SO253-15 War, Memory and Society

24/25

Department
>Sociology

Level
>Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader
>Alexander Smith

Credit value
>15

Module duration
>9 weeks

Assessment
>100% coursework

Study location
>University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

War not only influences societies and determines the fates and fortunes of states. It impacts on the ways in which societies imagine and constitute themselves as well as macro-level narratives of national progress or decline and fall.
This module considers the social and cultural consequences of war and how war, memory and society interacts with, and impacts upon, each other in the making of national and other identities. It also explores how war has helped influence the development of sociology as a discipline, shaping its empirical and theoretical sensibilities at important junctures in its history.

Each week will draw on scholarly literature from sociology and associated cognate disciplines, (e.g. social anthropology, history, cultural studies), as well as texts in popular culture and the media to explore a different question or issue. These questions will link past debates in sociology and the social sciences with current questions concerning the social and cultural implications of war for contemporary states and societies. Although the module will draw eclectically on case studies from around the world, it will return to consider the importance of war in the making of collective identities and memory in Britain, Australia and other Commonwealth countries. The module will also involve a consideration of the impact and memory of the 20th century's two world wars, about which students will be encouraged to reflect critically.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module aims to provide an historical and theoretical introduction to sociological debates about the social origins of war, the impact of war on society and the role it plays in constructions of memory and social identities.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Does war have social origins? How have sociologists theorised war? War not only influences societies and determines the fates and fortunes of states. It impacts on the ways in which societies imagine and constitute themselves as well as macro-level narratives of national progress or decline and fall.

This module considers the social and cultural consequences of war and how war, society and memory interact with, and impact upon, each other. It also explores how war has helped influence the development of sociology as a discipline, shaping its empirical and theoretical sensibilities at important junctures in its history. Each week will draw on scholarly literature from sociology and associated cognate disciplines (e.g. social anthropology, history, cultural studies) as well as texts in popular culture and the media to explore a different question or issue concerning how war, society and memory act upon, and react to, each other. These questions will link past debates in sociology and the social sciences with current questions concerning the social and cultural implications of war for contemporary states and societies. Although the module will draw eclectically on case studies from around the world, it will return to consider the importance of war in the making of collective identities and memory in Britain and the countries of its Commonwealth (e.g. Australia, Sri Lanka).

TOPICS BY WEEK

1. Introductory Seminar: Does War Have Social Origins?
2. Colonial War, Race and Genocide
3. Empire, Revolution and Social Change: Britain and the World Wars
4. How is War Remembered? Nostalgia, War and National Identity
5. Reading Week (No Lectures or Seminars)
6. War, Popular Culture and Social Protest
7. Group Presentations
8. Group Presentations
9. Concluding Seminar: War, Memory and National Identity

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Distinguish and explain major sociological approaches to theorising the social origins of war
- Understand the role that war plays in structuring memory and collective/national identities in modern society

- Explain the continuities and differences between how societies planned and mobilised for war in the past and how they do in the contemporary world
- Account for the impact of the media and popular culture on how war is understood and debated in contemporary culture and society
- Discuss critically the role war has played in shaping empirical and theoretical developments in sociology and related discipline

Indicative reading list

Flanagan, Richard. 2014. The Narrow Road to the Deep North. London: Chatto and Windus

Kapferer, Bruce. 2012 [Revised and Updated Edition]. Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence,
Intolerance and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia. (Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Inquiry). New York: Berghahn Books

Kapferer, Bruce, ed. 2004. State, sovereignty, war: civil violence in emerging global realities. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books

Kulka, Otto Dov. 2013. Landscapes of the Metropolis of Death. London: Penguin Books

Malešević, Siniša. 2010a. The Sociology of War and Violence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Malešević, Siniša. 2010b. How pacifist were the founding fathers? War and violence in classical sociology. European Journal of Social Theory 13.2: 193–212

Malkki, Lisa. 1995. Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Marx, Karl. 1988. The Civil War in France: The Paris commune. New York: International Publishers

Scruton, Roger. 1987. Notes on the Sociology of War. The British Journal of Sociology 38.3: 295-309

von Clausewitz, Carl. 1976. On war. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Walker, Rebecca. 2013. Enduring Violence: Everyday Life and Conflict in Eastern Sri Lanka. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Weber, Max. 1978. The types of legitimate domination. In Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 212–216. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press

West, Brad. 2014. Historical re-enacting and affective authority: performing the American Civil War. Annals of Leisure Research 17:2: 161-179

Interdisciplinary

The module draws on academic disicplines including sociology, social anthropology, history, English literature, journalism and cultural studies.

International

The module draws on case studies from around the world.

Subject specific skills

Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge

Transferable skills

Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms
to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
Undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations
The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	56 hours (37%)
Assessment	76 hours (51%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Reading for seminars.
Preparation for seminars
Preparation of presentations
Preparation and writing of formative work
Preparation and writing of summative work
Other work related to assessment

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Group Presentation	25%	26 hours

The group presentation provides students with an opportunity to present a case study exploring the cultural politics of war and the making of national identity and social memory in relation to a specific case study.

	Weighting	Study time
Summative Essay (2000 words)	75%	50 hours

The essay provides students with an opportunity to explore the issues and themes covered by the module in response to a choice of questions.

Feedback on assessment

Marking is via the Tabula system and students receive written, electronic feedback through the system.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
- Year 2 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)

This module is Option list G for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)