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

The class meets 10:00-10:50 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in King 123. 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. The memorandum assignment is explained in a separate document. Memoranda will be due on September 19, October 3, October 17, November 7, and November 24.

The final exam will take place Friday, December 19, 2:00-4:00 p.m. A review sheet will be handed out in the last week of class and class time will be available for review questions.

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. For questions about the Code’s application to Politics 227, please consult me.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring note-taking, test or other accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services [http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/).
Required Books


Electronic resources


There are many assigned readings that can be found through links in this syllabus, directly through URLs or as 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.

Please let me know ASAP if links don’t work or material is otherwise unavailable!

Some Useful Websites (there are many more)


Arms Control Association and *Arms Control Today* [http://www.armscontrol.org](http://www.armscontrol.org) access to (Carnegie Endowment supported) periodical on arms control. Access to some articles requires subscription, others are freely available.


*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* via OhioLink: [http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/journal.cgi?issn=00963402](http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/journal.cgi?issn=00963402)


James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (Monterey Institute of International Studies) [http://www.nonproliferation.org/](http://www.nonproliferation.org/)

Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments [http://www.csbaonline.org](http://www.csbaonline.org) think tank focusing on defense planning and spending rationality. Annually analyzes US defense budget.

China defense blog [http://china-defense.blogspot.com/](http://china-defense.blogspot.com/) “This is the blog of China defense, where professional analysts and serious defense enthusiasts share findings on a rising military power.”


*Defense Industry Daily* [http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/](http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/) (by subscription for full articles, but the headlines are interesting and by clicking on headlines, synopses of the full articles are available).


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.


Heritage Foundation National Security and Defense web pages [http://www.heritage.org/issues/national-security-and-defense](http://www.heritage.org/issues/national-security-and-defense) “... whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.”
Human Security Report Project, “Human Security Report 2013,” interesting annual reports: is the world getting safer (or not) for humans?

Institute for Energy and Environmental Research http://ieer.org/ Washington public interest/research organization run by nuclear expert (and my friend) Arjun Makhijani. Fascinating research and public interventions on radiation exposure, non-nuclear, non-carbon energy, reactor technology and a wide variety of interesting topics.


Nuclear Threat Initiative http://www.nti.org excellent web site for information on WMD threats and anti-WMD efforts.


Private Military Organizations.Org http://www.privatemilitary.org/ industry-oriented non-profit information website. It has a very useful long list of private military companies (somewhat out of date – doesn’t have Academi, but the Blackwater/Xe link goes there automatically)
http://www.privatemilitary.org/private_military_companies.html

Project on Government Oversight http://www.pogo.org/ lots on defense contracting (generally critical).

Raytheon Company http://www.raytheon.com/ major military hardware producer. Click on “capabilities” and then the weapons category of your interest.


Sinodefense http://www.sinodefence.com/ Website on Chinese defense technologies (not clear who these people are).

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) http://www.sipri.org/ very useful current news and database materials, for instance on arms transfers, Korean Peninsula relations, general arms control issues. Also produces highly regarded annual SIPRI Yearbook series.


US Department of Defense http://www.defenselink.mil/ with lots of further links to the armed services,
Joint Chiefs, etc.


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

Topics and Readings


   Class 1 9/3: Introduction; your interests
   2 9/5: Discussion: Agincourt, technology and doctrine

2. Causes and nature of war. Sept. 8, 10, 12 (Start thinking about memo #1!)

   For 9/8: Thomas Schelling, “The Diplomacy of Violence,” chapter 1 from Arms and Influence 1-34 [Blackboard].


   For 9/10: John Keegan, ch. 1 “What is War?” from A History of War (Vintage, 1994), 3-12, 24-46 [Blackboard: Keegan - What is War?].

   Greg Cashman, What Causes War?, ch. 10 (279-289) [Blackboard: Cashman - Causes?].


   Class 3 9/8: Rationality and its limits. Fog of war, friction, real versus ideal war, the object of war (war and rationality).
   4 9/10: War as a product, instrument and producer of culture; language and war, desensitization (war and irrationality).
   5 9/12: Looking for theories on the causes of war: system, state, individual.

3. Technology and doctrine. Sept. 15, 17, 19. (Memo #1 due Sept. 19)


Class 6 9/15: Role of doctrine, strategy. Ideas matter a lot!
7 9/17: Does technology drive doctrine, or vice versa?
8 9/19: Evolution of technology


4. **Learning from experience?** Sept. 22, 24, 26. (Think about Memo #2)

For 9/22: Gabriel & Metz, *Short History of War*, ch. 4-6 (5 and 6 are very short!)

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

http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Wilson_Warden_Jeffrey.pdf?issn=15314804&issue=v31i0004&article=162_twwwwiloh [Also on Blackboard]


Class 9 9/22 Attrition, air power, and total war
10 9/24 The nuclear triad, deterrence, war-fighting, prevention and pre-emption.
11 9/26 Generations of warfare

5. **4GW versus RMA.** Sept. 29, Oct. 1, 3. (Memo #2 due Oct. 3)

During the week of 9/29, read

Fred Kaplan (OC ’76), *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the plot to change the American Way of War* (Simon & Schuster, 2013). It’s an easy read and covers several important themes: the standard US way of war, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), the role and nature of insurgency and counter-insurgency warfare (COIN), and how resistant large bureaucracies (in this case, the Army) are to change even when failure is clear. It also contains lots of interesting information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush Administration, and about General (Ret.) and former CIA chief David Petraeus (Kaplan describes Petraeus’s mother as “...from a family of Oberlin College graduates” [p. 12].)

