

Seminar: War Reporting Jour 304, Fall 2009

Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:15 p.m.

Weinstein Hall, Room 418

Robert Hodierno, instructor

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Reading and viewing:

1. The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq (Johns Hopkins Paperback) by Phillip Knightley (Paperback – Sept.13, 2004)

2. “Media Credibility in War: The Phenomenon of Embedded Reporters” by Robert Hodierno, a paper at the 2005 conference “Arab Media in the Information Age” sponsored by the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research. You can read the paper at: <http://hodierno.com/cred.htm>

3. “Reporting America at War,” a film by Steven Ives. A two-part PBS special that you can see at: <http://www.pbs.org/weta/reportingamericaatwar>

4. “Blood Brothers,” a four-part multimedia series on the Army battalion in Iraq that was the hardest hit of any U.S. battalion since Vietnam. **By Kelley Kennedy, who will be a guest lecturer Sept. 30.** Read the series here: <http://militarytimes.com/news/2007/11/bloodbrothersredirect/>

5. “Bearing Witness,” a documentary on contemporary women journalists working in war zones. On reserve in the MRC.

6. We will read war coverage as it appeared in newspapers during the various wars. The library has an excellent electronic collection of papers dating back to the Revolutionary War. The second class session will be run by Jim Gwinn from Boatwright Library who will teach you how to use the newspaper archive.

In this course we will trace the coverage of American wars from the Revolution through the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We will put special emphasis on these wars and it would be wise to refresh your knowledge of them:

Revolutionary War -- briefly

Mexican-American War -- briefly

Civil War -- deeply

Spanish-American War -- briefly

World War I – briefly

World War II – deeply

Korean War – briefly
Vietnam War – deeply
Current wars – deeply

(A note of “briefly” means we will spend no more than two class sessions dealing with those wars. “Deeply” means three or more class sessions.)

Here is a list of war correspondents we will focus on:

George Wilkins Kendall, among the first truly professional war correspondents. He covered the Mexican-American War for the New Orleans Picayune.

Richard Harding Davis, an accomplished author whose coverage of the Spanish-American War is credited by many for elevating Teddy Roosevelt to national prominence.

Ernie Pyle, the most beloved of the World War II reporters.

Robert Capa, World War II’s most famous war photographer.

Peter Arnett, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his Vietnam War coverage.

We will also consider the role changing technology played in war coverage. In particular we will consider these technologies:

High-speed rotary press
Telegraph
Photographs
Photo engraving
Telephone
Radio
Television
Satellite communications

Finally, one area that we will cover in this course that is rarely mentioned in the literature of war reporting is the psychological impact on the individual journalists. While the impact on troops has long been considered – whether it was called shell shock, battle fatigue or post traumatic stress disorder – the impact on journalists has been little understood. That has started to change and we will examine that. Kelly Kennedy, who will be speaking Sept. 30, is an expert on this topic.

Individuals in the class will be assigned to become “experts” on individual correspondents and their wars. Others will be assigned to become “experts” on the role of various new technologies. Those experts will report to the seminar and lead discussions on their topics.

Everyone in the class will be assigned papers during the course of the semester. There will be a term paper that will count for 25 percent of the final grade.

Grades will be based on the quality and depth of expert presentations, papers and class participation.

By the end of this course you will have an understanding the historically antagonistic relationship between those who wage war and those who report on them. You will have a sense of the personalities of war reporters both contemporary and historical.

Attendance: Missing a class is not an excuse for failing to do the work assigned in that class. Ask your classmates or ask me what the assignment was. If there's a good reason you missed the class, talk to me. But it had better be good.

Deadlines: No late assignments will be accepted. Part of learning to be a journalist is meeting deadlines. Media editors do not tolerate those who miss deadlines.

Punctuality: You are expected to be in class on time. Each class will start promptly. If you cannot get to class on time, please drop the course now. The door will be closed at the start of class and you will not be allowed to enter.

Cell Phones: No cell phone use, either voice or text, is allowed during class. If your cell phone goes off, you will be asked to leave the class and not allowed to return.

Reaching me: I will be in my office from 2:30-5 pm Monday and Wednesday. Feel free to call me at 484-4759 Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. If you need me in person at other times that can be arranged by appointment. You may e-mail me at rhodiern@richmond.edu. But a special note about e-mails to me: Treat them like the business communication they are. Begin with a conventional salutation (Dear Prof. Hodierne) and end with a polite closing (Sincerely, Jane Doe). Write in complete sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation. I don't think emoticons are cute. Finally, I don't respond to text messages, IMs, Facebook postings or Tweets.

Plagiarism: Don't appropriate the work of others and pretend it's yours. Err on the side of disclosure. Even if you have appropriated an idea or concept from another without actually stealing that person's words verbatim, say where the idea came from. If I catch you plagiarizing, you will fail this course. Period.