

POLS 203: Pop Culture and Politics (War on Film)

Fall 2021

Mondays 4:00 – 6:30 pm

Lecture Center A-002

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Katharine M. Floros

BSB 1170B

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Phone: 312-996-8778

Student Drop-in Hours:

Mondays: 6:45-7:45 PM in person and virtual (in person gets precedence)

Wednesdays: 3:00-4:00 virtual

Online link: <https://uic.zoom.us/j/3129968778>

COURSE CONTENT:

This course explores the portrayal of historically excluded groups in war/military movies involving the United States (mostly) and seeks to expand students' understanding of the expansion of opportunity for non-white male persons and the barriers yet to overcome. By focusing on representation in movies, this course intends to explore how cultural messages about historically excluded groups affect the popular understanding of these groups at war and in broader society.

- **WARNING:** Some of the course readings and movies shown in this class have disturbing content including the use of racial slurs and depictions of sexual assault, among others. Sex, foul language, and/or nudity may also appear in a graphic manner. Students should feel empowered to speak with the professor if there is any content that may trigger a damaging response so alternate media can be assigned. Please check <https://www.doesthedogdie.com/> for movie-specific warnings.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENT:

- All students are required to get a COVID-19 vaccination prior to the fall semester if they are able to do so. This includes students at the regional campuses and students who participate in off-campus learning activities.
- Students must disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status through UIC Healthcheck as soon as possible. Returning students should disclose vaccination status by August 1. Freshman, transfer and new graduate students should disclose vaccination status by August 16. Students in the health sciences may have earlier deadlines that have been communicated by the colleges.
- If you are partially vaccinated at the beginning of the fall semester, you may participate in on-campus activities if you have a scheduled final vaccine dose and vaccination completion is imminent; however, you must continue to participate in on-campus COVID-19 saliva testing at least weekly, complete the daily UIC Healthcheck COVID-19 Self-Monitoring Survey, and wear a face mask indoors. You may update your vaccination status through UIC Healthcheck after your final vaccine dose.
- If you have not received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start of the fall semester and you do not have a COVID-19 vaccination exemption, you should not come to campus.
- Upon disclosing that you are fully vaccinated (at least 14 days since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine), you will not be required to participate in mandatory on-campus saliva testing, UIC Healthcheck, and you will not be required to quarantine if you are a close contact of someone with a positive COVID-19 test or if you have returned from international or domestic travel, unless otherwise required by applicable public health regulations. Your UIC Daily Pass will remain green.
- Following your vaccination disclosure, you will receive an email with instructions on how to submit proof of vaccination.

VACCINATION EXEMPTION:

- In the interest of the health and safety of our entire UIC community, COVID-19 vaccination exemptions are limited to specific medical conditions with physician documentation and religious exemptions. You may request an exemption online.
- Unvaccinated students who obtain an exemption will be required to participate in symptom monitoring via UIC Healthcheck, on-campus COVID-19 saliva testing at least once weekly, and continue to wear a face-covering indoors to participate in classes, activities or events on campus.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ATTENDING AN ON-CAMPUS CLASS REMOTELY:

- A vaccination exemption is not the same as an accommodation to attend an on-campus class remotely.
- Students may request this type of accommodation by contacting the Disability Resource Center.

FACE MASKS:

Masks covering both the mouth and nose must be worn at all times by all students, faculty, and staff while on campus and inside any building regardless of vaccination status. If you do not wear a mask, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be allowed back in class unless or until you wear a mask. If you have forgotten your mask, you may pick one up from one of the student information desks on campus during the first two weeks of the semester. Students who do not comply with the mask-wearing policy will be reported to the Dean of Students. Eating and drinking are not allowed in classrooms.

PROFESSOR'S LAMENT

No one has any idea how this semester is going to play out. This class is supposed to be completely in-person; however, with the spread of the Delta variant of Covid and the possibility of new variants, it's anyone's guess how the next several months will go. If students are concerned about attending classes on campus, please reach out to me for a more detailed conversation. We can do this!

TECHNOLOGY:

Online students will need regular access to a computer that runs on a broadband Internet connection. Please contact Learning Solutions (<https://help.uillinois.edu/TDClient/37/uic/Requests/ServiceCatalog?CategoryID=180>) to request and borrow a laptop or be assigned a hotspot for the semester if you do not have the required hardware and internet capabilities.

