Sex and War

The course examines the biological and social determinants of aggression, violence, and war. Some topics include gender biases in international relations theories, women in combat, homosexuals in the military, discourse, attitudes towards war, rape, and female and male roles in the conduct of war. The course also assesses the roles of women as leaders, actors, and objects of foreign policy.

Course Requirements

There are three course requirements:

1. Class participation (15%)
2. Weekly summaries of readings (35%); and
3. A term paper (50%).

Seminar participants will be required to turn in a one page summary of the week’s readings at the beginning of each seminar.

I recognize that public speaking is not a requirement of good scholarship and good analysis, but the true strength of the seminar format is intense and directed discussion. Seminar participants are therefore expected to contribute arguments, criticism, and opinions to the discussion; engaging major themes of the course on an ongoing basis.

Finally, participants will be asked to write a fifteen-page term paper exploring one of the major themes of the course. Seminar participants should feel free to work together both to develop suitable paper topics and to critique each others’ work, but these papers must in the end represent each individual participant’s own work.

Readings

Books (the following are required and should be purchased at the College bookstore)

• Goldstein, Joshua, War and Gender (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
• Wrangham, Richard and Dale Peterson, Demonic Males (Mariner Books, 1997).

Articles & Book Chapters

• Clausewitz, Karl. On War (New York: Penguin), pp. 101-103. (3 pp)
• Ehrenreich, Barbara, et. al. “Fukuyama’s Follies: So What if Women Ruled the World?” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 78. No. 1 Jan/Feb 1999), pp. 118-.
• Wright, Quincy. *A Study of War* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), chapter 2, pp. 20-50. (31 pp)

**3FEB09 Session 1: Overview (sex vs. gender)** [91]

**Issues**
- What is sex and what is gender?
- Are men and women different?
- If men and women are different, how if at all do those differences matter?
- Is war a male phenomenon?

**10FEB07 Session 2: the Nature of War and Killing** [101]
3. Huntingford. “Animals fight, but do not make war,” pp. 25-34. (10 pp)
5. Ehrenreich. *Blood Rites*, pp. 7-35. (29 pp)

**Recommended**

**Issues**
- Is killing natural?
- Why the obsession with war?

**17FEB09 [no class]**

**24FEB09 Session 3: A Male Violence Gene?** [201]
1. Wrangham and Peterson, *Demonic Males*, read chapters 1, 4, 6, 8-12, (146 pp), skim other chapters.

**Recommended**

**Issues**
- Is killing a male act?
- What role do women, reproduction, status, territory and food play?
3MAR09 Session 4: Men as Killers [174]

2. Ahmad and Smith. “Bullying in Schools and the Issue of Sex Difference,” pp. 70-86. (17 pp)

Recommended


Issues

• Is violence natural for males?
• Is male violence the result of socialization?

10MAR09 Session 5: Women as Peacemakers? [71]


Recommended


Issues

• Are women naturally peacemakers or is this a role they have been socialized into?
17MAR09 Session 6: Women in Combat [101]


Recommended


Issues

• Should women serve in combat?
• Which arguments for and against do you find most convincing?
• Socialization, physical strength, emotional strength, unit cohesion

24MAR09 Spring Break [no class]
31MAR09 Session 7: Impact of War on Females [63]
1. Goldstein. Gender and War, pp. 380–401. (22 pp)

Recommended
Enloe, Cynthia E. “Spoils of War” Ms, 1996. (5 pp)

Issues
• Women as victims of war
• Rape, genocide, sanctions, social change and movement

7APR09 Session 8: Impact of War on Males [72]
1. Selected Poetry from WWI (Sassoon, Graves. Owen)

Recommended
Remarque, Erich Maria. All Quiet on the Western Front.

Issues
• Men as victims of war
• Dying, killing and their psychological impacts
14APR09 Session 9: Views of Diplomacy and War [105]

Debate

Recommended
McGlen, Nancy and Meredith Ried Sarkees. “Gender Gap in Management Styles?," in Women in Foreign Policy (Routledge, 1993), chapter 6, pp. 262-297. (36 pp)

Issues
• If women were in positions of power, would interstate affairs be “better”?

21APR09 Monday Schedule [no class]

28APR09 Session 10: International Relations Theory and Feminist Thought [69]
Tickner, ed. Gender in International Relations, chapters 1, 2 and 5.

Recommended

Debate

Issues
• How and to what extent is the field of international security dominated by masculine underpinnings?
• What is a feminist perspective?
• Can a feminist perspective help achieve stability?
5MAY09 Session 11: Societal Features and War Propensity [66]

Sex ratios and war

Equality and war

Recommended

Issues
• Under what conditions does the presence or absence of women influence the likelihood of conflict and war?
• In what ways does gender equality or inequality contribute to war and peace?

12MAY09 Session 12: Conclusions
[no assigned readings]