

This sampler comes from my own experience teaching at Valley Forge Military College. I found that, if I offered the right entry point, my students would follow critical thinking about Stalingrad into any number of related topics. The lesson plans included here range from simple, 20-minute writing challenges to more scholarly features from my open-access journal, *www.empirestudies.com*.

You want to start small, with bite-sized lesson plans like MOOSEMUSS and regimental mottos. The biggest bundles are *Saving Private Ryan* and the *Battles Debate*. Advanced material is towards the end of the file.

I have worked to express these ideas in familiar contexts and in language friendly to all undergraduates. All of our students need to understand war in all its aspects.

I hope you will find some of the lesson plans useful –

Tom Durwood

Photo # NH 45023 USS Monitor vs. CSS Virginia, print after a painting by J.O. Davidson



Study of the Monitor and the Merrimac encounter

**A gulf between the military and the university
is not healthy for American democracy.**

-- Professor John A. Lynn

MooseMuss: Nine Rules

The Basic Laws of War

“Moosemuss” is the acronym for the nine rules of war, as taught at Sandhurst to Britain’s military leaders for over a century.

Let’s look at these rules and see if you think they have any validity.

First, we’ll apply them to “battles” in your own life. Second, let’s apply them to historical battles and see if these tools do actually unlock victory and defeat.

Mass ... Ensure that you have enough force to complete the mission.

Objective ... Stick to the mission. Persist. All action should have a clearly defined and achievable objective, and all efforts should always be directed to achieving that objective.

Offensive... You are permanently on the offensive. Unless you are constantly moving forward, you are losing ground.

Security... Without the proper tools and supplies, you will lose.

Economy of force ...The concentration of force you have where it counts.

Maneuver ... Adapt. Battles are rarely fought as planned. Find the best way to achieve your objective in ever-changing circumstances.

Unity of Command ... Seek always to coordinate your efforts with different forces, particularly when they can add to your own capacities.

Surprise ... Be active, always.

Simplicity ... Grand battle plans fail in the chaos of combat.

Assignment 1

Apply two of these rules to a battle – either an historical battle, like Iwo Jim or Gettysburg, or a fictional battle, like *The Avengers versus Ultron*. You may prove or disprove the rule.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

New Comparison

Please read the accompanying article, “Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts” by Bruce Catton. In this excellent essay, the author compares and contrasts these two generals in three specific ways:

- a) their personalities (good traits and bad) and actions
- b) their loyalties and values
- c) the *ideas* that each man represented, or embodied. What each man stood for.

<http://homework.sdmesa.edu/bdill/topics/comparison/grantlee.pdf>

Please use Bruce Catton’s approach to compare either:

- a) two leaders in a battle presented by one of your fellow cadets, or
- b) two people whom you know in real life. For example, you might choose a coach and a teacher, or your father and your best friend's father, or two fellow students.

Length: 250 words

Perfectly typed

Due: Tuesday

Ten Things to Know About This Difficult-Yet-Rewarding Class

SCHOOL NAME GOES HERE SPRING 2019

1. The Brockton miracle (constant writing) works.

Practice, practice, practice. This is the last how-to-write-effectively course you may ever take, so I must be sure that ALL aspects of your writing game are sound.

I will be asking you to go out and research a wide variety of new topics -- from architecture to literature, cities to movies to heroes to happiness -- and then come back and write a solid essay breaking down that topic. You will not necessarily know or care about all these topics. Studies show that the more I ask you to critically think and write, the higher your success rate at your next college and in the real world.

2. High-level critical thinking on all topics is an incredibly valuable skill. The marketplace rewards strong critical thinkers and effective writers. Believe it or not, your salary is tied to the quality of your teachers. I am so obsessed with your good reading and writing because I know it will give you a big advantage in your life and career.

3. You are all capable of good writing. You each have a lot to say. Communicating well is largely a learned skill. The more you practice, the easier it will be to express yourself clearly and fully.

4. From now until the end of term (May 20), I am your total writing coach. Your total writing success is my goal. I am happy to help you not only with your assignments for this class but any other classes, as well as college essays, resumes, etc.

5. Each hour of this class costs you \$120. Your parents are paying a ton of money for you to attend this class and take this demanding yet invaluable course.

If you want to doze through it and waste that money, it is your choice. DO NOT impede the class's progress since there are other cadets who want to get their money's worth. We only have 33 class meetings in which to transform each of you into critical thinking machines.

6. The most important work you do is outside class. We have quizzes and mid-terms and final exams. Some cadets think everything is fine because the classes are lively, but your grade actually depends on the depth of your research.

While this is basically about research, it is really a double course: in addition to all the independent research you are doing, we also share your work with your peers in a vigorous presentation rotation.

7. The price for the free pretzels is your total engagement. I am working hard to give you all the writing and critical thinking you will need to be successful. **If you do not do the assignments, I will**

have no regard for you. You will have no way to tell this is happening since I will still seem nice. Your grade will be very, very bad.

8. We are also reviewing Happiness 101, so try not to

miss a class. This is the most popular course at Harvard, taught by Prof. Tal Ben-Shahar. We will be looking at and writing about different aspects of this subject, and I don't want you to miss any of the material.

9. Fake writers get punished. Many students like to talk a lot in class and then produce inferior essays. The essay is the point.

