In this course we study the social drama of war. We look at concrete cases of war in distinct places and in select periods of history—including our contemporary world. The personal stories and perspectives of participants in war have a prominent place in our course. A “biography and history” approach, informed by the sociological imagination in the tradition of C. Wright Mills, provides the organizing principle for our time together. We combine Socratic seminar, guest speakers, small group and large group discussion, films, music, art, meditation, and the culmination of our community of learning: team presentations.

We explore some of the ways that sociology—in collaboration with other fields and diverse ways of knowing—can shed light on the complex relationships between the individual and society in the context of war. How is war related to patriotism, nationalism, religion, ideology, ethical reasoning, militarism, and socialization? What are the systemic, structural, and cultural dimensions that figure into a thoughtful analysis of war and society, war and the global economy today, war and ecological concerns? Why do nations and ideological groups go to war? We explore many questions but we do so with a focus on three books:

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque  
*War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, by Chris Hedges  
*The Sociology of War and Violence*, by Sinisa Malesevic

These three books (above) are the required texts. Other books and Internet sites will be noted along the way. A few suggested reads:  
*New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, by Mary Kaldor  
*The Forever War*, by Dexter Filkins  
*The Politics of Truth: Selected Writings of C. Wright Mills*, by John H. Summers  
*The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, by Iris Chang  
*The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash et al  
*The Great War and Modern Memory*, by Paul Fussell  
*A History of Warfare*, by John Keegan  
*The Sociological Imagination*, by C.Wright Mills  
*Passionate Declarations: Essays on War and Justice*, by Howard Zinn  
*Arguing About War*, by Michael Walzer  
*War, Peace, and the Social Order*, by Brian Fogarty  
*Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*, by Barbara Ehrenreich
Week One – Tues. April 3 and Thurs. April 5  
Introduction of course themes—the big picture and our own stories. We consider war and the sociological imagination. We consider war and communities of memory. Guernica meditation and musical meditation…

Week Two – Tues. April 10 and Thurs. April 12  
Read All Quiet on the Western Front in preparation for our discussion this week. Biography and history, the intimate and universal dimensions of war…

Week Three – Tues. April 17 and Thurs. April 19  
Read the first half of War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning in preparation for our discussion this week. The intoxicating myth of war—glorification as a social and spiritual ritual…

Week Four – Tues. April 24 and Thurs. April 26  
Read the second half of War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning for this week. The not-so-intoxicating reality of war—the contagious and tragic dimensions of organized violence…

Week Five – Tues. May 1 and Thurs. May 3  
Read pages 1 – 28, 50 – 84 of The Sociology of War and Violence for this week. War and social thought…

Week Six – Tues. May 8 and Thurs. May 10  
Read pages 89 – 145 of The Sociology of War and Violence for this week. War and modernity…

Week Seven – Tues. May 15 and Thurs. May 17  
Read pages 179 – 233 of The Sociology of War and Violence for this week. Nationalism and propaganda…

Week Eight – Tues. May 22 and Thurs. May 24  
Read pages 237 – 307 of The Sociology of War and Violence for this week. Stratification and gendering…

Week Nine – Tues. May 29 and Thurs. May 31  
Team presentations

Week Ten – Tues. June 5 and Thurs. June 7  
Team presentations

Final Exam – Thurs. June 14 10:15 AM – 12:05 PM

Course grade is based on four elements, each worth 25%:

1. Class attendance and thoughtful participation
2. Five-page essay (guidelines TBA during the second week, paper due on May 15)
3. Team presentations (guidelines TBA during week five)
4. Final exam (open book, integrative question)
Frank Fromherz

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My office hours are Tues. and Thurs. 11:00 – 11:50 AM, and I “base camp” at the Energy Juice Bar, (1431 SW Park Ave.) corner of SW Park and Clay.

Master Tasks for Intellectuals

1. To define the reality of the human condition and to make our definitions public.
2. To confront the new facts of history-making in our time, and their meaning for the problem of political responsibility.
3. Continually to investigate the causes of war, and among them to locate the decisions and defaults of elite circles.
4. To release the human imagination, to explore all the alternatives now open to the human community by transcending both the mere exhortation of grand principle and the mere opportunist reaction.
5. To demand full information of relevance to human destiny and the end of decisions made in irresponsible secrecy.
6. To cease being the intellectual dupes of political patrioteers.

-- C. Wright Mills  (as cited in The Politics of Truth: Selected Writings of C.Wright Mills, by John Summers)

“…the analytical power of the relational approach…understanding war as both a complex social process and an extraordinary series of events in the lives and histories of peoples and states.” (Meyer Kestnbaum, “Mars Revealed” p. 284, in Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology, eds. Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens, and Ann Shola Orloff)