1) OVERVIEW. War figures prominently in the self-affirming narratives of most societies, but this is perhaps especially true of the United States—a nation paradoxically conceived in opposition to military “tyranny” yet birthed in war and self-defined largely by its subsequent martial ventures. Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton have likened the metanarrative of American history to a suspension bridge, anchored at one end by Plymouth and Jamestown and rising to three peaks—the Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II—before descending through the Cold War to the present day. This course will critically examine this arc and its important omissions, beginning with pre-contact Native American military practices. In keeping with the “new” military history, this course will study the ways in which North American societies organized and applied external violence to serve their collective ends. This includes the “traditional” study of armed conflicts but places them in a broader social and cultural context. Weekly readings will follow a familiar chronology yet reflect a range of approaches to military history privileging seminal and worthy new interpretations. Many of these will reflect the field’s ongoing fascination with cultures or “ways of war.” The course meets weekly for two-hour seminar discussions on the assigned readings.

2) COURSE OBJECTIVES.
   a) Students will acquire a foundational knowledge of the major events and historiographical themes in American military history.
   b) Students will critically evaluate and contextualize signal and notable recent scholarship in the field, communicating their evaluations orally and in the form of an academic review article.
   c) Students will synthesize course materials in a manner that furthers their own scholarship.

3) EXPECTATIONS / REQUIREMENTS.
   a) Students must attend all meetings of the seminar and participate actively in discussion. Participation will be evaluated for quality and consistency.
   b) Students will submit weekly reviews of common, core texts (indicated on the schedule by an asterisk) no later than noon the day before each seminar meeting. These reviews will

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1 The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), reading, writing, and individual consultations with the instructor.
not exceed eight hundred words and will conform to the guidelines provided below. No
common reviews are required for week 1 or the weeks in which students submit their
longer reviews of “additional readings.”
c) Students will submit two 4-5 page reviews of works listed as “additional readings” on the
schedule. These reviews are due at noon the day prior to the respective class meeting, and
students will present their review to their classmates at this session. No two students may
review the same book; nor will students review books that they have already read. Students
should prioritize their preferences prior to our first class meeting, at which I will reconcile
your wishes with the needs of the course. These reviews should also conform to the
guidelines below but more substantially engage the relevant historiography.

4) BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES. All reviews should be critical, analytical, and thoughtful.
Assess the book as a work of individual scholarship and locate it in the larger body of
literature. Consider and address at least three published, scholarly reviews in your own. At a
minimum, reviews should provide:
a) Information on the author and his or her qualifications.
b) A brief, general description of the organization and contents of the book.
d) Your critical evaluation of how successful the author is in achieving his or her goals and in
persuading you of the thesis. The emphasis in each review should be on critical reading
and evaluation. No book is perfect and none is worthless. The objective is to discern the
strengths and weaknesses in the books you read and to place them in the context of the
kinds of literature being done in the field and approaches to the various topics.
e) Submit all reviews via the Canvas course page. Use the following file-naming convention:
Wilcox_Pueblo Revolt and the Mythology of Conquest by Hall.docx.

5) COURSE TEXTS.
a) Required. See course schedule (below).

b) General works. There are four general works that can be read along chronologically at the
right time, in pieces. You are not required to read them, but I highly recommend each of
these books—particularly if you lack the background familiarity necessary to contextualize
our common readings.

Chambers, John Whiteclay, and G. Kurt Piehler, eds. Major Problems in American Military History:

Lookingbill, Brad D. American Military History: A Documentary Reader. Malden, MA: Wiley-

Millett, Allan R., Peter Maslowsk, and William B. Feis. For the Common Defense: A Military History
of the United States of America. Completely revised and expanded ed. New York: Free Press,
2012.

c) References / bibliographic sources.


6) COURSE SCHEDULE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1, 27 January</th>
<th>American Ways of War</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Readings:</td>
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<td>Additional Readings:</td>
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<th>Week 2, 3 February</th>
<th>Contact and Conflict</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Readings:</td>
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**Additional Readings:**


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**Week 3, 10 February**

**Early American Warfare**

**Common Readings:**


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2 Each student will review only one of the books here indicated as a common reading.


**Additional Readings:**


**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


<table>
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<th>Week 5, 24 February</th>
<th>Young Republic</th>
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**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


Week 6, 3 March Antebellum Era

Common Readings:


Additional Readings:


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<th>Week 7, 10 March</th>
<th>Civil War</th>
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<td>**Common Readings:**3</td>
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**Additional Readings:**

3 Each student will review only one of the books here indicated as a common reading.


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<th>Week 8, 17 March</th>
<th>Toward Empire</th>
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**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


### Week 9, 24 March

**The Great War**

**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


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*Subject to change based on Spring Break plans.*


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10, 14 April</th>
<th>Interwar</th>
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**Additional Readings:**


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Week 11, 21 April | World War II

**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


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<th>Week 12, 28 April</th>
<th>The Cold War &amp; the Militarizing State</th>
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**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


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<th>Week 13, 5 May</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
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**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


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<th>Week 14, 12 May</th>
<th>Perplexity</th>
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**Common Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


