

PHIL 272

Peace, War, and Human Nature

Summer II 2020, Mon. – Fri. 11:30am – 1:00pm (EST)

INSTRUCTOR: Philip Bold

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Office Hours: By appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course surveys a variety of perspectives on the relationship between war, human nature, and ethics. What does the experience of war tell us (very generally) about human psychology and motivation? How should our understanding of human nature, in turn, influence our ethics – our sense of what we should do as individuals or as societies, especially in the contexts of war, civil strife, and conflict? Is human nature compatible with a peaceful society? – If so, how might we make peace a reality? We will explore these questions, among others, through a selection of readings by Thucydides, Hobbes, Plato, Freud, Nietzsche, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Judith Butler, Homer, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Nancy Sherman, and Jonathan Lear.

CONTENT WARNING: Some of the readings, films, and topics discussed in this class may be heavy or emotionally difficult. Please bear this in mind as you read and prepare for class. If you suspect that reading, watching, or discussing specific material is likely to be emotionally harmful for you, please let me know. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations if necessary.

GRADING AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Participation** (25%)
 - Class Performance
 - Quality of Forum Posts
 - Regular Attendance

Deadlines

2. **Forum Posts** (10%) See schedule below.
3. **Readings Quizzes** (10%) Saturday, each week no later than 11:55pm.
4. **Midterm Exam** (10%) Tuesday, July 7th no later than 1:00 pm.
5. **First Paper (5 pages)** (15%) Tuesday, July 14th no later than 1:00 pm.
6. **Final Exam** (10%) Saturday, July 25th no later than midnight.
7. **Final Paper (5 pages)** (20%) Monday, July 27th no later than 2:30 pm.

PARTICIPATION: Discussion is the core of this class. This is why participation counts for 25% of your course grade. You should come to *every class* prepared to talk about the assigned readings and the course topics. The participation component of your grade will also factor in your attendance

record as well as the regular completion and quality of your forum posts. I will provide a mid-session participation estimate with comments and suggestions for improvement.

FORUM POSTS: Each student will be required to complete 8 out of 9 forum assignments over the course of the session (i.e., you have the option to skip 1 forum assignment of your choosing). Students will be divided into two groups for the entire session: Team A (alpha) and Team Ω (omega). Each team will receive one of two assignments: (1) you will either be required to write an original forum post, raising a specific question, comment, or objection that responds directly to the assigned reading, or (2) you will have to respond to the original forum posts written by members of the other team. Forum posts, on either assignment, should be roughly 100-150 words (*maximum!*) and convey knowledge of the assigned reading. The 10% of your grade allocated to forum posts is for *completion* (i.e., of meaningful, clearly stated responses to either the reading or someone else's post, ones which convey knowledge of the reading assignment), while their general *quality* will be factored into the participation component of your grade (25%). **Deadlines for forum posts are listed in the schedule below – please note variations in days and times!**

To be clear: Forum post assignments must respond to the readings assigned *on the very same day*. So, for instance, your 1st Forum post that is due on Thursday June 25th must respond to Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Chapters 14 & 15 (i.e., the reading assignment for Thursday June 25th).

READING QUIZZES: At the end of every week, students will be required to complete a very brief reading quiz on Sakai. Questions on the reading quiz will largely be multiple choice and are designed to be easy for anyone who has completed the reading assignments. Students will be at liberty to complete these quizzes in a way that best fits their schedule, but the absolute deadline will be on **Saturdays no later than 11:55pm** (though, **Quiz 5** is an exception – see schedule below).

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS: There will be two required exams for the course, both accessed through Sakai. These exams serve as an opportunity to show your understanding of the assigned readings. All *possible* questions for each exam will be made available to students ahead of time. Each exam itself will consist of a random selection of 3 questions from the longer list given to you in advance. Students will be at liberty to complete these exams in a way that best fits their schedule (i.e., once they have been released), but the absolute deadlines are as follows. The absolute deadline for your midterm will be **Tuesday, July 7th no later than 1:00pm**. The absolute deadline for your final will be **Saturday, July 25th no later than midnight**.

PAPERS: There are two major papers for this course. Each will require students to engage clearly, critically, and creatively with a central topic in the course. More detailed instructions will be provided in closer proximity to the deadlines.

