

ON PERPETUAL WAR  
COLI 280W  
Spring 2008  
TR 10:05-11:30, AA G008

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### Course Description

This course has two principal foci. In the first instance we will be concerned with the ways in which the concept of “war” designates a very different reality than it did in the so-called modern period. This difference is clearly the effect of multiple intersecting histories of science and technology, of material culture, as well as of social, cultural, and intellectual histories just as much as it is of the histories of international relations. Our focus in examining certain aspects of these histories will be with the ways in which what is called “war” has become an entirely different conceptual object than it was for modern thought: it is this question that will serve as our guiding thread. This part of the course (roughly, the first half of the semester) will consist largely of lectures and, as class size allows, discussion.

The second, and concomitant, focus of the course is constituted in an attention to the ways in which any resistance to “perpetual war” that aspires to political consequence has had to adapt its thinking, its strategies, and its tactics to the new realities of war. Here, perpetual war demands a new politics of resistance. At stake is a more expansive conception of resistance that understands that perpetual war is not merely a question of combat, but of everything that is implicated in the war. We will proceed through an examination, as a series of case studies, of various instances, strategies and practices of resistance. Students will develop a final project in close consultation with one or more of the instructors; we will attempt to guide you to appropriate resources for your projects, which should be pertinent to the work of the second half of the course.

### Course Requirements

The course will consist of lectures, discussions, meetings of working groups, and perhaps other formats, as dictated by the developing work of the course. Attendance and participation is expected; more than two *unexcused* absences will be reflected in your

final grade. You will write a 5-10 pp. midterm essay on an assigned question based on the readings and lectures of the first half of the course. You will receive the question(s) on 28 February, and your papers will be due 13 March. Late papers will be penalized. You will also be required to develop a final project in consultation with one or more of the instructors (Ms. Ricciardone, Mr. Pieragastini, or myself). Your project must be submitted in its final form by 15 May.

The University obliges me to remind you that plagiarism, the unacknowledged appropriation of someone else's words or ideas, is a bad thing. Don't do it.

### Required Texts

The following texts are required and are available at the campus bookstore.

Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*

Pierre Guyotat, *Eden Eden Eden*

Pavel Hak, *Sniper*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology and the War Machine*

Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*

John Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*

### Tentative Schedule

#### PART ONE: PERPETUAL WAR AND ITS CONCEPT

29-31 January	Introduction: No Readings
5-12 February	The Old Modern Concept of War  Read: Ernst Jünger, <i>Storm of Steel</i> , all; Carl Schmitt, selections on e-reserve.
14-26 February	How War Exceeds Its Concept  Read: Pierre Guyotat, <i>Eden Eden Eden</i> , all. Pavel Hak, <i>Sniper</i> , all. Jean Genet, "Four Hours at Shatila," online or handout. Jean Genet, "Violence and Brutality," on e-reserve.
28 February- 13 March	Thinking About War Now  Read: Rosa Luxemburg, "Militarism as a Province of Accumulation," on e-reserve.

Retort, "Permanent War," on e-reserve.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "War," on e-reserve.

**Questions for your midterm essay, covering the readings of Part I, will be assigned on 28 February; your essays are due on 18 March.**

PART TWO: CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES OF RESISTANCE

18 March-

8 May

Read: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology and the War Machine*, all.

Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, all.

John Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, all.

**Your final projects/essays pertinent to the work of Part II, are due 15 May.**