This course offers:
1) the theoretical foundation for a discussion of women, war, and violence;
2) a comprehensive analysis of how women experienced the First World War, Second World War and the Iraq War both as victims of and as participants in warfare.

We often conceive of war as an exclusively masculine affair. And yet, in the twentieth century, the number of civilian victims, that is, women and children, exceeded that of soldiers by a factor of two. Because scholars tend to conflate warfare and frontline fighting, woman’s experiences (the suffering of the refugee, the rape victim, or the concentration camp inmate) are often sidelined and dissociated from the “actual” violence of war. Conversely, until recently, scholars have ignored women’s active contributions to and complicity with warfare and genocide, e.g., as army auxiliaries and as secretaries who helped organize the Holocaust.

It is the goal of this course to:
1) make women’s experiences in warfare visible;
2) promote a complex understanding of the categories of victim and perpetrator, which are often conceived as mutually exclusive.

Topics to be discussed include:
1) Theories of Violence and War (Hannah Arendt);
2) War and Representation (Kollwitz);
3) War and Propaganda (Leni Riefenstahl);
4) War and Rape (Helma Sanders-Brahms);
5) War and Genocide (Ruth Klüger);
6) War and Refugees (Christa Wolf);
7) War and the Media (Elfriede Jelinek).