 38764  
Review Boulanger on PTSD  
Stoler, "Imperial Formations" (optional)  
Kamalipour, "Language, Media, and War"  
Fawn and Hinnebusch, *The Iraq War*, 1-18  
Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look* 277-287, 290-309  
Ben-Ghiat, "American sniper,"  
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/09/opinion/ben-ghiat-american-sniper-hero/>

**May 1 Drone Warfare**

*Eye in the Sky* (Gavin Hood, 2016) DVD 43673  
Benjamin, *Drones*, 127-148  
Gusterson, *Drone*, 59-81  
Satia, "Drones: A History from the British Middle East"  
Beauchamp, "Can Drone Pilots be Heroes?"

**May 8 Presentations and Round-Up**