CAST 311
Militarization in American Daily Life
Spring 2016

Professor Pérez
Email: gina.perez@oberlin.edu

Office Hours: MWF 11-11:45
MWF 2:30-3:30


National events from Ferguson to Baltimore have revealed to a broader American public troubling phenomena that have consumed many activists and scholars since the 1990s: the militarization of local police forces that have made them increasingly resemble the U.S. military. How and when did this happen? How has the history and contemporary reality of war and war preparation shaped daily life in the United States? What have been the repercussions of militarization both within the United States and beyond U.S. geopolitical boundaries? What kinds of efforts have been developed to address militarism and militarization both in the U.S. and beyond? This course takes a broad view of American daily life to consider how war, concerns around national security, worries about immigration, and war’s aftermath have shaped the lives of those who live within the United States and those beyond its borders. A number of questions and theoretical concerns guide this course: What is the relationship among gender, sexuality and militarism? What happens when we seem to live in a constant state of war? What has been the consequence of increasing militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border and what is the relationship between U.S. foreign policy, immigration, and militarism? How do militarism and militaristic values give shape to our understandings of citizenship, as well as new raced, classed, gendered and sexual identities? And how do people exercise agency within social, economic, and political contexts shaped by military power? In order to engage with these questions, we will read a wide range of texts, including feminist scholarship, ethnographic studies, history, urban and cultural studies, personal accounts of war and anti-war activism, and film.
Required Texts

All textbooks can be purchased at the college bookstore and many are also on Reserve at Mudd. All articles are available on blackboard under the course documents tab.

I. CLASS POLICIES

Class Attendance
This class will be run as a seminar. Your attendance, as well as your informed and thoughtful participation, is absolutely critical to the success of this course. You must have assigned readings completed for class and be prepared to discuss the texts. Current political events are certainly relevant to much of the course content, and making connections between the readings, class discussion and the contemporary experiences of militarism and war is encouraged. But students are required to do so in relation to course materials. This course requires a great deal of reading and demands a high level of engagement, and students are expected to assume three important roles in the course: 1. To do the assigned readings each week; 2. To be engaged participants raising questions, comments and critiques in relation to the readings; and 3. To be thoughtful, rigorous listeners, respectful of others’ opinions and willing to respectfully challenge (and be challenged by) your classmates.

Many of us have complicated relationships to militaries and militarism. Some of us come from families who currently serve or have served in the military; some might come from pacifist backgrounds that have engaged in activism against war and militarism; still others might be new to some of the issues raised in the class. In short, the goal of this class is neither to demand unanimity of opinion; nor should we assume a shared experience about the issues raised. The goal is to foster learning, dialogue, respectful and rigorous engagement and to strengthen your ability to have respectful and honest dialogue around controversial issues. To that end, I ask that each member of the class respond thoughtfully and carefully with each other and with the various topics in the course.

Please be aware that some issues in this course may be personally difficult for people to discuss. I cannot always anticipate what those topics will be, but I will do my best to respond...
appropriately if these situations arise. And I encourage you to come and speak with me if you have any concerns.

**Attendance Policies**
Since this class meets only once I week, I expect all of you to come to all classes. *I do not expect you to come to class if you are ill!* But if for some really good reason you anticipate missing class, please inform me by email prior to your absence. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade for the course.

I absolutely require student to arrive to class on time. This is essential for fostering a respectful learning environment. If you arrive to class once class has begun, you will be considered absent.

**Classroom Etiquette**
Once you arrive to seminar, please turn off all cell phones. Texting is not permitted. Laptops are useful (and sometimes necessary) for taking notes and reading assigned articles, and, therefore, are allowed in this seminar. I ask that you use your laptops for that purpose only. Students found to be using class time checking email, surfing the web, or engaging in social networking will be asked not to bring their laptops to class in the future.