Do not wait until the night before to start work: that may have worked in the past, but it won't work any more. In this class, it is all about the writing and research. When you give your presentation, we will all know how much research you have actually done.

We will review the building blocks of your essays together. I will circulate A papers so you have a very clear idea of what it takes to excel.

10. I don't care if you dislike the assignments, or me. It's all about critical thinking and writing. Learn to read and research and think critically and write effectively on any topic – **even if it is not in your comfort zone** -- and I will eventually stop bothering you. This is what employers value.

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CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENT #9

Michael Walzer and “Just War”

Is war fair? Should we ever wage war? Can it be fought in some ways that are okay, and some ways that are NOT okay?

Michael Walzer is the latest philosopher to take up the idea of “just war.” While some of his writing can be difficult to read, it contains several “nuggets” that you may find extremely useful. Walzer writes:

- a) that there are two types of moral codes (thick and thin),
- b) that there are twin principles of war: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*-- the justice of war, and justice in war. The first refers to the justness of the war itself, whether it is one for which human lives are worth sacrificing. The second refers to the way the war is conducted, whether the lives were lost in fair battle. Although these concepts seem similar, they are in fact quite separate: a just war can be fought unjustly, and an immoral war can be fought according to ethical rules.

Just War Theory

Just war theory deals with the justification of how and why wars are fought. According to theorists like **Michael Walzer**, the justification can be either theoretical or historical. The theoretical aspect is concerned with ethically justifying war and the forms that warfare may or may not take. The historical aspect, or the “just war tradition,” deals with the historical body of rules or agreements that have applied in various wars across the ages.

For instance, international agreements such as the Geneva and Hague conventions are historical rules aimed at limiting certain kinds of warfare which lawyers may refer to in prosecuting transgressors, but it is the role of ethics to examine these institutional agreements for their philosophical coherence as well as to inquire into whether aspects of the conventions ought to be changed. The just war tradition may also consider the thoughts of various philosophers and lawyers through the ages and examine both their philosophical visions of war’s ethical limits (or absence of) and whether their thoughts have contributed to the body of conventions that have evolved to guide war and warfare.

A Long Tradition

Historically, the just war tradition—a set of mutually agreed rules of combat —may be said to commonly evolve between two culturally similar enemies. That is, when an array of values are shared between two warring peoples, **we often find that they implicitly or explicitly agree upon limits to their**

warfare. But when enemies differ greatly because of different religious beliefs, race, or language, and as such they see each other as “less than human”, war conventions are rarely applied. It is only when the enemy is seen to be a people, sharing a moral identity with whom one will do business in the following peace, that tacit or explicit rules are formed for how wars should be fought and who they should involve and what kind of relations should apply in the aftermath of war. In part, the motivation for forming or agreeing to certain conventions, can be seen as mutually benefiting—preferable, for instance, to the deployment of any underhand tactics or weapons that may provoke an indefinite series of vengeance acts, or the kinds of action that have proved to be detrimental to the political or moral interests to both sides in the past.

Regardless of the conventions that have historically formed, it has been the concern of the majority of just war theorists that the lack of rules to war or any asymmetrical morality between belligerents should be denounced, and that the rules of war should apply to all equally. That is, just war theory should be universal, binding on all and capable in turn of appraising the actions of all parties over and above any historically formed conventions.

The just war tradition is indeed as old as warfare itself. Early records of collective fighting indicate that some moral considerations were used by warriors to limit the outbreak or to rein in the potential devastation of warfare. They may have involved consideration of women and children or the treatment of prisoners (enslaving them rather than killing them, or ransoming or exchanging them). Commonly, the earlier traditions invoked considerations of honor: some acts in war have always been deemed dishonorable, whilst others have been deemed honorable. However, what is “honorable” is often highly specific to culture: for instance, a suicidal attack or defense may be deemed the honorable act for one people but ludicrous to another.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

My Views on Morality in Warfare

Yes, I have read and understood Michael Walzer's views on "just" war and "just" weapons and morality in warfare.

Well, I have a few things to say about this myself. Here is my opinion on the following controversies in war:

The Nuclear Bomb as used by America on Japan in 1944:

Should we have dropped a nuclear bomb on Berlin in 1945 if it had been necessary? Why or why not?

The nuclear bomb as it might be one day used by terrorists on an American city:

Flame throwers as used by us against Germany

Flame throwers one day being used by radical sects against police in San Francisco:

Killing civilians in Vietnam

The two young bombers killing citizens at the Boston Marathon:

The 9/11 World Trade Center attack:

Drones killing citizens at a wedding party

Cyberwarfare

IN-CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

Regimental Mottos Assignment

I'll Try, Sir ... *Fifth Infantry Regiment*

Noli Me Tangere (Don't Touch Me) ... *Third Infantry Regiment*

Semper Primus (Always First) ... *First Infantry Regiment*

No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great ... *First Infantry Division*

Nous Resterons La (We Will Remain) ... *Third Infantry Division*

Willing and Able ... *Seventh Infantry Division*

As Much As I Can ... *Twentieth Infantry Regiment*

Mission First ... *29th Infantry Brigade*

Attack Attack Attack ... *34th Infantry Division*

Let Him Beware ... *172nd Infantry Brigade*

Point the Way ... *76th Infantry Brigade*

Please write your own original motto for at least seven of the following:

America

Your week _____

Your favorite book

LeBron James

Frank Gehry

Something else _____

You

This class

Your family
