

**ENG 101W: o6 War as/beyond Metaphor**

Tuesday/Thursday 9:40-11:10, 211 Eaton

Professor Rebecca Pyatkevich Mehr, Ph. D. (she/her)

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**Student hours/Office hours:** T 12:10-1:10, Th 11:10-12:10 AND by appointment on Zoom

**COURSE PAGE IS ON CANVAS**

The history of writings about war is nearly as long as the history of writing. As an experience, war silences and renders mute; but in novels, epics, poems, and drama, war has been a topic, a catalyst for thought, and a metaphor. In this class, we will analyze the ways in which war as metaphor has functioned in our cultural fabric, and how that has changed across time and in different genres. Does war bring out something noble, or is it grotesque? How does one render violence in words, and to what end? Can a writer capture war, and its effects? Why might it be important to do so? And should it be done?

Most of our readings will be found **on our class site on Canvas**. **Additionally**, please buy the following editions:



- Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (1990). Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009 edition

As we weigh the intellectual questions of the course, we will also focus on a set of skills important in the field of English (if you choose to be a major or a minor), and useful elsewhere in college, and beyond: **careful reading**, thoughtful **argumentation**, and **writing** as a mode of thinking and communication.

**Course goals and course modes**



- Learn to **read more deeply, attentively, and enjoyably** (this is sometime called “close reading”), and it can ask you to focus on specific words, how various parts of the text work together, and think about the context in which the work was written.
- Engage in **collaborative work** with your peers to develop arguments, points of view, and achieve common goals
- Use writing as a way to **deepen and develop** your thoughts
- Improve your writing: find your voice, **learn** conventions of **academic writing**, and how – and why! – to use them to your advantage

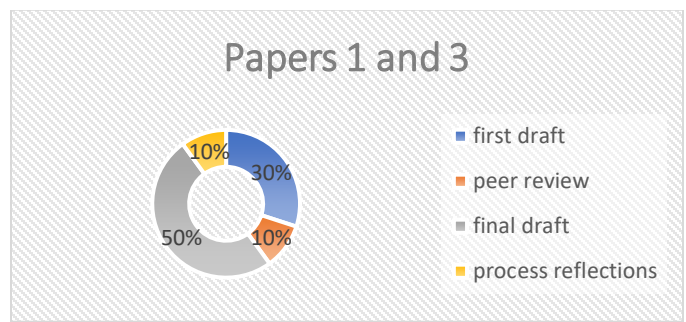
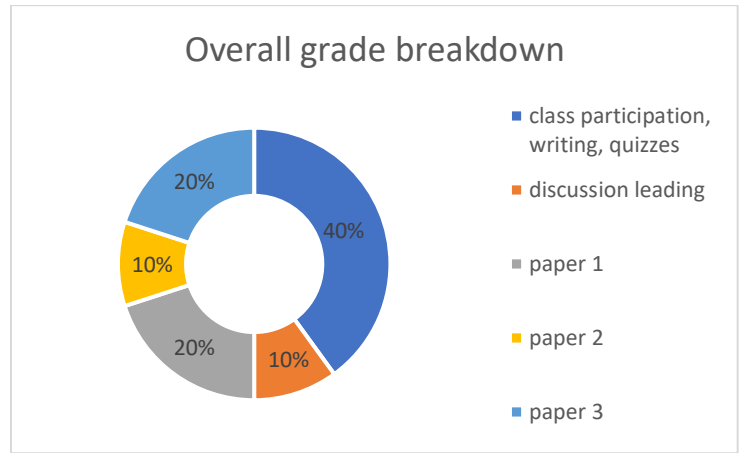
We will do this by:



- Engaging in discussion that is **both thoughtful** and **considerate**, while being incisive about challenging topics
- Using a variety of writing modes – **free writing** and other **in-class writing** exercises, **informal** and **formal** at-home writing, **peer review** and targeted **revision**.

