

War and American Society

21H.223 Fall 2002

Presentations on War and American History after September 11

In the final two weeks of the semester, we will engage in a series of discussions that analyze American society and culture and its responses to September 11 and a looming war with Iraq. The aim of this assignment is to use give historical and cultural context to contemporary events. You will be reporting on current events, but analyzing them with the critical tools and historical awareness that your knowledge of American history provides. Think about it in a larger time frame: how will history students twenty or fifty years from now analyze these sources? What do they reveal about how war has shaped Americans, and how Americans have shaped war?

There will be a few different presentations on the following days: Class #22, Class #23, Class #24. Each person can present for as long as they wish, but certainly for at least fifteen minutes and no more than twenty minutes. Your task is to present us with an overview of the issues surrounding your particular topic, and to lead a discussion on a topic and document or set of documents that future students of American history might turn to as they study these events. It is completely up to you what these document are, but in your presentation, your task will be not so much to give a presentation as to provoke and guide a discussion of the material and issues raised by it. The class will be in your capable hands during that time.

In advance, you should let me know what you would like the rest of the class to examine on your topic. This can be a website that you have uncovered, or an article, ideally nothing too long. If you would like to circulate a published article, you need to get it to me in advance so that I can scan it and put it on the class homepage. Possible topics include:

Debates on the war within conservative publications.

Debates on the war within left-wing publications.

Responses of Arab-Americans to the war.

Responses of American Jewish groups to the war and the crisis in Israel.

Responses of women's organizations to the war and to women under the Taliban.

Responses of Christian fundamentalists.

Legal issues surrounding civil liberties, military tribunals, the USA Patriot Act, etc.

President Bush as statesman: his speeches, etc.

Baseball (or other sports) respond to September 11.

Impact of the war on college campuses and debates within universities.

Memory and American culture: proposals for a September 11 memorial.

Coverage of America and the war in the foreign press.