

**Course Syllabi for Richard Lerman**

**Media and Digital Arts**

**Interdisciplinary Arts and Performance Area**

**Arizona State University West**

•••This class will screen/look at/read works that will be very explicit in exploring issues as violence and death resultant from war. Persons not wishing to engage such material should not enroll in this class.

When I proposed this course, I had to write a 'justification' -- that follows below:

Again, we are at war. For thousands of years, war has been part of nearly every civilized and uncivilized society. Artists have created responses to wars and this course offers students a brief glimpse at a range of this work.

It may be impossible for a one semester to deal effectively with the great quantity of work available, and yet the course is more than a survey course. Students pursuing degrees in art do not live in a vacuum. However, there are few courses offered that both engage serious issues of content and expect students to create their own work in response to that material. This course does both. For students who are not artists, there are few courses about artists' perceptions and dealings with war and then asks the individual student to respond to the material in relation to their own studies.

For the first 12 weeks of this course, students will read/listen to/screen/look at books/articles, music compositions, films/videos, paintings, installations, and architecture, all of which concern war. Selected international interdisciplinary works range from early times to the present and present a broad sweep of opinions and stories. Because of the global focus, this class now meets both G (Global) and HU (Humanities) Requirements for ASU. Students will learn to uncover/recognize themes and techniques that artists have used for centuries to comment on and/or record their impressions of war and to examine the nature of creativity alongside the destruction of war.

The last four weeks of the course asks students to create work in any medium (music, video, installation, fiction, poetry, performance, theater, visual art...) reflecting the student's attitudes/perceptions towards war. This can be based on a specific situation from the present or past (and I suppose the future as well!) or can engage a general point of view. This touches upon two important issues for persons working creatively: 1) how an individual Artist might engage specific content laden material as War. and 2) how an individual artist might engage content laden material generally. For those students more directed to Critical Studies, a paper, the topic of which must be cleared with the instructor, is also acceptable.

•••Note: There are some 40 students in this course. It is not in the scope of this class for me to assist students with technical issues in Media/Audio projects.

During the first part of the course, works will often be viewed/played in class followed by discussion. There is so much work this class could examine that student teams will be assigned parallel pieces to report on to the class in following weeks. All students are expected to participate in discussions, and midterm grades will be based on these discussions, the delivery of reports by the student teams and a paper written about the book the Sorrow of War by Bao Ninh. (Pay attention to the author's uses of images in this book).

Grades will be based on:

1. Attendance, participation in class discussions	15%
2. Preparation and presentation of team reports	20%
3. Paper on the book <i>The Sorrow of War</i> by Bao Ninh	25%
These are due on October 13!	
4. Effectiveness of Final Projects in conveying the artistic vision & concept/content of the student's work	40%

Week 1: In class we will screen the film **Dr. Strangelove** directed by Kubrick →Begin to read the novel *THE SORROW OF WAR* by Bao Ninh. We will discuss this book during week 8 after the midterm papers are turned in. Note: No class next week because of Labor Day. So, begin to read Simone Weill's essay, **Poem of Force** for Week 3's class discussion. Also familiarize yourselves with either the **Iliad** or the **Odyssey** by Homer. (While I would love to have you ALL read at least one of these, it's not in the scope of this class to assign them in their entirety.) There are many online sites that have synopses and there are also some placed in Blackboard.

Week 2: we will screen the **Battle of Culloden** and the **War Game**, both films by Peter Watkins. Made for the BBC, *The War Game* was not screened on TV until 1985, although it won an Oscar in 1967 for best 'documentary.' Discussion points: 1) Watkins' use of non-actors 2) what does the camera do to make this seem realistic 3) narrator/voice over—does it work? how is it similar and different to other pieces using this technique 4) and what about *Braveheart* (which is modeled on the *Battle of Culloden*.) We will also listen to Penderecki's **Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima**.

Week 3 We will discuss the essay, *Poem of Force*, in the context of Homer, followed by a screening of parts from **The Mahabharata**, Part 1 of Peter Brook's staging of the great Hindu epic. We will also listen to: the Balinese Monkey Chant (Kecak), to some Gamelan Music and look at excerpts from a Kathakali performance from India. Discussion to follow will focus on the representations of war in these works. Time permitting we will listen to excerpts from the 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky. I will also assign each of you to groups to present reports to the class during weeks 8/9.