## Grading Information

- Class attendance and participation – 20%
- Pre- and post-discussion work (in class and at home) – 10%
- In-class quizzes – 10%
- Class discussion lead – 10%
- Paper 1 – 20%
  - Draft 6
  - Peer review – 2
  - Final draft – 10
  - Process reflection - 2
- Paper 2 – 10%
  - Draft 4
  - Final draft – 5
  - Process reflection - 1
- Paper 3 – 20%
  - Draft 6
  - Peer review – 2
  - Final draft – 10
  - Process reflection - 2



## Time Commitment



According to WU's course credit policy, for every hour of class, the expectation is that you will complete 2-3 hours of work outside of class. You should therefore be spending on **average 6-9 hours a week** on homework outside of class. If you find that you're spending significantly more than that, please come talk to me and we'll see if we can find strategies to reduce it!

## Class Attendance:

Because this is a discussion-based and skills-based class, missing too much class or not participating actively will hurt not just your grade, but how much you can learn from the experience.

I encourage you to come to all class sessions, **unless!:**



- You are dealing with a personal **emergency**
- You are observing a **major religious holiday**
- You are **an athlete playing in a university away game**
- **You are sick.** Please **stay home** if you're showing signs of **transmissible illness**, or if you really cannot participate (migraine? too tired?).
- If you suspect **Covid**, take a test, and if positive, stay home until you are fever free for 24 hrs and other COVID-19 symptoms are improving, wear a mask through day 10.

You can **miss 3 class sessions** for any reason with no grade penalty whatsoever. I encourage you to get notes from your classmates and stay on top of the reading!

I always appreciate a heads-up letting me know you're going to miss class – it helps me plan. You can tell me why you're missing class and I will try and help if I can – but you don't have to.

### Participation

This class is based on the magic that happens when people probe ideas together, ask each other questions and find varied answers, and collaborative to achieve insight, though not always consensus. In order for this to happen, I will be looking for the following signs of engagement with your fellow students and the material:



- You always have **your book with you** and/or your readings **printed out**
- Your book/readings are marked up
- You're **prepared for discussion** because you've completed the reading assignment and the and pre-discussion writing assignment/post on Canvas.
- You contribute to class discussions **thoughtfully and substantively**. If speaking in class is easy for you, you limit yourself to 3-4 contributions per class; if it's harder for you, aim for 3-4 contributions. It can help you to jot down some notes or plan out a comment before class or during class.
- You participate in **the in-class writing activities as directed**.

Additionally, I would like to encourage you to be mindful of others: **show respect for fellow students** as people even as you may challenge their points and ideas. Disagreeing is ok – necessary! But how you do it is important.

To help you keep track of your participation and give feedback on how you can improve it, I will be posting daily participation grades for each of our class sessions, according to the following rubric:

A	Student seems well-prepared; contributes to discussions thoughtfully and frequently, helpfully responds to other students' comments and continues to engage; participates fully in in-class writing tasks.
B	Student demonstrates good preparation and contributes to discussions relatively frequently and thoughtfully, engaging in class in an ongoing manner; participates in in-class writing tasks with some reservation
C	Student seems adequately prepared and contributes thoughtfully but only when called on, infrequently engaging in class voluntarily; participates in in-class writing tasks only partially.
D	Student does not engage in class, contributing little and only when called on. Student demonstrates that s/he is unprepared or inattentive (e.g. texting, chatting, or online);
F	Student is absent (unexcused), asleep, or present and disruptive; refuses to participate in in-class writing tasks.

Additionally, I will **require 3 office hour meetings with me** during the term. One will be to talk get to know each other better, one will be about your paper(s), and one will be about the presentation lead experience. Attending those will go into your participation grade.