EVALUATION:

10% Attendance

- **ALL** classes will be recorded and available to review through Zoom.
 - Students will only receive credit for synchronous Zoom attendance if the student has made arrangements with the professor *in advance*.
- Attendance will be taken using iClicker. See Blackboard for more information about creating an iClicker account and linking to this class.
- Attendance will be taken in every class beginning September 13. Student may miss one (1) class on/after this date before absences will begin to affect the student's final grade.
 - University- or military-*required* events or a Covid-positive member of the household are the only activities that will warrant an excused absence. If a student is going to miss class for any other reason, the professor does not need to be informed that the student will miss class or why the student missed class.
 - All university- and military-*required* events or Covid-related issues should be disclosed to the professor as soon as possible, and students are responsible for any material missed and to make up any work missed in class.

- Unless explicitly approved by the instructor, university- or military-required events do not absolve students from turning in assignments on time.

50% Movie Journals

- Students are expected to watch the assigned movie **before** the class it will be discussed. Also before class, students must write a journal entry and answer specific questions about the movie. These journal entries will be visible only to the professor.
- The questions asked each week will be similar, but there may be questions specific to the movie, so students should check the journal assignment in Blackboard before watching the movie.
- The more in-depth the student's answer, the higher the grade is likely to be.
- The *Courage Under Fire* journal entry is considered practice and will not be graded. There will not be a penalty for students who do not complete it, but if you'd like to see how long it will take to complete the assignment and what type of grade you can expect on future journal entries, you may want to use this opportunity for feedback.
- Because the second argumentative essay (see below) is due the same day we are discussing *American Sniper*, the journal entry for *American Sniper* is optional. If you find this assignment helps you focus your attention while you watch the movie, you may want to submit a journal entry for this movie as well.

20% Argumentative Essays

- Students are asked to write five paragraph argumentative essays on the topics listed below. They should identify a thesis in the first paragraph (the point they want to make), provide three paragraphs of evidence to support their point, and summarize their arguments in a concluding paragraph.
 - Students who think these extraterrestrial visitors would be getting the wrong idea from these movies may include one paragraph (before the conclusion) to refute the messages that the movies send.
- 10%: Women, Children, and War essay (**October 11**)
 - What do two or more of these movies tell us about women and/or children in war/military? What conclusions would a visitor from another planet reach if everything they knew on this topic came from watching the films featured in class?
- 10%: People of Color in the Military essay (**November 15**)
 - What do two or more of these movies tell us about people of color in war/military? What conclusions would a visitor from another planet reach if everything they knew on this topic came from watching the films featured in class?

20% Memo to Hollywood

- The final paper of the class, due **Dec. 6 by midnight through SafeAssign**, is a 5-ish page, single-spaced memo to those in Hollywood responsible for creating, producing, and/or greenlighting movies. Two key ideas should be represented in the memo:
 - Why the student believes (or does not) that more movies featuring historically excluded groups in the military should be produced and released to American audiences. Please include an explanation of why featuring such increased representation is important (or not).
 - Students will also be asked to identify three (3) historical events involving the US military/war that could successfully be adapted into a fictional (non-documentary) movie for general release. [Because documentaries are not included, students must identify points of tension/action that would make the movie exciting to audiences.] Science fiction movies should NOT be pitched.
- More explicit instructions may be found on Blackboard

