

THE COMBAT EXPERIENCE

MSCI 390-0001 (11790)

SP 2020

Day and Time: Tuesday 5:00 PM – 7:45 PM

Location: Memorial Hall 7370

Instructor: Matthew Bowen, PhD drmatthewbowen.com

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Office Consults: At class break or after class

Course Description: The course will explore the experience and consequences of military combat. It relies primarily on oral history documentary film interviews conducted by the instructor with combat veterans. Participants range from World War Two through the Middle East War (OIF/OEF). The focus will be on the extraordinary physical, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual challenges encountered. The course thoroughly examines the soldier's reintegration into civilian life. The factor of political climate is analyzed in regard to adjustment while in service, upon returning to society, and longer-term. Combat veteran guest speakers, external documentary film, weekly readings and discussion will contribute to the learning process.

Class Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to: 1) impart an understanding of the uniquely profound experience of combat; 2) possess a familiarity with the range of factors that influence how veterans cope with its consequences, both in-service and during civilian reintegration short and long-term; 3) analyze our major military conflicts of the last 78 years in respect to the individual combatant, American society and global political climates; 4) have sophistication in critically interpreting military-related media; 5) contemplate further study and / or career-related possibilities with combat veterans.

Class Format: Documentary and video presentation; lecture and power point; guest speakers; open discussion; topical small groups.

Required Readings: Because of the nature of the material, there is not a suitable textbook that justifies use over the semester. Instead, relevant readings will be assigned each week.

Exams and Papers: Mid-term and final essay exams and a minimum six page term paper. The paper will be on a topic germane to the class material. Parameters of the paper will be presented and provided. You must propose a topic for instructor approval by 11:59 PM on March 22.

Grading: The final grade is comprised of the exams and term equally weighted but with class attendance / *participation* very much factored in. Grades will be based upon the following grading scale: A = 93-100% A- = 90-92% B+ = 87-89% B = 84-86% B- = 80-82% C+ = 77-79% C = 74-76% C- = 70-73% D+ = 67-69% D = 64-66% D- = 60-63% F = 59% and below. If you take the course Pass/No Credit a C- (70) grade or higher is a pass.

Make-up Exam Policy: Make-up exams require medical documentation or institutional approval, *brought to the attention of the instructor in advance*. Make-ups exams will 1) not be provided electronically but require arrangements for a seating in the Military Science department, 2) be completed within the designated make-up days and times provided by the department. Not doing so will result in 33% loss of the cumulative grade.

Attendance & Reserve Materials / Make-Up Assignment Policy: The material does not allow for text book, on-line access, or multiple choice exams. Thus **attendance is required** and necessary for success. Attendance will be taken and factor in grading. Any absence must be noticed in advance and justified (usually by medical documentation). If you do not take the initiative **to notify of an intended absence before class** (or in emergency circumstances asap thereafter) you will have 5 points deducted from your summary grade. It is the professor's discretion what constitutes *emergency* circumstance to justify untimely notification. **A second invalid or unnoticed absence will result in being dropped from the course for inadequate attendance.** Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions. To stay abreast of the material it is the student's responsibility to view missed documentaries in a timely manner (by 11:59 PM the day before the next class). The documentaries will be on reserve upstairs at Carrier library in Media Reserves. To assure their availability they can only be viewed in that location rather than checked out. To demonstrate being current with material, you must submit a thorough one-paragraph summary of your viewing of reserve DVDs via e-mail prior to the following class (timeline per above). Failure to do so results in a five-point deduction from the summary grade that cannot be made up. The documentary content is the core of exam material. Failure to view and report on the documentary of any guest results in disallowance of attending that guest's class and an additional 5 point grade deduction for the absence. Make-ups for points after an invalid absence via extra credit is an option per professor discretion. This option is solely pertaining to an absence and does not apply to points lost for failing to do the reserve assignment by the deadline.

Note: email via the Comcast address is the best way to promptly communicate with me. It is your responsibility to ensure that your message has reached me. *If*

you do not get a response from me within 24 hours, assume that I did not receive the message and contact me by the phone # provided.

Academic Integrity: The inherent honor code applies.

Etiquette and Electronic Devices Policy: Because they are a major distraction, use of electronic devices during class is forbidden. **Cells go in backpacks.** Notes are taken on paper unless you present with a documented disability.

Course Schedule

January 14	World War 2: The Pacific -- Pearl Harbor & Iwo Jima
January 21	Europe / D-Day & The Holocaust
January 28	The Battle of the Bulge / A German soldier on the Russian Front
February 4	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder / POWs / The Atom Bomb /
February 11	The Korean War in combat & American culture – The Communist Threat
February 17	The Vietnam War in combat and our culture ¹ ; Achilles in Vietnam
February 24	The Vietnam War in combat and our culture ²
March 3	The Vietnam War: consequences & reconciliation / Mid-term Exam
March 10	SPRING BREAK
March 17	The Mid-East War (s) / Mexico to the Marines / Blast-related Brain Injury
March 24	The Moral Wound / Female Combat Veterans
March 31	Combat Addiction / Guest #1: Vietnam Veteran (Marine Infantry)
April 7	An Airborne Unit in Iraq / Guest #2: OIF/OEF Green Beret (TBD)
April 14	Once a Marine / Guest #3: Special Forces Navy Seal
April 21	Mother & Father Grief / Term Paper Due
April 28	4 Limbs & 3 Lives / Final Exam (in class)

Instructor Background

Matthew Bowen, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist with a sub-specialty in neuropsychology and board certification as a disability analyst. His internship was with the Veteran's Administration. A former clinical professor at Stanford Medical School, he is active in scholarly publication and medical school psychiatry department presentations on the combat experience. He is a lecturer in combat psychohistory at James Madison University and previously The University of Virginia. In addition to being founder and curator of The Combat Veteran's Oral History Project, he is a practicing clinical neuropsychologist with veterans and their significant others. Dr. Bowen was incarcerated as a non-combatant prisoner of war in Damascus, Syria in the aftermath of the Camp David Accords.

COMBAT VETERANS ORAL HISTORY

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