Week 4 Screening and discussion of *Butterfly* (La Lengua de Mariposa) a film about life in a Spanish town just prior to the Spanish Civil War. We will also look at images of Picasso's **Guernica** and etchings from Goya's, **The Disasters of War**, made around 1810. <http://goya.unizar.es/infogoya/Work/Desastres.html> is a good link to look at this work. Other artists include Thomas Hart Benton and the Colombian artist Botero, who has begun making work about the violence there.

Week 5 Screening and discussion of John Sayles' **Men with Guns**, a film set in a 'mythical' Latin American country. . In class, we will look at various photos and websites concerned with El Mozote, a massacre of campesinos that took place in the 1980's in El Salvador.

Week 6 Screening of **The Official Story (La Historia Oficial)** about Argentina's 'dirty war' of the 1980's. Discussion to include comparisons with John Sayles' *Men with Guns*. We will also look at information on The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires and la Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos y Desaparecidos in Chile. Listening will include the song "los pueblos unidos jamás serán vencidos" by Quilyapan and the Rzewski's Piano Variations.

Note: → →Papers on **The Sorrow of War** are due next week!!! (You may want to consult maps of Vietnam while writing your papers – look on Blackboard.) For next week, everyone should look on line for images/websites about the Vietnam War Memorial designed by Maya Lin

Week 7 In the past, we screened a German film called **Stalingrad** this week, but have decided to eliminate it---it's 3 hours long and really falls apart at the end.... Instead, I will show some excerpts and we will look at maps and discuss why the battle was so critical in WW2. We will then take a look at images of many war memorials, including the one at Stalingrad (now called Volgograd) and images from the Cambodian Genocide at Tuol Sleng and the photographic memorial that has evolved from this period. Listening will include excerpts from Shostakovich's Symphonies 7 and 8, and Britten's War Requiem. → →Midterm Papers Due

Week 8 30 - 45 minute Wrap-up discussion on the **Sorrow of War**. We will also screen Phillippe de Broca's film, **King of Hearts**, w/ discussion to follow.

Week 9 Students will begin to present group reports on the following films: 1) **Open City** (Rossolini's GREAT film shot in Rome while occupied by the German army, 2) de Sica's **The Bicycle Thief**, 3) Milestone's **All Quiet on the Western Front**, and 4) Schlöndorff's **The Tin Drum**. Each report should include excerpts that underscore the important elements in the films. Brief descriptions of the final project you will create for class are due today.

Week 10 Group reports on 1) **Born on the Fourth of July** in class 2) **Kandahar**, 3) **Hiroshima Mon Amor**, 4) **Daughter from Danang**. Also students should begin working on final projects outside class. I will be available during office hours or by email to discuss content issues.

Week 11 Screening and Discussion of the Finnish film, **The Cuckoo**.

Week 12 Screening and Discussion in Class of the Film **Turtles Can Fly**, an Iraqi film about the first Gulf War and it's effect on young children in the northern Kurdish region.

Week 13 Screening and Discussion of Pontecorvo's **Battle of Algiers**. We will also screen a bit of 1960's tv news from the Vietnam War era. *Battle of Algiers* is a long film and I will excerpt it a bit.

Week 14/15 Students to present projects to the class for the final two weeks.

Text Books Required:

**The Sorrow of War**, by Bao Ninh (paperback)

**The Iliad, Poem of Force** by Simone Weil, (Pamphlet from Pendle Hill Publishers)

Below is a VERY PARTIAL list of films/media pieces, music, books, visual art, etc. that could be source material for the class. I welcome additions to this list. One might also follow this link [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars) for even more references. Also look on the Class Blackboard Site for websites and other info