Extra Credit

- Friday, September 17 is **Constitution Day**, the day every year when the United States celebrates the signing of the US Constitution by the Constitutional Convention delegates on September 17, 1787. At UIC we celebrate Constitution Day with a lecture on a topic relevant to our lives today that deals with the Constitution. This year former US Senator (and UIC alumna) Carol Moseley Braun will speak from 12-1 about Race and the Constitution in the 21st Century.
 - Students who attend the talk and submit a one-paragraph reflection on Race and the Constitution will receive 5 bonus points on the Women, Children, and War reflection.
- The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has put together an Orientation on Blackboard. Though geared specifically for first-year students, the information is also useful for advanced students as well. This orientation will help students understand how to use Blackboard and its tools more effectively. Students who complete the Orientation will receive a certificate of completion.
 - Students who submit their certificate of completion will receive 5 bonus points on the Journal grade.
- On Thursday, December 2, former National Security Council member (and impeachment witness) Dr. Fiona Hill will give a virtual talk at 2 pm on “The Danger of Populism.”
 - Students who attend the talk and submit a one-paragraph reflection on the topic of Dr. Hill’s talk will receive 5 bonus points on the People of Color in the Military reflection.
- Every semester, students are asked to complete course evaluations. For my classes, I challenge students to solve a collective action problem. If 75% or more students complete course evaluations, *everyone* in the class will receive 5 bonus points on the Memo to Hollywood grade. If fewer than 75% of students submit their evaluation, *no one* will receive bonus points on the Memo to Hollywood grade.

Late papers: Late papers will be penalized 1 letter grade (10 points) per day including weekends and holidays, except in the case of a verified emergency or documented medical excuse. [An assignment is late after midnight on the day it is due.] In order for the penalty for tardiness to be waived, students must contact the professor **before** the due date with a request for an extension.

Grade disputes: Students must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade or graded work before approaching the professor about the grade. All challenges must be emailed to the professor more than 24 hours after the grade was received. Students must be able to explain in their email why the grade deserves to be adjusted. The professor reserves the right to either raise or lower the grade, based on her re-assessment of the material.

GRADES

90-100: A 80-89: B 70-79: C 60-69: D <60: F

GUIDELINES:

Inclusive learning environment: UIC values diversity and inclusion. Regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic background, religion, political ideology, language, or culture, we expect all members of this class to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of our class. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, engagement, accurate assessment or achievement, please notify me as soon as possible.

Academic integrity: UIC is an academic community committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. In this community, all members including faculty, administrators, staff, and students alike share the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and quality of academic work so that such a collegial and productive environment exists.

As a student and member of the UIC community, you are expected to adhere to the [Community Standards](#) of integrity, accountability, and respect in all of your academic endeavors. When [accusations of academic dishonesty](#) occur, the Office of the Dean of Students investigates and adjudicates suspected violations of this student code. Unacceptable behavior includes cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication or falsification, plagiarism, multiple submissions without instructor permission, using unauthorized study aids, coercion regarding grading or evaluation of coursework, and facilitating academic misconduct. Please review the [UIC Student Disciplinary Policy](#) for additional information about the process by which instances of academic misconduct are handled towards the goal of developing responsible student behavior.

By submitting your assignments for grading you acknowledge these terms, you declare that your work is solely your own, and you promise that, unless authorized by the instructor or proctor, you have not communicated with anyone in any way during an exam or other online assessment.

- The University of Oxford defines **plagiarism** as “presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional.”¹
- Their comments on **unintentional plagiarism**: “Not all cases of plagiarism arise from a deliberate intention to cheat. Sometimes students may omit to take down citation details when taking notes, or they may be genuinely ignorant of referencing conventions. However, these excuses offer no sure protection against a charge of plagiarism. Even in cases where the plagiarism is found to have been neither intentional nor reckless, there may still be an academic penalty for poor practice. It is your responsibility to find out the prevailing referencing conventions in your discipline, to take adequate notes, and to avoid close paraphrasing...If ever in doubt about referencing, paraphrasing or plagiarism, you have only to ask your tutor.”²
- Students found to be plagiarizing a paper will receive the following penalty:
 - For a first offense: A “0” grade will be awarded to the offending assignment and the student’s final grade (after calculating in the “0”) will be lowered one letter grade.

For a second offense: The student will receive an “F” for the final grade of the course.

Special provisions: UIC is committed to full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of university life. If you face or anticipate disability-related barriers while at UIC, please connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at drc.uic.edu, via email at drc@uic.edu, or call (312) 413-2183 to create a plan for reasonable accommodations. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to disclose the disability to the DRC, complete an interactive registration process with the DRC, and provide me with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Upon receipt of a LOA, I will gladly work with you and the DRC to implement approved accommodations.

Tips for Success: There are many ways for you to show what you know or can do and how you are learning, through your effort, interaction and class participation, application of critical thinking skills to solve real world problems, and performance on assignments. This class has been structured to help all students get the support and guidance needed to succeed in your learning. The following tips will help you be successful in this class and in other classes throughout your career at UIC.

