Media and War
Fall 2006

Thursdays 7:20
Robinson A107

Prof. Hugh Gusterson
Robinson B 453
703-993-4084
hgusters@gmu.edu

Office hours:  Wednesday 3:30-4:30
Thursday: 2:30-3:30
Or by appointment

This class draws eclectically on literature in anthropology, media studies, history and critical security studies to examine the relationship between war and media since World War II. While shifts in technology and political economy have produced changes in the dynamics of war and media, the shifting phenomenologies of war and media have also been co-produced by one another. The class will delve into theories of the emergence of what has variously been called “postmodern war” or “network war,” track the mobilization of mass publics mobilized for war (especially in the context of the Cold War), map the uses of war by Hollywood, examine the relationship between memory, atrocity and nationalism, and explore the ways in which the media become conduits for both dominant and counter discourses. The wars examined will include World War II, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and the War on Terror.

Reading, writing and class participation are all essential to the class. While there will be some lecturing from the instructor, much of the learning will be generated by seminar-style discussion. Consequently, it is important to come to class prepared to discuss the readings for class. The final grade will be based on class participation and on written assignments. Students have a choice of writing three short (5-7 double-spaced pages) papers on questions periodically distributed by the instructor or (the preferred option) writing an original research paper due at the end of the semester.

Articles will be distributed by the instructor as pdfs. The following books have been ordered from the bookstore:


Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2003).


**Schedule of Classes**

**Aug 31**  
Introduction

**Sept 7 Introductory Ideas**


Sept 14    Creating A War Public


Joanne Sharp, Condensing the Cold War: Reader’s Digest and American Identity (Minnesota, 2000), introduction and chapter 3 (“the beginnings of the cold war”), pp.ix-xix, 83-106.


Film: Why We Fight

Sept 21    Images and Networks


Sept 28    Picturing War

Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2003).


Film: Baghdad ER
Oct 5  Memorializing Atrocity


*Film: Hiroshima, Mon Amour*

Oct 12  The Cold War I


Oct 19  The Cold War II: Representing the Unthinkable


Oct 26 Vietnam


Film: Sir! No Sir! OR Hearts and Minds OR The War at Home

Nov 2 (4s) Remembering Vietnam


Film: Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision

Nov 9 Journalistic Complicities

Mark Pedelty, War Stories, selections

Film: War Photographer (from AU library)

Nov 16 (AAA) The First Gulf War


Film: Jarhead

Nov 23 (NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING)

Nov 30 9/11 and After


Film: The Control Room

Dec 7 The War on Terror


*Film: Occupation Dreamland*