## Reading

Our reading assignments will vary in length from 40-50 pages to as little as 1 poem of 12 or 20 lines. However long the reading is, I will ask you to read **attentively**. This means:



- After you read the work through once, **re-read** or at least **re-think** with an eye toward particular issues (discussion questions, class discussions, guidance in Canvas from me on where to focus).
- Please **write on your texts**. Print your readings. Mark them up. Circle things, highlight things, write comments and notes. If you don't want to write on the books themselves, get sticky notes and write on them.
- Complete the **pre-discussion home posts** in Canvas
- We will have 12 **in-class reading quizzes** (mostly multiple-choice) throughout the term. They will not be announced ahead of time. I will drop **2 lowest of these grades** at the end of the term.

Once during the term, beginning in Week 4, you will **lead one class discussion session**. There will be a format for you to follow, and you'll meet with me beforehand to discuss the presentation.

## Informal writing

We will use informal writing both in and outside of class to:



- Help prepare for discussion
- Make new and surprising connections
- Find raw material we will work into our formal writing

Grammar, spelling, organization will not matter in much of our informal writing. Instead, the goal is to let your mind reveal and make connections you may not have been able to make otherwise.

Although some of our exercises may feel odd or strange to you at first, I hope you will soon see how they may help you develop as a writer and reader.

At-home informal writing (discussion posts) will be **graded on a simple scale; in-class informal writing will be graded for completion.**

## Formal writing

We will write **two long** and **one short** formal paper during this class. All three assignments will consist of:



- Rough draft
- Peer review
- Final draft
- Reflection on the writing process

For each paper, I will provide some broad prompts and guidance, but within those, I encourage you to design a topic that you find interesting and exciting. Both in terms of writing technique, and content, the papers will build on work we do in class, in informal writing and discussion.

**Paper 1** will ask you to write about an incident in *The Iliad*.

**Paper 2** will ask you to analyze in-depth one poem about WWI (this will be the short paper, and for most of you, it will build on the presentation).

**Paper 3** will ask you to write about *The Things They Carried* and one other work of your choosing.

**All 3 formal papers** must be submitted and completed in order **to pass the class**.

## Late work and Grading Flexibility

The course moves fast, and much of the work is designed to help us in class the next day. Therefore, when you complete it late, you limit your own ability to get the most of class. Please talk to me if you are getting behind, and I'll help you make a plan to get back on track!

But, life happens, so here are some allowances and suggestions:



- On days drafts are due, please **prioritize getting a draft in**, even a partial draft. In-class work that day will be peer review, so you will want something your partners can work with! It doesn't need to be perfect, nicely spelled, etc. It just needs to be there.
- You can miss **3 discussion posts** without penalty, and **complete 3 more late** with a top score of 3 (out of 5).
- I will drop your **2 lowest reading quiz scores**, and let you take **2 more late**.

Sometimes students who get really behind ask about taking an incomplete and finishing the work over winter break. I **really discourage incompletes** except in cases of major family

emergency. Winter break invariably ends up being too short, and then you're working on your incomplete on top of your regular course load.

Instead, **if you're really behind, please talk to me** so that we can make a plan to finish your work on time!

### Plagiarism and policy on AI

Plagiarism is the use of other people's work, thoughts, and ideas that you pass off as if it were your own. Examples include:



- having someone else write your papers but submitting them as yours
- copying part of someone else's work word for word into your own, without citing.
- changing just a few words in a passage that you submit as your own, with or without providing a citation.<sup>1</sup>

However, writing builds upon thinking and sharing ideas with others, so the lines are not necessarily always clear-cut, and my first step will be to teach you to recognize and learn about proper attribution rather than to threaten and punish.

That said, egregious and obvious violations will be referred out to the deans. Please see the full academic policy here.



Engaging in plagiarism short-circuits the processes of critical analysis and writing as an effective tool of communication and an incisive mode of thinking. It is unfair to your fellow students, and it shortchanges your own learning process.

