What is war? How does war come into being? What keeps war going? How does war end? Is war—organized destruction—a social construction? What shapes the complex relationship between war and society? What about specific wars and specific societies? What about specific people and specific situations? What about war as part of a system of venture capitalism? War as hegemony? War as liberation? What about war as part of a system of totalitarianism? What about war and religion?

How can the sociological imagination help us understand the relationship between war and peace, war and justice, war and freedom, war and self-identity? What are the factors which shape our understanding of war? What guides our moral evaluation of war—and of specific wars? What about the systemic dimensions—structural and cultural—involved in the national/international military-industrial complex? How do war and the threat of war—or anti-war (or alternatives to war) give meaning to our lives? How are personal stories—across the generations—significant for our understanding of the relationship between war and the self, mortality, immortality, glory, heroism, geography, freedom, justice, and peace?

Our course is a small group and large group seminar—designed to foster deep study, reflection, sharing of our stories, and dialogue. The central organizing principle of this course is the sociological imagination. Regular note-taking (as for a lecture) is not necessary in this seminar course. What will be most helpful is to keep a personal journal—both during our sessions and especially as a daily reflection. Take in various sources to help you think about war and society—one good source is Democracy Now: The War and Peace Report (available through KBOO Radio or via online).

Here is the outline, week by week. Please be sure that you have read the assigned readings ahead of discussion.

 Week II (Tuesday, April 7 and Thursday, April 9) **Deeper into the Sociological Imagination and War**

This week we will discuss what C. Wright Mills means by the sociological imagination (be ready to discuss, based on the reading as indicated above). And in preparation for Week III please read the rest of the Mills book and begin to read Walzer’s book, through page 33.

 Week III (Tuesday, April 14 and Thursday, April 16) **The Sociology and Morality of War**

Based on the readings (Mills and Walzer, as indicated above), we will begin to examine both the sociology and the morality of war—indeed, we will consider not just the broad notion but the personal and specific war situations which provide context for thinking about the sociology and ethics of war. And in preparation for Week IV please read Walzer, pages 34-124. Also begin to read the Hochschild book (through page 53).

 Week IV (Tuesday, April 21 and Thursday, April 23) **Just War Tradition and Alternatives to War (One Story—and Our Stories...)**

Here we study the logic of war, just war criteria, and the social construction of morality. Again, prepare for this week, especially Tuesday, by reading Walzer 34-124. Also, begin to read (through page 53) the Hochschild book, *To End All Wars*. Hochschild tells the story of WWI from the perspective of both the participants and the protesters. On Tuesday of this week I will give you guidelines for the paper (see below). We will have a special guest, Ann Huntwork, with us for Thursday, April 23. She brings a life of experience in efforts to protest war and to envision and practice alternatives to war. Keep your journal notes going this week, as every week.

 Week V (Tuesday, April 28 and Thursday, April 30) **Two Stories—and Our Stories...**

This week we learn from two people and their stories: Matt Donohue joins us on Tuesday and Kevin Pannell will be with us on Thursday this week. They have experience from several years ago serving in the U.S. military in combat zones, and they come to us through collaboration with Darla Darville, LCSW, OEF/OIF/OND Transition Patient Advocate, Portland VA Medical Center, who has worked with me each year in this sociology of war seminar by asking veterans to share their stories. This week, as every week, keep your journal handy and make notes that help you think about what really matters as we study war.
and alternatives to war—all in relation to society and our personal stories. In preparation for next week (Week VI) please read Walzer, 127-222.

Week VI (Tuesday, May 5 and Thursday, May 7) Sociology and Morality of War—Continued...

This week, drawing upon the Walzer reading as indicated above, we dig more deeply into the distinctions between just and unjust wars. Here the central challenge is to grapple with moral complexity even as we keep in mind how often it is that moral claims are exploited. Hence we must analyze the moral dimensions in relation to many other factors, including the all important analysis of power and powerlessness (or gradations of both). And in preparation for Week VII, please read Walzer, 225-335.