- Ask questions during class
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined, keeping up with assignments and completing coursework on time
- Participate in class discussions
- Individually review your notes after class

¹ See “Plagiarism,” University of Oxford, accessed August 17, 2021, <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>.

² Ibid.

- Ask questions during student hours about concepts or procedures that seemed confusing
- Attend / engage in student hours with me
- Speak up if problems arise because non-verbal communication not possible in an online setting

Grade disputes: Students must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade or graded work before approaching the professor about the grade. All challenges must be emailed to the professor **more than 24 hours after** the grade was received. Students must be able to explain in their email why the grade deserves to be adjusted. The professor reserves the right to either raise or lower the grade, based on her re-assessment of the material.

OTHER STUDENTS IN THE CLASS:

If you have any questions about assignments, deadlines, or other matters in the class, you may wish to contact other students before contacting the instructor or teaching assistant. It is important, especially in a time of increased isolation, that students have a network to support them. Finding others with shared interests in the class will help build that network.

REQUIRED READINGS:

There is no required textbook for the class. Relevant readings (along with video and online content) will be posted on Blackboard for each section.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week	Date	In Class	What's Due (before class)
1	Aug. 23	Introduction Women, Children, and War	
2	Aug. 30	<i>Courage Under Fire</i> (1996)	Journal entry (ungraded)
3	Sept. 6	<i>Labor Day - No class!</i>	
4	Sept. 13	<i>GI Jane</i> (1997)	Journal entry
5	Sept. 20	<i>The Whistleblower</i> (2010) <i>The Invisible War</i> (2012)	Journal entry
6	Sept. 27	<i>Beasts of No Nation</i> (2015)	Journal entry
7	Oct. 4	<i>Soldier's Girl</i> (2003)	Journal entry
8	Oct. 11	People of Color in the Military	Women, Children, and War argumentative essay
9	Oct. 18	<i>Glory</i> (1989)	Journal entry
10	Oct. 25	<i>The Tuskegee Airmen</i> (1995)	Journal entry
11	Nov. 1	<i>Windtalkers</i> (2002)	Journal entry

12	Nov. 8	<i>Only the Brave</i> (2006)	Journal entry
13	Nov. 15	"Enemies" <i>American Sniper</i> (2014)	People of Color in the Military argumentative essay Journal entry (optional)
14	Nov. 22	<i>13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi</i> (2016)	Journal entry
15	Nov. 29	Course Wrap-up/ Concluding thoughts	
	Dec. 6		Memo to Hollywood

POLITICAL SCIENCE WRITING PRIZES

- In the Spring semester of every year, the Department of Political Science announces competitions for 'best undergraduate paper' in several categories, such as international relations, urban politics, public policy analysis or comparative politics, and constitutional law and ethics. Any paper written for a POLS class during the academic year, Fall or Spring semester, is eligible for submission for one of these awards, if it fits with the broad scope of one of the topics. Students are encouraged to keep these awards in mind when developing papers for their classes.
 - The writing assignment for this class is not appropriate for the 'best paper' awards, but if you are also enrolled in another political science course this semester, please keep these awards in mind.

UIC RESOURCES

As an undergraduate at UIC, you may experience challenges such as struggles with academics, finances, student life, or your personal well-being. Please know this is completely normal and that you shouldn't hesitate to ask for help. Come to me, or if it is about an issue beyond the scope of this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services and resources available to all UIC students:

- [Student Academic Resources](#)
- [UIC Tutoring Resources](#)
- [Student Success Units](#) in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs and Academic Programs Supporting the Academic Experiences of UIC Undergraduates
- [Current Student Resources](#) (General, Academic, Student Support, Student Life, Technology, Health and Safety, Getting Around Campus)

Importantly, if you are in immediate distress, please call the UIC Counseling Center at (312) 996-3490 to speak directly with a counselor or to schedule an appointment with a counselor. If calling after business hours (which at UIC are typically from 9 am - 5 pm, M-F), press 2 to be connected to a crisis counselor. You can find additional online mental health resources on the [Counseling Center Resources](#) page.