For the First Paper assignment, I will ask you to explain and evaluate the perspectives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X on violent and non-violent resistance. The absolute deadline for your first paper will be **Tuesday, July 14th no later than 1:00pm**.

For the Final Paper assignment, I will require everyone in the course to watch Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* and explain how the film illustrates one (or more) of the major themes of our course, making direct connections with *at least 2* major authors that we have read. The absolute deadline for your final paper will be **Monday, July 27th no later than 2:30pm**.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY: All students must be capable of using the Zoom application for class meetings. This will require, at the very least, (1) a reliable device that is compatible with Zoom (such as a laptop or tablet device – smartphones are *not* sufficient), (2) a stable internet connection,

and (3) a quiet space that will allow you to focus on class meetings. If you do not have access to (1) – (3), it is very unlikely that you will be able to pass this course.

LATE WORK: Extensions *on paper assignments* are granted liberally as long as you have received permission from the instructor. Late papers submitted without a granted extension will be penalized 10% for every day past the official deadline. Extensions on quizzes, exams, and forum posts will require a formal excuse with evidence, such as a medical note or a note from a parent in the case of a family emergency.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS: If you need to arrange for accommodations for a disability, please let me know. For Accessibility Resources & Services see ARS website: <https://ars.unc.edu/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at UNC. All students are expected to adhere to the UNC Honor Code. Please make yourself familiar with the university's policies on plagiarism. It may be helpful to take the UNC plagiarism tutorial: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism>

GRADE ACCOMODATIONS DURING COVID: If you should be affected in some significant way by the pandemic, you can choose to take CV as your final grade. Details of how this works can be found here: <http://registrar.unc.edu/registrar-covid-19/>

READING & FILM ASSIGNMENTS

REQUIRED TEXTS: All readings for this course will be made available on Sakai.

REQUIRED FILMS: You will be required to access two films:

- (1) *Malcolm X* by Spike Lee (starring Denzel Washington), and
- (2) *The Thin Red Line* by Terrence Malick.

Malcolm X happens to be available for streaming on Netflix – but if you do not have access to Netflix, I strongly recommend that you *purchase* a copy of the film (either a streamable or hard copy), rather than simply renting it. The same goes for *The Thin Red Line*. This is because your course assignments will require you to watch these films multiple times, and they are long enough that you will probably need to watch each in multiple sittings (e.g., I would recommend watching only 1 hour of each film per viewing).

OPTIONAL TEXTS: A number of the texts below are labelled “Optional”. These readings are recommended for those who are especially interested in the topics included. Although these readings are highly recommended, none is required.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

MODERATE REALISM: Human Nature and Political Stability

Mon. June 22nd

Introduction to Class, No Reading Assigned

Tues. June 23rd

[1] Thucydides, Origins of the War, (selections from *History of the Peloponnesian War*)

[Note: Feel free to skip Pericles' War Speech, pp. 31 – 37.]

Optional: Paul Woodruff, "Introduction to Thucydides' *History*"

Wed. June 24th

[2] Thucydides, The Plague, Civil War, & The Melian Dialogue
(selections from *History of the Peloponnesian War*)

Thurs. June 25th – 1st Forum Post Due. Team A: Wed midnight. Team Ω: Thurs 1pm.

[3] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 13: "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, As Concerning Their Felicity and Misery"

+ Chapter 14: "Of the First and Second Natural Laws and of Contracts"

[Skip: Ch. 14, Sections [10] – [17]; [20] – [28].]

Optional: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction

Fri. June 26th

[4] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 15: "Of Other Laws of Nature"

[Skip: Ch. 15, Sections [6] – [34].]

+ Chapter 17: "Of The Causes, Generation, and Definition of Commonwealth"

***Reading Quiz 1: Due no later than Saturday, June 27th at 11:55pm.**

Week 2

RADICAL REALISM: Amoralists and Pessimists

Mon. June 29th

[5] Callicles, speech from Plato's *Gorgias*

Thrasymachus, speech from Plato's *Republic*

Tues. June 30th – 2nd Forum Post Due. Team Ω: Mon. midnight. Team A: Tues. 1pm.

[6] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface

Optional: Nietzsche, "What I Owe The Ancients",

from *Twilight of the Idols, Or How To Philosophize with a Hammer*

Wed. July 1st

[7] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay: "'Good and Evil', 'Good and Bad'"

Thurs. July 2nd – 3rd Forum Post Due. Team A: Wed. midnight. Team Ω: Thurs. 1pm.