I value and welcome honest debate about controversial issues; and of the many controversial things we discuss in Comparative American Studies, I find conversations about militarism are some of the trickiest to navigate. I may not always agree with perspectives some of you may offer, nor do I assume everyone will agree with me or with each other at all times. And while I do not want to smooth over differences in opinions, I do want to create a space where people can disagree without being judged or devalued. I value respectfulness, kindness, and honest engagement with questions that are incredibly important for us as a class to think through carefully. I also value this intellectual space to read, discuss and write about these important issues. *If these are not values you share or believe will be difficult to abide by, this might not be the right class for you, and therefore I ask that you please come and talk with me after the first day of class.*

**Meetings Outside of Class**
My office hours will be posted on my office door in King 141D. I encourage you all to come and speak with me often. If you cannot make my posted office hours, please email me so we can find an alternate time to meet.

**Course Deadlines**
This course requires weekly response papers that are designed to facilitate seminar discussion. There are also a number of personal reflections you are asked to write throughout the course of the semester. *All assignments must be completed on time.* Response papers not turned in at the beginning of class will be considered late and will be penalized a full grade for each day they are overdue. Reflection essays that are not submitted on time will not be accepted.

**P/NP**
If you are taking this course P/NP, you must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the course.
**Academic Incompletes**
Assignments will not be accepted past the end of reading period without an approved incomplete from the Dean of studies. Extensions of final projects need an approved incomplete from the Dean of Studies. These are College-wide policies and there are no exceptions.

**Honor Code**
The policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System apply to this class. Written work must include proper citations and must be the product of your own work. You are also required to include the following statement on all written assignments: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."

If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources or about the Honor Code, please feel free to approach me. For more information on the Honor Code, see [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html)

**Students Needing Special Assistance**
Please speak with me if you need disability-related accommodations in this course. Student Academic Services is also an important resource for students needing academic assistance. Please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Peters G27, extension 58467 for assistance developing a plan to address your academic needs.

**Student Athletes**
If you are a student athlete and member of an Oberlin College sports team and your athletic schedule will cause you to miss a class, please come and speak with me.

II. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Class Facilitation.**
By the end of the second week, students will establish groups of 2 or 3 and sign up to facilitate the discussion of one of the 8 weeks you are assigned a book to read. You are not being asked to summarize the day’s reading. Rather you are being asked to bring in a set of questions and issues related to the day’s readings that demonstrate the connections between classroom discussion and analysis in the wider world. You are encouraged to be creative in facilitating class discussion: Bring in media, articles, different pedagogical exercises to facilitate conversation. The day you facilitate class, you are not required to submit a response paper. All groups are required to meet with me prior to their class facilitation.

2. **Written Assignments**
This course is designed to help you develop critical reading, writing and analytical skills. To that end, you are required to complete a variety of writing assignments.

- **Response Papers (8)**
  To facilitate our discussions each week, you are required to write a response paper to the assigned readings for the day. These responses need to be submitted to me in hard copy at the beginning of class each Thursday. Some weeks I will provide you with specific prompts for your papers. For other weeks, your response essays should articulate clearly the argument of the book and engage with the way the author constructs the argument.
and analyze how the book fits with themes for the class. **You are not being asked to summarize the readings.** Rather you should provide an analysis of the book’s strengths and/or limitations and contributions it makes to further your understanding of militarism. You are not required to write a response paper for the week you and your group facilitate class discussion. **No late response papers will be accepted.**

- **Reflection Essays (4)**
  In addition to the analytical reading response papers, you will also be asked to reflect on specific questions throughout the course of the semester. These reflections will be part of a digital journal you will maintain on blackboard.

### REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CLASS SCHEDULE

**Part 1: Militarizing Daily Lives**

**Week 1: Why Militarism Matters**
February 4: Introduction to class and next period’s readings

**Reflection Essay #1 (in class):** What is your understanding of militarism/militarization? What are some of your earliest memories and/or experiences with the military and war? And, finally, can you identify different ways and moments in which the military, ideas about military power, and/or questions about war and war preparation have shaped your life?

