Course Syllabus

Large-scale violence among humans has taken place at least since the dawn of recorded history. This course is about how societies arm themselves for and pursue war, how they have attempted to limit the destructiveness and likelihood of war, and how these pursuits have affected their political, organizational and technological development.

The course aims to acquaint students with the evolution of war’s technologies and the logics that underlie them, to help them become able critically to assess claims made by strategists, political and military leaders and weapons experts, about the role and control of force and military technologies in the international environment. Written assignments are intended to help students develop skills in writing clear, concise, factual, action-oriented memorandums.

Requirements and grading

Section 01 meets at 10:00-10:50 a.m., section 02 at 2:30-3:20 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Students are expected to arrive on time and attend class, read, listen, and discuss.

A series of five memoranda and an in-class final exam will constitute the written work for the class. These are explained in a separate handout.

All written work must be submitted for a passing grade to be earned.

Grades will be based upon the memoranda (approximately 60%), the final (approximately 30%) and attendance and class participation (approximately 10%).

Honor Code: Oberlin College students are on their honor to uphold a high degree of academic integrity. All work that students submit is expected to be of their own creation and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. When students write and sign the Honor Pledge, they are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information, nor assisted others in these actions.

Honor Pledge: “I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” The default assumption covering all academic exercises is that students are required to do their own work only utilizing the help and resources considered appropriate for each academic exercise, including sources of assistance routinely offered by the college to students, such as reference librarians and writing tutors.

For more information on the honor code, consult the Student Regulations [https://oncampus.oberlin.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp]. For questions about the Code’s application to Politics 227, please consult Mr. Schiff.
Books

The following are available in the bookstore and are required:


Some Useful websites (there are lots more)

Arms Control Center  [http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/](http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/)

Arms Control Association and *Arms Control Today* [http://www.armscontrol.org](http://www.armscontrol.org) access to (Carnegie Endowment supported) periodical on arms control.


Center for Nonproliferation Studies (Monterey Institute of International Studies) [http://cns.miis.edu/index.htm](http://cns.miis.edu/index.htm)


FAS link page – very useful further links on nuclear issues: [http://www.fas.org/nuke/links.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/links.htm)


GlobalSecurity.Org [http://www.globalsecurity.org/index.html](http://www.globalsecurity.org/index.html), an excellent site dealing with current military technology and arms control matters. It is run by John Pike who used to run the FAS site.


Holdren and Matthew Bunn: [http://www.nti.org/e_research/cnwm/overview/technical.asp](http://www.nti.org/e_research/cnwm/overview/technical.asp)


Henry L. Stimson Center (“Pragmatic steps for global security”) [http://www.stimson.org/home.cfm](http://www.stimson.org/home.cfm)


Wisconsin Project (seeking to control weapons proliferation) [http://www.wisconsinproject.org/](http://www.wisconsinproject.org/)


**Web and Blackboard Readings**

The books are on reserve. In addition there are materials that can be found through links in this syllabus directly or through Blackboard Documents. Direct links (when the syllabus is opened in Blackboard) can be clicked upon and should open. Blackboard documents are listed on the class Blackboard website under Course Documents in order of their appearance in the syllabus.

Non-Blackboard documents, with direct links, are also with URLs so that in the event that clicking on the syllabus doesn’t work or is impossible, you can paste the URL into your browser.
Topics and Readings


   Class 1 9/7: Introduction; your interests
   2 9/9: Discussion: Agincourt, technology and doctrine

2. **Causes and nature of war.** Sept. 12, 14, 16


   For 9/14: John Keegan, ch. 1 “What is War?” from *A History of War* (Vintage, 1994), 3-12, 24-46 [Blackboard: Keegan - What is War?].


   For 9/16: Greg Cashman, *What Causes War?*, ch. 10 (279-289) [Blackboard: Cashman - Causes?].

   Class 3 9/12: Fog of war, friction, real versus ideal war, the object of war (war and rationality).
   4 9/14: War as an instrument and producer of culture (hence irrational); language and war, desensitization..
   5 9/16: Looking for theories on the causes of war: system, state, individual.


3. **Consequences of technology and doctrine.** Sept. 19, 21, 23.