Class 12 9/29: Low intensity conflict, insurgency/counter-insurgency/guerilla war
13 10/1: Revolution in Military Affairs?
14 10/3: Learning, doctrine, and weapons

Recommended: Hammes, ch. 5-7, “Mao”; “Vietnam”; “Sandinistas” (p. 44-88); Hammes, ch. 8-9,
“The Intifada: Civilians versus an Army,” “Al Qsa Intifada”, “Al-Qaeda” (p. 89-129). [On reserve in the library]


FM3-24 US Army Counterinsurgency 2006 [Blackboard]

6. Defense programming and spending. Oct. 6, 8, 10. (Think about Memo #3)

For 10/6: Franklin “Chuck” Spinney, “Defense Power Games” (this is a classic!) http://pogoarchives.org/labyrinth/01/09.pdf [also on Blackboard].


For 10/8: Feinstein, TSW, ch. 12-14, “Legal Bribery,” “In the Name of Uncle Sam,” and “Taking the Mickey, the Toilet Seat and the Hammer . . . in a Galaxy Far, Far Away,” 237-304.


Lockheed, F35 fast facts https://www.f35.com/about/fast-facts/cost

Aviation Week, “F-35 Deal Targets Unit Cost Below $100 Million” (July 30, 2013) http://aviationweek.com/defense/f-35-deal-targets-unit-cost-below-100-million

Class 15 10/6: Defense budget process
16 10/8: Rational versus real procurement logic
17 10/10: Can military spending be controlled?
7. **Private military contractors.** Oct. 13, 15, 17. (Memo #3 due Oct. 17)


For 10/17: Check out some PMC websites: Dyncorp, Academi, Engility (formerly MPRI) (or any others at http://www.privatemilitary.org/private_military_companies.html

Class 18 10/13: Contractors and recent wars
19 10/15: Regulation possibilities
20 10/17: First half wrap-up

**Fall Break.** Oct. 18-26

8. **Arms control theory and practice.** Oct. 27, 29, 31. (Think about Memo #4)

For 10/27: Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (originally published in 1961) (excerpts) [Blackboard] 1-61. (It’s not really that long – there are a lot of partial and blank pages included.)


Class 21 10/27: Arms races and arms control
22 10/29: Bilateral and Multilateral arms control
23 10/31: Monitoring, verification, violation

9. **Proliferation, counter-proliferation.** Nov. 3, 5, 7. (Memo #4 due Nov. 7)

For 11/3: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (read the text) http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml


B. Schiff, “Two Routes to an Atomic Bomb” [Blackboard, graphic]
For 11/5: Iran (TBA)

For 11/7: Chemical Weapons Convention
http://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/ (read at least Preamble, Articles I-V, VIII, IX.

Class 24
11/4: How to make a nuclear weapon

Class 25
11/6: Iran negotiations

Class 26
11/8: Syria chemical disarmament?

Recommended: Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, “Nuclear Weapons” web page;
Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, “Chemical Weapons” web page.
http://www.wisconsinproject.org/bomb-facts/chemicalessay.htm

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


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

Landmines treaty http://www.icbl.org/media/604037/treatyenglish.pdf

Class 27
11/10: Norms versus realism

Class 28
11/12: Reciprocity as motive

Class 29
11/14: Civil society arms control efforts

11. Nov.17, 19, 21. Conventional Arms Trade, SALW. (Think about Memo #5)

For 11/17: Feinstein, TSW, ch. 19 “Cry, the Beloved Continent” 435-465.

For 11/19: Feinstein, TSW, ch. 19, “Cry, the Beloved Continent” 465-497.

http://www.un.org/disarmament/ATT/docs/ATT_text_(As_adopted_by_the_GA)-E.pdf

Class 30
11/17: Is the arms trade just another business?

Class 31
11/19: Can SALW be controlled?

Class 32
11/21: Inspection, monitoring, unilateralism and multilateralism


12. **Discriminating weapons and humanitarian law.** Nov. 24, 26. (Memo #5 due Nov. 24)


Class 33 11/24: Advantages and disadvantages of discriminating weapons
Class 34 11/26: Targeted killing and law

13. **Cyber War.** Dec. 1, 3, 5.

For 12/1: This week, read Singer & Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyber War*

Class 35 12/1: Cyber war
Class 36 12/3: Cyber arms control?
Class 37 12/5: What is war?

Recommended: Richard Clarke, *Cyber War* ch. 1, “Trial Runs” 1-32 [Blackboard].
Ralph Langner, “To Kill a Centrifuge: A Technical Analysis of What Stuxnet’s Creators Tried to Achieve” (November, 2013) [Blackboard]

14. **Wrap up.** Dec. 8, 10, 12.


Class 38 12/8: The future of war?
Class 39 12/10: Course review
Class 40 12/12: Final comments, course evaluations distributed.