Because AI tools such as ChatGPT and similar can mimic the shape of a thoughtful argument without giving you the critical and analytical growth that comes from wrestling with the material, I would like you **to refrain from using AI in this course entirely**. This includes using it for tasks such as brainstorming or rephrasing.

Additionally:

- do not have AI write a draft (either rough or final) for you.
- do not use entire sentences or paragraphs suggested by AI.

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<sup>1</sup> I like to practice what I preach, so here is an informal citation of the sources that went into writing this syllabus: [www.accessiblesyllabus.com](http://www.accessiblesyllabus.com), syllabi by Heather Miner, Ph.D., Annette Hulbert, Ph.D., Mike Chasar, Ph.D., Lila Davachi, Ph.D., Sarah Clovis Bishop, Ph. D, "Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools," the deanery's links to required elements on the syllabus.

## Getting Help

As the professor, I am here to help you, and so is the university as a whole. We want you to be as successful as possible. Here are various resources:



- **My office hours:** During my office hours, you will find me in my office waiting for students to come talk to me! Please do so with any questions, thoughts, concerns, or news that you might have! This is the best way to get one-on-one help. I am also happy to meet at other times by Zoom!
- **Email:** I am also happy to answer questions or concerns by email. Generally, you can expect a response within 24 hours.
- **Writing Support Center:** The Writing Support Center is here to help you write! You can meet with a writing tutor who'll help you think through your paper or work on specific writing skills. They also have tea, a communal writing hour (more fun than writing by yourself!), and other programming. Check it out!



- **Accessible Education Services:** I strive to create a learning environment that is inclusive, welcoming and equitable. If you feel like anything in the course is not inclusive to you or prevents an accurate assessment of your achievements, please let me know so that we can discuss possible remedies. You can also contact **Accessible Education Services** office in **Smullin 155** at **503-370-6737** or **Accessible-info@willamette.edu** to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course. This includes formal accommodations.
- **SOAR Center Offerings: Food, Clothing, and School Materials:** The Students Organizing for Access to Resources (SOAR) Center provides free, confidential, and equitable access to food, toiletries, professional clothing, textbooks and scholarly resources for all WU and WU-affiliated students. The SOAR Center is located on the Putnam University Center's third floor. The space houses the Bearcat Pantry, Clothing Share, and First-Generation Book Drive and is maintained by committed students and advisors. Please **check [www.willamette.edu/go/soar](http://www.willamette.edu/go/soar)** for current hours of operation and email **soarcenter@willamette.edu** for any questions or concerns.

## Heart vs Brain? Heart + Brain!



I will often ask you how you feel about something we have read. Feelings are great motivators, and they can help us focus on what is important to us in a work. However, they are not, in and of themselves, sufficient! I will ask you to move from the feeling to the thought processes, data, and analyses that can support where your feelings lead you. And sometimes, you will find that your brain leads you somewhere different than where your heart is!

## Pronouns and self-identification



I am happy to use your preferred name and pronouns; please let me know if at any point I make an error, or you need to change how I address you.

## Challenges and Safety



Is this a safe space? Yes, insofar as my goal is to create and sustain a learning community focused on helping you pose and answer questions about how, why, when, and whether to talk about war in literature. War is, by its nature, disturbing.



You will be uncomfortable; you are *supposed* to be. The discomfort is (part of) the point. I and your fellow students will provide compassion and support, but by staying in the course, you are agreeing to engage with the uncomfortable aspects of the course topic.



