



What is War?

3rd year option, Autumn term 2015-2016

Overview

- The course examines the history, theory, and contemporary political implications of 'counterinsurgency', one of the most significant and enduring forms of war.
- The course opens by reflecting on the fundamental question of the relation between war and politics. What is war and how, if at all, is it different from other forms of violence? What is politics and how, if at all, is it to be distinguished from war?
- We then examine specific wars in some depth. We begin examining a series of case studies, from two late-colonial 'emergencies' in Malaya and Kenya and the recent counterinsurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq. We also examine the case of urban militarization in the cities of the industrialized West. What are the similarities and distinctions between how populations are governed during late-colonial and post-colonial counterinsurgencies and seemingly far from the main battlefield?
- With knowledge of concrete cases under our belts, the second part of the course examines counterinsurgency in specific relation to culture, gender and ethics.

Tentative Outline*

- Wk. 1. War is what, again?
- Part I: History/empirics
- Wk. 2. Case studies I. Late-colonial Malaya and Kenya
- Wk. 3. Case studies II. Post-colonial Afghanistan and Iraq
- Wk. 4. Case studies III. War comes home: urban militarization
- Part II: Theory
- Wk. 5. War and 'cultural' knowledge: natives, races, tribes
- Wk. 6. Social work with guns
- Wk. 7. Reading Week - no class
- Wk. 8. 'Covet your enemies wife': women as physical terrain
- Wk. 9. Ethics: winning with decency?
- Wk. 10. Domestication/pacification: what is politics, again?
- Part III: Thinking/writing
- Wk. 11. Plenary session on Assessment Preparation

* A new convenor will be running this module in 2020, so the topics and outline may change.

Teaching arrangements

- The module is taught via a three-hour workshop.
- This will include a short introductory lecture; class discussion; writing and small group-exercises, debates and short video-clips.

Assessment

- 10% Group presentation
- 20% 1000 word essay
- 70% 3500 word essay

Contact

- The IR Department is excited to be appointing two new faculty member for the 2020/21 academic year. This module will be taught by one of these appointees. We are unable to name this individual, though, until the appointment is confirmed.
- In the interim, if you have questions about this module, feel free to contact Dr Earl Gammon, Undergraduate Director for IR at e.gammon@sussex.ac.uk