[8] Freud, *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, First Essay, "The Disillusionment of the War"

Freud, "Why War?", Correspondence with Albert Einstein

Fri. July 3rd
Holiday, No Class

***Reading Quiz 2: Due no later than Saturday July 4th at 11:55pm.**

Week 3
(NON-)VIOLENCE & THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE

Mon. July 6th

[9] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail"
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence"
Optional: Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Other America"

Tues. July 7th – *Midterm Exam* due by 1:00pm (on Sakai). No forum post due.

[10] Film: *Malcolm X*, by Spike Lee (available on Netflix)
Optional: Malcolm X, "Nightmare", from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Wed. July 8th – 4th Forum Post Due. Both Teams A & Ω: Tues. by midnight.

[11] Malcolm X, "Ballot or the Bullet"
Stokely Carmichael, "The Pitfalls of Liberalism"
Cornel West, "Why Malcolm X Still Speaks Truth to Power"
Optional: Malcolm X, "After the Bombing"
Malcolm X, "Prospects for Freedom in 1965"
Malcolm X, "Confrontation with an "Expert""

Thurs. July 9th – 5th Forum Post Due. Team Ω: Wed. midnight. Team A: Thurs. 1pm.

[12] Judith Butler, "Nonviolence, Grievability, and the Critique of Individualism", pp. 27-51
Optional: Judith Butler, "What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'" (NY Times)

Fri. July 10th

[13] Judith Butler, "Nonviolence, Grievability, and the Critique of Individualism", pp. 51-65
Optional: "Judith Butler Wants Us to Reshape Our Rage" (Interview with The New Yorker)

***Reading Quiz 3: Due no later than Saturday July 11th at 11:55pm.**

Week 4
CULTURE, HONOR, & MORAL PROGRESS

Mon. July 13th

[14] Homer, *Iliad*, Books 1 & 24
+ "Summary of the *Iliad*"

Tues. July 14th – *First Paper* due no later than 1:00pm (submit to Sakai). No Forum post.

[15] **Optional:** Nancy Sherman, "A Warrior's Anger", from *Stoic Warriors*

Wed. July 15th – 6th Forum Post Due. Both Teams A & Ω: Tues. by midnight.

[16] Kwame Anthony Appiah, **Preface and Chapter 3:** "Suppressing Atlantic Slavery",
from *The Honor Code*

Thurs. July 16th

[17] Kwame Anthony Appiah, **Chapter 4:** "Wars Against Women", from *The Honor Code*
Optional: Chapter 5: "Lessons and Legacies", from *The Honor Code*

Jonathan Haidt, “In The Eyes of Others”, Review of Appiah’s *Honor Code*

Fri. July 17th

– **7th Forum Post Due. Team A: Thurs. 3pm. Team Ω: Thurs. midnight.**

[18] Nancy Sherman, “Don’t Just Tell Me ‘Thank You’”, from *Afterwar: Healing the Moral Wounds of Our Soldiers*

Optional: Karl W. Eikenberry & David M. Kennedy, “Americans and Their Military, Drifting Apart”

***Reading Quiz 4: Due no later than Saturday July 18th at 11:55pm.**

Week 5

HOPE IN THE AFTERMATH

Mon. July 20th

[19] Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, Part I: “After This, Nothing Happened”

Tues. July 21st – 8th Forum Post Due. Team Ω: Mon. midnight. Team A: Tues. 1pm.

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*, Part II: “Ethics at the Horizon”

Wed. July 22nd

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*, Part III: “Critique of Abysmal Reasoning”

Thurs. July 23rd – 9th Forum Post Due. Team A: Wed. midnight. Team Ω: Thurs. 1pm.

Review for Final Paper & Exam, No Reading Assigned

^ *Special Instructions for Thurs. July 23rd forum*

Address the question, “What can we learn from Plenty Coups today?”

Team Ω: Address the question directly.

Team A: Respond to Team Ω.

***Reading Quiz 5: Due no later than Thursday July 23rd at 11:55pm.**

***FINAL EXAM*:** Due Saturday July 25th no later than midnight (complete on Sakai).

***FINAL PAPER*:** Due Monday July 27th no later than 2:30 pm (submit to Sakai).