The **Writing Center** offers friendly and supportive tutors who can help you with reading and writing in any of your courses, not just English. Tutors are ready to help other writing as well, such as job applications, personal statements, and resumes. The tutor and you will work together to decide how to improve your writing. If you have not started your assignment, that is OK. A tutor can help you brainstorm or make an outline. Tutors understand that you might be using the Writing Center for the first time. They are ready to guide you through your first session. You can choose to work with a tutor in real time using chat and a white board, or submit up to 5 pages of text and receive written feedback within 48 hours. For more information and to schedule an [appointment](#), visit the [Writing Center website](#).

The **Math and Science Learning Center**, located in the Science and Engineering South Building (SES) at 845 W. Taylor St. 3rd Floor, Room 247, is a meeting place for students in Math, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Physics. At the MSLC, students can meet with graduate teaching assistants for tutoring in 100-level courses, arrange informal group study sessions with other students, or meet up with friends to attend one of the workshops, seminars, or other activities sponsored by the SLC during the semester. Visit the website at <https://mslc.uic.edu/>, call 312-355-4900, or email at mslc@uic.edu.

The **UIC Library** is located both on east and west campus, provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person. At Daley Library on the east side of campus, stop by the reference desk in the IDEA Commons, or make an appointment for research help on either side of campus. Learn more about library policies at <http://library.uic.edu/>. To find research materials in specific subject areas view the Research Guides at <http://researchguides.uic.edu/>.

The **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)** can help if you feel you need more individualized instruction in reading and/or writing, study skills, time management, etc. Please call (312) 413-0031 or visit <https://ace.uic.edu/> for more information.

Counseling Services are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center at www.counseling.uic.edu. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services Building; you may contact them at (312) 996-3490 during normal business hours (M-F, 9 am - 5 pm). If calling after hours, press 2 to be connected to a crisis counselor. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions; please call (312) 996-5535.

- Services are also available from the Office of Applied Psychological Services (OAPS); Behavioral Sciences Building, Room 3011A; Phone: 312.996.2540. See <https://psch.uic.edu/research-programs/clinical/office-of-applied-psychological-services/> for more details.

The **Campus Advocacy Network** provides information and offers resources to all UIC students, faculty, and staff. Under the Title IX law you have the right to an education that is free from any form of gender-based violence and discrimination. Crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking are against the law and can be prevented. For more information or for confidential victim-services and advocacy, contact UIC's Campus Advocacy Network at 312-413-1025 or visit <http://can.uic.edu/>. To make a report to UIC's Title IX office, email TitleIX@uic.edu or call (312) 996-5657.

Campus Security

As a UIC student, you've chosen to live in one of the nation's largest cities. But, as at any university, crime is a reality. At UIC, we are strongly committed to our public safety programs, and we encourage students to be proactive in learning what programs and services are available in case of an emergency. You are **DISCOURAGED** from staying in university buildings alone, including lab rooms, after hours and are **ENCOURAGED** to use the POLICE/STUDENT patrol escort if you are uncomfortable traveling anywhere on campus. You may request an escort to accompany you to your campus destination on foot by calling (312) 996-2830, and between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am you can dial the Red Car service (312) 996-6800 if you are alone and need to leave the building. Through Red Car, the university has established a safe evening transportation service for university employees, students, visitors, and other authorized individuals. The car travels between university facilities within the following general boundaries: Clinton Street on the east; Western Avenue on the west; Jackson Boulevard on the north; and, 16th on the south. This service is available only to individuals possessing a valid UIC i-card. The i-card is required to ensure the safety of the driver and other passengers. Navigate to [Life at UIC](#) for more information.

Also, you can download the UIC SAFE app, a free personal security tool for students, faculty, and staff. It allows you easy contact with dispatchers and first responders in case of emergency. Navigate to the [UIC SAFE Toolkit](#) to download the app.

Finally, by dialing 5-5555 from a campus phone, you can summon Police or Fire for any on-campus emergency. You may also set up the complete number, (312) 355-5555, on speed-dial on your cell phone.

Emergency Response Systems and Guides

The emergency response guide can be found at the [UIC Ready](#). Please review and acquaint yourself with the guide and recommendations for various emergency situations.