**Week 2: Feminism, Masculinity and the New American Militarism**
February 11: Enloe, “How Do They Militarize a Can of Soup”

- Enloe, “Conclusion: Decisions, Decisions, Decisions”
- Mann, “Manhood, Sexuality and the Nation in Post 9-11 United States”
- Gonzalez, “Introduction: Militarizing Culture”
- Bacevich, Preface AND Introduction, *The New American Militarism*
- Bacevich, Prologue AND Introduction, *Breach of Trust*

**Reading Response Prompt:** Critiques of militarism are often regarded to be advanced solely by progressive, radical, and leftist activists. And it is often challenging to explain why militarism is a question that should concern feminists, environmentalists, economic and political conservatives. The readings for this week demonstrate that anxieties about militarism are shared across the political spectrum and the civilian-military divide. For this week write a 3-4 page letter to a family member or a friend and explain why radical
feminists like Cynthia Enloe and conservative historians like Andrew Bacevich write so passionately about militarism. Pay particular attention to the way the writers this week have provided feminist critiques of militarization as well as how they have highlighted important concerns about class, race, ethnicity, and citizenship in militarizing American culture.

Week 3: An American Century of War and Peace
February 18: Dudziak, War Time

Week 4: Militarization of Local Police
February 25 Balko’s, Rise of the Warrior Cop

Reading Response Prompt: As I noted above, recent events in Ferguson, Baltimore and beyond clearly illuminated the ways that local police forces have become increasingly militarized. How does Balko’s book provide insight into how this occurred? As we read in week 2, Cynthia Enloe argues that militarization occurs through many different decisions. Please use this week’s response paper to focus on the different decisions that led to the militarization of police forces in the United States. Be specific and clear about historical moments, policies, public attitudes and legislative changes that facilitated this transformation of local police.

Week 5: Militarizing the U.S.-Mexico Border and the Homeland Security State
March 3: Gonzales, Reform Without Justice

Week 6: Race, Religion and the War on Terror
March 10 Bayoumi, This Muslim American Life

Week 7: From the Military to Prison Industrial Complex
March 17 Why We Fight (Film)

- McClain, “Are Americans Finally Facing Up To the True Costs of Mass Incarceration?”
  http://www.thenation.com/article/are-americans-finally-facing-up-to-the-true-costs-of-mass-incarceration/
- Coates, “The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration”

Reflection Essay #2: The film and readings for this week provide an analysis of the development and consequences of the military and prison industrial complex. Please define what is meant by these terms and what do you regard as the strengths and limitations of comparing militarism and incarceration. Due Midnight Friday March 18

********************************************************************************SPRING BREAK********************************************************************************
Part II: War’s Toll

Week 9: Militarism, Tourism, and U.S. Empire
March 31 Gonzalez, Securing Paradise

Film Screening Outside of Class, Sunday April 3: Where Soldiers Come From
7pm, Location TBA

- Graeber, “An Army of Altruists”
  Reflection Essay #3: Both the film “Where Soldiers Come From” and David Graeber’s article, “An Army of Altruists” provide ways of understanding the personal, historical, and political economic contexts for military enlistment. How have the film and article shaped your understanding of these experiences? Due Midnight, Monday April 4

Week 10: Injury and Trauma
April 7 Wool, After War

Week 11: Narrating War
April 14 Klay, Redeployment

Part IV: Responses

Week 12: Politics, Patriotism and Protest
April 21: Film: Sir! No Sir! (Film)
- Read about Iraq Veterans Against the War http://www.ivaw.org/
- Vigil, “Camilo Mejía’s Public Rebellion”

Week 13: Race, Class and Political Mobilizations
April 28: Oropeza, Raza Si! Guerra No!

Week 14: Militarism and the New Century: Is Another Future Possible?
May 5: Continue Discussion about patriotism and protest and final thoughts
  Reflection Essay #4: For some protest is antithetical to patriotism; for others, patriotism absolutely requires one to challenge what s/he believes to be unjust wars and military operations. What is your definition of patriotism? Would you regard yourself as a patriot? What kinds of obligations do you believe you have to the broader national community in which you live? Due in class.

Final Project Due Saturday May 14, 11am