   For 9/19, read: Barry Posen, “The Importance of Military Doctrine,” chapter 1 of *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (Cornell, 1984) 3-33 [Blackboard].


gunpowder, pp. 80-102.  
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb00833

Class 6 9/19: Role of doctrine, strategy. Ideas matter a lot!
7 9/21: Does technology drive doctrine, or vice versa?
8 9/23: Hardware and doctrine: in-class video
   PBS: “Ground War: Warrior Weapons”

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/v032/32.2lieber.html


For 9/26, read: Thomas Schelling, “The Diplomacy of Violence,” chapter 1 from Arms and Influence 1-34 [Blackboard].


Class 9 9/26 Attraction, air power, and total war
10 9/28 The nuclear triad
11 9/30 The best defense/deterrence is a good offense. Or not?


For 10/7: Clarke, Cyberwar, chapter 1, “Trial Runs” 1-32.


Class 12 10/3: Generations of warfare. Where is war headed (where has it been)?
13 10/5: Pre-emption, prevention, doctrine, hardware, and incentives.
14 10/7: RMA

6. **Spending, procuring and testing.** Oct. 10, 12, 14.

For 10/10, read: Franklin “Chuck” Spinney, “**Defense Power Games**” (this is a classic);
http://www.dnipogo.org/fcs/def_power_games_98.htm

For 10/12 Todd Harrison, “**Analysis of the FY 2012 Defense Budget**,” Center for Strategic and Budgetary Analysis (2010) Executive Summary and Part I.

For 10/14 Leon Panetta, August 3 statement on defense spending:

William Gates, “**Defense Spending,**” speech at the Eisenhower Library, 5/8/10


Class 15 10/10: Defense budget process
16 10/12: Rational versus real procurement logic
17 10/14: Discussion: can military spending be controlled?


For 10/19: Lindsay Cohn, “**It Wasn’t in My Contract: Security Privatization and Civilian Control,**” **Armed Forces & Society** Vol. 37, No. 3 (2011) 381-398.
http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Cohn_Lindsay_P.pdf?issn=0095327x&issueno=3&articleno=381_iwimcspace


Class 18 10/17: Robots and artificial intelligence
19 10/19: Private Military Contractors
20 10/21: First half wrap-up

**Fall Break.** Oct. 22-30

For 10/31, read: Hammes, ch. 5-7, “Mao”; “Vietnam”; “Sandinistas”; “Intifada” (p. 44-88);


Class 21 10/31: Theories of low intensity, guerilla, and insurgency conflict
22 11/2: OODA loops, war and morale
23 11/4: Were/are Afghanistan and Iraq 4GWs? What about Libya?


Class 24 11/7: Arms races and arms control
25 11/9: How to make a nuclear weapon
26 11/11: Arms control and weapons development

Recommended: *The Progressive H-Bomb Issue* (1979) [Blackboard].

Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, “Nuclear Weapons” web page;


10. **Proliferation, counter-proliferation.** Nov. 14, 16, 18.

*Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*;  
*Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency* Articles I-XII, XIX.  
http://www.wisconsinproject.org/bomb-facts/nuclearessay.htm

For 11/16: Mohamed El Baradei, *The Age of Deception*, ch. 5-9  
*Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction* (Chemical Weapons Convention). Read the Overview, Articles I-XII, and the Annex on Chemicals. Note that Article VIII sets up a new international organization (the NPT analogue would be the IAEA, but the IAEA already existed).

*Biological and Toxin Weapons Treaty* (1972)  

Recommended:

Class 27 11/14: Anti-proliferation  
28 11/16: Counter-proliferation  
29 11/18: Culture and taboos?

11. **Conventional Arms Trade, Small and Light Weapons (SALW).** Nov. 21, 23.


Class 30 Is the arms trade just another business?  
Class 31 Can SALW be controlled?

12. **Arms, arms control, and humanitarian law.** Nov. 28, 30, Dec. 2.


http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Docherty_Bonnie_Lynn.pdf?issn=1085794x&issue=v31i0004&article=934_bngtcoteoihl [also on Blackboard].


Class 31 11/28: Inspection, monitoring, unilateralism and multilateralism  
32 11/30: Arms control and humanitarian law: indiscriminate weapons

   For 12/5, Clarke, *Cyber War*, ch. 1-3.

   For 12/7, Clarke, *Cyber War*, 4-6.

   For 12/9, Clarke, *Cyber War*, 7-8.

   Class 34 12/5: Precision strike, responsibility, and control
   Class 35 12/7: Is cyber war the fifth generation?
   Class 36 12/9: Conflicts of the future


14. **Last class:** Dec. 12

   Class 37 Final comments, final exam review, course evaluations distributed.