This class examines experiences and effects of war through close reading, historical context, and theories of memory and trauma. We will study poems, novels, short stories, graphic novels, and films from the 20th and 21st century; and we will put perspectives from history, philosophy, and the cognitive sciences into conversation with these narratives to consider how war influences, and is influenced by, stories.

Authors include Virginia Woolf, Kazuo Ishiguro, Art Spiegelman, Tim O'Brien, Phil Klay, and a range of poets. Films viewed in class include Stanley Kubrik’s “Full Metal Jacket” and Armando Iannucci’s satire “In the Loop.” Theorists introduced include Susan Sontag, historian Dominick LaCapra, and psychologist Daniel Schacter. Students are invited (but not required) to study war narratives of their choice beyond those on our syllabus, from any genre, in their final project.