**FILMS**

RAN	Stalag 17 (Hogan's Heroes.....)
Seven Samurai	Hiroshima, mon amour
Alexander Nevsky	The War Game (Peter Watkins)
Potemkin	Daughter from Danang
All Quiet on the Western Front	Killing Fields
Good Soldier Schweig (Czech film)	Born on the 4th of July
Duck Soup	The Tin Drum
Butterfly (Spanish Civil War)	Men With Guns (Sayles)
Open City	The Official Story
the Bicycle Thief	Open City
Stalingrad	Shoah
Schindler's List	Kandahar
Camp Thiroye	Days of Glory
Stop/Loss	Cuckoo
Lions for Lambs	Battle of Algiers
Harrison's Flowers	Marat Sade
Hotel Terminus	The Rape of Europa (2008 film)

**Books/Writing**

The Old Testament	Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids (Tenzaburo Oe)
The Ramayana	The Elements (Levi)
The Odyssey	Catch 22 (Heller)
War and Peace	Tree of Smoke (D Johnson)
Red Badge of Courage (Crane)	Odysseus in America (Shay)
For Whom the Bell Tolls (Hemingway)	Iliad: Poem of Force (Weill)
The Iliad	The Mahabaratha
Slaughterhouse 5 (Vonnegut)	Killing Fields (Dith Pran)
Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period	The Sorrows of War (Bao Ninh)
The Tin Drum (Grass)	Waiting for the Barbarians (Coetzee)
Testaments from Pacifists (websites)	

**Plays/Theater**

Lysistrata	The Deputy
Hiroshima Maiden	Home of the Brave
Marat/Sade	Welfare State International

**Visual Arts**

Guernica	Spanish Armada
Goya series, The Disasters of War	Cusco
Am Rev War Paintings (Stuart)	Goya
John Singer Sargeant's paintings from WW 1	Maori Pieces
Sisquieros Murals (revolución)	Pacific Islander Pieces
Diego Rivera Murals	Ed Kienholz
Cyclorama Boston/Gettysburg -first multimedia!	Maya Lin, Vietnam War Memorial
Aleut pieces (drawings from Russian sailors)	American Indian War images
Waterloo painting/Napoleonic works	Chinese Warriors of Xian
St. Gauden's Monument - Boston	Any/All War Memorials
Josef Beuys - installation work	

**Music**

Gamelan Music/Ramayana	Shostakovich 5, 7,8 Symphonies
Balinese Monkey Chant - Kecak	Fanfare for the Common Man Copland
Wellington's Victory March Beethoven	Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima Penderecki
Ives, Four Places in N. England	Kill for Peace (The Village Fugs)
Charles Ives (songs, symph #3)	Rice, Wax and Narrative (Lentz)
The Soldiers Tale (Stravinsky)	From Dark to Light (Lerman)
Freiheit, Paul Robeson	Where Have All the Flowers Gone?
Mexican Civil War songs	Mercedes Sosa (Argentina)
James Brown	Violetta Parra (Chile)
Britten's War Requiem	Lt. Kije Suite & Alexander Nevsky Prokofiev
4 Insurgente Generales Robeson	

**PHOTOS**

Tuol Sleng	Vietnam era News Photos/TV News
Magnum Photographer's	Iraq War(s) photos/TV News
Matthew Brady	

DEAD BIRDS-PART 1-3 164 00:30, color, 1964, MCGRAW-HILL Examines the highly systematic and formalistic ritual of continuing tribal wars. Directed by Robert Gardner. Video in ASU W Library

DEATH SQUADS OF GUATEMALA: ENGINES OF TERROR AND OF REPRESSION 00:23, color, EVN Images and reports of perhaps the most relentless terror campaign against humanity ever recorded in modern times in the Western Hemisphere. ASU W Library

Professor Richard Lerman [rlerman@asu.edu](mailto:rlerman@asu.edu) FAB S271C  
Office Hours Fall 2008 Monday 4:00 – 5:30; Tuesday 11 - 12

This class will provide the artist/student with an appreciation and understanding of many technical issues often taken for granted in the Arts. By close examination of technical terms and technologies used in media arts, students will gain an understanding of the link between certain aspects of human perception and these terms. Implicit in the course material is a glimpse at the process by which the standards that we all accept are created.

The second half of the course will be a thorough investigation of the DVD Specification. We will then look at scripting possibilities in DVD Studio Pro to enhance your DVD projects.