## Tentative Syllabus

Week	Date	Reading/writing Due this day	In-class
Week 1	Tues, Aug 29	_____	Class introduction/syllabus discussion Writing questionnaire
	Thurs, Aug 31	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Halyna Kryk, “War is Not a Metaphor”, “There’s so much ripe anger” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Why, whether, and how to write about war: discussion of Kruk Background info: the myth of Troy; Homer and <i>The Iliad</i>
Week 2	Tues, Sep 5	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> <i>The Iliad</i> , Book 1 <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion of book 1 of the Iliad
	Thurs, Sep 7	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> <i>The Iliad</i> , Book ??? <b>Write:</b> discussion post	<i>introductions discussion</i>



Week 3	Tues, Sep 12	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> <i>The Iliad</i> , Book 24 <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Writing skills: <i>introductions</i>
	Thurs, Sep 14	<b>Write: paper 1 draft</b> , with particular focus on introduction	<i>introductions in-class drafts (and peer review)</i>
Week 4	Tues, Sep 19	<b>Write: work on draft</b> <b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Horace poem	Writing skills: evidence/quoting Horace discussion
	Thurs, Sep 21	<b>Write: work on draft</b> <b>Print, read, annotate:</b> John Donne Poem	Writing skills: evidence/quoting John Donne discussion
Week 5	Tues, Sep 26	<b>Write: Paper 1 final DUE</b>	read and discuss Tennyson, “Charge of the Light Brigade”
	Thurs, Sept 28	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Lev Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in December” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion: realism, observation, novel/short story
Week 6	Tues, Oct 3	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Lev Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in May, pt 1” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion: realism, observation, novel/short story
	Thurs, Oct 5	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Lev Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in May, pt 2” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion: realism, observation, novel/short story
Week 7	Tues, Oct 10	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Isaac Babel, “My First Goose” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion: realism, observation, novel/short story
	Thurs, Oct 12	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Siegfried Sassoon, “To His Dead Body”, “The Rear-Guard”, “Repression of War Experience” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Discussion: poetry as genre Modern poetry vs <i>Iliad</i> vs Horace, Donne
Week 8	Tues, Oct 17	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Isaac Rosenberg, “Break of Day in the Trenches”, “Returning, we hear the larks” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	WWI – why was it different? Are the poems different?
	Thurs Oct 19	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum est”, “Returning, we hear the larks” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	WWI – why was it different? Are the poems different? Writing skills: connections

Week 9	Tues, Oct 24	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Guillaume Apollinaire, “Wonder of war” <b>Write:</b> discussion post	Differences between French and English
	Thurs, Oct 26	<b>Write: paper 2 draft</b> , with particular focus on evidence, quotes, linkage	<i>peer review, with focus on evidence, quotes, linkage</i>
Week 10	Tues, Oct 31	<b>Write: work on draft</b> <b>Print, read, annotate:</b> W. H. Auden, “September 1, 1939”	Discuss: “September 1, 1939”
	Thurs, Nov 2	<b>Write: work on draft</b>	Discuss: “September 1, 1939”, continued
Week 11	Tues, Nov 7	<b>Write: Paper 2 final due</b>	Catch-up/sense-making day
	Thurs, Nov 9	<b>read, annotate:</b> <i>The Things they carried</i> , pp. 1-36	Discussion: modern war, modern war novel Writing skills: organization
Week 12	Tues, Nov. 14	<b>read, annotate:</b> <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 37-84	Discussion: modern war, modern war novel
	Thurs, Nov 16	<b>read, annotate:</b> <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 85-154	Discussion: modern war, modern war novel
Week 13	Tues, Nov 21	<b>read, annotate:</b> <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 155-207 Begin working on Paper 3	Discussion: modern war, modern war novel In-class work on paper 3
	Thurs, Nov 23	THANKSGIVING	
	Tues, Nov 28	<b>read, annotate:</b> <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 207-233	Discussion: modern war, modern war novel Writing skills: conclusions
	Thurs, Nov 30	<b>Paper 3 draft due</b>	Peer review
	Tues, Dec 5	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Sergiy Zhadan, poems TBA	Circling back to the beginning: war beyond metaphor
	Thurs, Dec 7	<b>Print, read, annotate:</b> Lyuba Yakimchuk, poems TBA	Circling back to the beginning: war beyond metaphor
Finals week	Tues, Dec. 12		Paper 3 final draft due