Week VII (Tuesday, May 12 and Thursday, May 14) Moral Dilemmas of War and Alternatives to War

Here I want us to wrestle more deeply perhaps than we have ever before done so, with questions regarding the dilemmas that are faced when questions of war and alternatives to war come to the forefront. Here we try to bring together some of the best analysis from sociology (and other disciplines) and moral philosophy. We try also to pay attention once again to our own sociological imaginations and how it is that personal stories (across the generations) influence our outlook and our analysis.

Week VIII (Tuesday, May 19 and Thursday, May 21) Theaters of War – as scheduled (see below).

Week IX (Tuesday, May 26 and Thursday, May 28) Theaters of War – continued as scheduled, with post-drama full group reflection after all of the dramatizations have been completed.

Week X (Tuesday, June 2 and Thursday, June 4) Your Paper Due at Beginning of Class on Thursday. On Tuesday of this final week we will reflect together on some of the most important things we have learned together this term. Before we complete the course on Thursday of this week we will do a brief self-evaluation and a course evaluation.

Assignments—Basis of Grading:

Read carefully each assigned reading in preparation for class discussion—small group and large group seminar. Regular attendance and active participation (attentive listening is just as important as
speaking, so let’s find the balance so that all have the opportunity to share and we can thereby learn much more from one another and our diverse perspectives and experiences). This aspect of the course is worth one third of the course grade.

Work as a team with your Theater of War group and develop a thoughtful dramatization. Guidelines will be provided during Week III. These dramatizations (note above) take place during Weeks Eight and Nine.

Develop a paper (fifteen pages if undergraduate; twenty-five if graduate). Guidelines will be provided during Week III. This paper will accomplish two things: a) a thoughtful review of *To End All Wars* and b) your own argument as to how best to go about actually putting an end to war as a social institution—or if you want to argue that such is not possible, argue why.

**NB:** Throughout our course keep a “sociological imagination” journal—see it as a blend of research, social analysis, and personal reflection. I will not ask you to share it in any formal way, but perhaps you will find it to be a most helpful way to capture with pen what you are getting to know and understand, to reconsider and see from other angles, step by step, in these ten weeks as we engage our sociological imaginations on such a serious matter. Also note, for context and for hope: As a companion course, each winter term I teach sociology of peace.

Some other Society & War reads I would recommend:

- See online the American Sociological Association, Section on Peace, War, and Social Conflict (see Resources)
- *On War*, by Carl Von Clausewitz
- *An Iraqi Woman’s Account of War and Resistance*, by Haifa Zangana
- *War*, by Gwynne Dyer
- *The Sociology of War and Violence*, by Sinisa Malesevic
- *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies* (see Chapter One, Approaches to War), ed. David Barash
- *Passionate Declarations: Essays on War and Justice*, by Howard Zinn
- *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict*, by Lewis Coser
- *The Face of Battle*, by John Keegan
- *The Forever War*, by Dexter Filkins
- *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide*, by Joshua Goldstein
- *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu

War and Modernity, by Hans Joas

Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic, by Chalmers Johnson

Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the Making of the Military-Industrial Complex, by William Hartung

Bomb Power: The Modern Presidency and the National Security State, by Garry Wills

The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America’s Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War, by Jonathan Herzog

The Prince, by Niccolo Machiavelli

New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era, by Mary Kaldor

The Poetry of War, by James Anderson Winn

Dispatches, by Michael Herr

A History of Warfare, by John Keegan

Women’s Writing on the First World War, eds. Agnes Cardinal, Dorothy Goldman, and Judith Hattaway

The First World War: Context and Commentary, by Dominic Hibberd

A Terrible Love of War, by James Hillman

Blood Rites, by Barbara Ehrenreich

The Great War and Modern Memory, by Paul Fussell

Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil, by Hannah Arendt

To meet individually: The Energy Bar (coffee, muffins, soup, smoothies shop), 1431 SW Park Ave. (corner of SW Park and Clay); stop in to see me on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 2 and 3 PM, or discuss with me at class break so that we can arrange a time to meet that works for you.