There is no one text book in the class. I would prefer you spend your money on art supplies. I do expect you to use the Web to gather information, conduct mini research projects using resources in the library, attend class regularly, participate in class and ask questions. There will be quizzes throughout the semester and each student will offer a report to the class and create a final project.

A partial list of subjects/terms follows, in alphabetical order.

4:4:2; 4:2:2; 4:2:0	electricity	MPEG
8/16/24 bit audio	f stops	negative film
8/16/24/32 bit color	file formats	networks
amps	filters (audio)	positive film
audio/video recorders	filters (color)	postscript
B & W film	fuses	Quicktime
Bitmap images	gamma	RAM
circle of confusion	hard drives	reversal film
Color film	Hi 8	Sample Rates
color temperature	high impedance	shielded cable
compression	histograms	time code
daylight	HTML	tungsten light
decibels	JPEG	vector based images
depth of field	light meters	video sync signals
depth of focus	low impedance	video sampling rate
digital video formats	microphones	volts
DVD's	MIDI	watts
		others.....

We will discuss this list during the first class and probably add to it. While understanding these terms and concepts is intrinsically useful, students will also learn how to engage technology in the arts and in one's own artmaking. Learning the language of technology will assist all of you to NOT be intimidated when having to deal with persons speaking 'tech talk' as you create, or produce work, or engage the research/art/market/place.

Grades will be based on the following:

Students are expected to engage in class discussions and raise questions.  
This is an intense course and you really don't want to miss any classes (20 %)

Each student will offer at least one 20-30 minute presentation to the class on a subject to be decided on during the first or second week of class. This may be assigned in Teams. Power Point presentations may be used, but students must not simply read the power point project. I expect an oral presentation in class that indicates the research you have done and communicates the subject matter to the entire class as well. (30%)

Occasional pop quizzes (20%)

Final Project (30%)

•••There are no text Books for the class. I expect students to research websites, some reserve materials, Film/Photo/Audio/Computer magazines, PDF Files/Text Files/HTML Files on Blackboard, and other sources.

Week 1: Film Technology, Silver halides, processing, gamma

Week 2: Everyone must take still photos (or use video stills) under our wonderful sunshine here. Each photo should include a human subject and be taken at several angles. We will use Photoshop to correct for gamma, exposure and other problems also investigating histograms.

Week 3 – Week 9 Presentations to begin

Week 10 The DVD Specification. A pdf file of that name is on the BlackBoard site.

Week 11-14 DVD Scripting

Week 14-15 Presentation of Final Projects

**ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO SETUP AND ESTABLISH BOTH AN EMAIL ACCOUNT AND SPACE ON THE ASU SERVERS FOR STORAGE OF THEIR FILES AT TECHNOLIS OR AT THE COMPUTING COMMONS AT ASU TEMPE. YOU MUST ESTABLISH AN ASU RITE ID # to access Blackboard. NO EXCEPTIONS**

Professor Richard Lerman rlerman@asu.edu FAB S271C 602 543 6038  
Office Hours Fall 2008 Monday 4:00 – 5:30; Tuesday 11 – 12

rlerman@westex1.west.asu.edu I do respond to your emails!  
→→WHEN YOU SEND ME AN EMAIL ABOUT THIS CLASS, ALWAYS put  
Re: IAP 465 in the subject header!

•••Collect info on Technologies and the Arts on the internet—there are some good sites out there. Please share them when you find them.

The outcomes upon successful completion of this class are listed below.  
You will have accomplished the following:

1. Gained an understanding of many technical terms that are used by arts professionals worldwide
2. Better understand the relationship between perception and the units used to define technical terms
3. Apply this understanding to the creation of your own work
4. By engaging and understanding these terms better, you will become a better artistic collaborator.
5. Better understand the differences and similarities in techniques between 'analog' art forms and 'digital' art forms
6. Be able to better, 'talk the talk' and 'walk the walk' with other persons engaged in aspects of technology and the arts

Some good websites—and there are many more listed on the Blackboard site.

<http://www.cinematography.com/forum2004/lofiversion/index.php?t1926.html>

<http://www.siggraph.org/education/materials/HyperGraph/video/mpeg/>