**SLAVIC 200/C LIT 251/GLITS 251: War Literature**

Fall 2023

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**Instructor: Piotr Florczyk, PhD (piotrf@uw.edu)**

**Teaching Assistant: Taylor Eftimov, ABD (eftimov@uw.edu)**

**Office: PDL A-215**

**Office Hours: TH 11:15-1:15, in person (and by appointment)**

**Course Description:**

While wars seem “never ending, still beginning,” we seldom pay attention to what wisdom, if any, can be gleaned from how they are portrayed by poets and writers. While the genre of war literature, which ranges from eyewitness accounts of combat to the depictions of civilians caught in the crossfire, has had many practitioners over the centuries, our readings will include works by David Diop (France), Bertolt Brecht (Germany), Anna Świrszczyńska (Poland), Yusef Komunyaaka (USA), Tarfia Faizullah (Bangladesh/USA), Don Mee Choi (Korea/USA), Serhiy Zhadan (Ukraine), among others. In addition to focusing on close-reading and comparative analysis of novels, short stories, hybrid works, and poetry, we will also examine various social, political, and cultural contexts to see if and how they might have impacted the authors under discussion. All readings are in English. No prerequisites.

**TRIGGER WARNING**: As the poet Lucille Clifton once said in an interview, “You cannot play for safety and make art.” As you know, literature often confronts very complex issues. Please be aware that you should SKIP any assigned reading and step away from any discussion as needed this term, no questions asked. I can’t always give the TW in advance as it’s impossible to know what might trigger someone, but I will try to give a general sense of what’s coming on these issues.

**Required Texts and Materials (eBook or paper copies):**

1. David Diop. *At Night All the Blood is Black*. ISBN: 978-1250800206
2. Bertolt Brecht. *Mother Courage and Her Children*. ISBN: 978-0802130822
3. Handouts: Anna Świrszczyńska, Don Mee Choi, Yusef Komunyaaka, Stig Dagerman, Serhiy Zhadan, and others.

You are responsible for reading all assigned texts and attending each class prepared to participate in class discussion. Without reading the texts, you will not be able to complete the assignments.

**Learning Objectives:**

This term we will immerse ourselves in the comparative study of a select group of writers and poets who have influenced our thinking about war and its aftermath. While the genre of war literature has had many practitioners, we will concentrate on works that respond to World War I, World War II, including the Holocaust, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Yugoslav Wars, and the ongoing aggression of Russia against Ukraine, with the aim of giving each student an opportunity to practice and hone their skills at:

1. Comparing and contrasting rhetorical strategies (irony, understatement, etc.)
2. Examining various social, political, and cultural contexts to see if and how they might have impacted the authors under discussion
3. Applying critical thinking and reading skills to written analysis of literary works and photographs.

**Assignments and Grading:**

1. Three response papers (500 words each), 60%
2. Group presentation (10 minutes), 30%
3. Active class participation, 10%

**Response papers 1 & 2:** Choose a poem/story/photograph and in a paper of 500 words reflect on its form and content, as well as any pertinent biographical/historical/political, etc. contexts, as if you were introducing it to a stranger.

**Response paper 3:** In an essay of 500 words please reflect on how the course’s readings and discussions have influenced/changed/informed your thinking about military conflicts going on in the world right now.

**Group presentation:** The works under discussion in our class are not the only voices worthy of our attention, and this is where you come in. In a group of 2-3, please introduce us to a literary text/photograph not covered in class. Your text and author may come from the U.S. or another country, write in English or another language.

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

**Week 1:**

TH 9/28 Introduction

**Week 2:**

T 10/3 David Diop, I-IX

TH 10/5 David Diop, X-XV

**Week 3:**

T 10/10 David Diop, XVI-XXV

TH 10/12 War Photography & War Music

**Week 4:**

T 10/17 Anna Świrszczyńska [Handout]

**Writing due: Response Paper #1**

TH 10/19 Holocaust Poetry [Handout]

**Week 5:**

T 10/24 Don Mee Choi [Handout]

TH 10/26 Yusef Komunyakaa [Handout]

**Week 6:**

T 10/31 Tarfia Faizullah [Handout]

**Writing due: Response Paper #2**

TH 11/2 Serhiy Zhadan [Handout]

**Week 7:**

T 11/7 TA Lecture

TH 11/9 Lecture TBD

**Week 8:**

T 11/14 Brecht, *Mother Courage*

TH 11/16 Brecht, *Mother Courage*

**Writing due: Response Paper #3**

**Week 9:**

T 11/21 Film: *Quo Vadis, Aida?* (2020)

TH 11/23 No Class (Thanksgiving)

**Week 10:**

T 11/28 TA Lecture

TH 11/30 No Class (ASEEES Conference)

**Week 11:**

T 12/5 Group Presentations

TH 12/7 Group Presentations

**Bibliography for Further Study: Please see me**

**OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The University takes academic integrity very seriously. Behaving with integrity is part of our responsibility to our shared learning community. If you’re uncertain about if something is academic misconduct, ask me. I am willing to discuss questions you might have.

Acts of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

* Cheating (working collaboratively on quizzes/exams and discussion submissions, sharing answers and previewing quizzes/exams)
* Plagiarism (representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit to the original author(s))
* Unauthorized collaboration (working with each other on assignments)

Concerns about these or other behaviors prohibited by the Student Conduct Code may be referred for investigation and adjudication.

Students found to have engaged in academic misconduct may receive a zero on the assignment, or other possible outcome.

**INCOMPLETE GRADES**

Incomplete grades may only be awarded if a student is doing satisfactory work up until the last two weeks of the quarter. Undergraduate students must not register for courses in which they have received an Incomplete, since a grade earned in a repeat course will not be recorded as an Incomplete conversion grade. To obtain credit for the course, an undergraduate student must convert an Incomplete into a passing grade no later than the last day of the next quarter.

An Incomplete grade not made up by the end of the next quarter (summer excluded) will be converted to the grade of 0.0 by the Registrar unless the instructor has indicated, when assigning the Incomplete grade, that a grade other than 0.0 should be recorded if the incomplete work is not completed. The original Incomplete grade is not removed from the transcript.

**RELIGIOUS ACCOMODATIONS**

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

**DISABILITY RESOURCES**

Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or [uwdrs@uw.edu](mailto:uwdrs@uw.edu) or [disability.uw.edu.](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/)DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions.  Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS.  It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

**RESPECT**

We aspire to create a classroom environment that encourages and welcomes different perspectives. How do we learn anything in the absence of robust engagement with ideas and views that differ from our own? Respect for different views and the people who express them does not necessarily mean agreement with them; at a minimum, it means that we should cultivate gratitude for the opportunity to re-examine our habits of thought. Let’s work together and show mutual respect.

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For more information on disability accommodations, academic integrity, safety, and religious accommodations, please see the information at this ink: https://registrar.washington.edu/curriculum/syllabus-guidelines/

**UW COVID-19 guidelines**

https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/covid-guidelines-

summary.pdf?mkt\_tok=NTI3LUFIUi0yNjUAAAGHGsmR5n3G4F\_8xcnMiUP3y0eGRAPGTM

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l42wGXrAZ7z4

**HUMANITIES ACADEMIC SERVICES**

Nancy Sisko: nsisko@uw.edu

HAS website: https://hasc.washington.edu/

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