

# War in the Modern World II

(1945 to Present)

## History 241

(CRN 26458)

Winter 2017

Tues/Thurs: 10-11:20

129 MCK

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Office: MCK 329 (Up two floors from our classroom: take left though double doors and my office is on the right just after the first partition)

Office hours: Wed. 1-2:30; Fri. 10-12; anytime after class or by appointment

Graduate Teaching Fellows: Lucas Erickson, John Bedan, Rachel Gerber (see Canvas for contact information)

### Topic

This course is an introduction to the history of war since 1945. The main focus of the course is changes in the nature and conduct of war in the context of social, economic, political and technological change. The course thus continues the main themes developed in HIST 240 (War in the Modern World, I), though HIST 240 is not required to take HIST 241.

Much more than in HIST 240, a focus on recent trends in the nature and conduct war leads to the point where history and strategic studies converge. A central premise of this class is that the development of a coherent security strategy requires an understanding and recognition of recent trends in war. In other words, answers to the security issues facing the U.S. and the world are intimately bound up with the question of what war *is* in the contemporary world: its nature, its objects, and its main characteristics. The only way to obtain an understanding of what war might look like in the near future is by looking at the wars of the last several decades, which is to say, by studying the history of recent wars.

We will start the term in the aftermath of World War II and several of the regional conflicts that were left unresolved with the defeat of Germany and Japan in 1945. We will continue with an examination, on the one hand, of the Cold War between the U.S. and U.S.R.R. and, on the other hand, the era of the wars of decolonization of the 1950s and 1960s. After a look at the civil conflicts of the later Cold War, we will turn in the last third of the course to "war in the very modern world": military developments and war

since the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1990. We will conclude with an examination of terrorism as a form of war and some thoughts on what the future of war might hold.

## **Learning objectives: what I expect you to get out of this class**

1. An understanding of both the main trends in the conduct and nature of war from the end of World War II to the present *and* the different ways that we can account for those changes. War has been changing over the last half century. What is the nature of those changes and how might we account for them?
2. A sense of some of the major concepts, problems and themes common to military history and strategic studies as these are practiced today. This course will introduce you to some of the conceptual language specific to military history and strategic thought; it will also expose you to several of the exemplary issues that that strategists and military history historians are grappling with today.
3. Practice and familiarity with several of the basic methodological moves that historians commonly employ. In particular, we will be comparing different interpretive explanatory frameworks that historians have used, either to explain specific events (such as the outcome of the Chinese Civil War: why did the Communists win?), or to explain general trends. Especially toward the end of the term we will be looking at why these interpretative frameworks matter and what their strategic implications might be.

## **Grades and assignments**

Grades for this course are calculated on the basis of 100 points for the term. The points are distributed as follows:

Three on-line quizzes: 10 points for first; 25 for the second and third  
Midterm exam (in class): 20 points  
Final exam: 20 points

The due dates are as follows:

First quiz: Wednesday, January 18 (on-line submission, 11 pm)  
Second quiz: Sunday, January 29 (on-line submission, 11 pm)  
Midterm: February 14 – in class, bring blue-green book  
Third quiz: March 2 (on-line submission, 11 pm)  
Final: March 23, 8:00 am - in 129 MCK – bring blue-green book

**Late submission** of assignments and tests are accepted with a late-penalty:

Up to 2 days late: 15% of the total value of the given assignment  
3-9 days late: 35%  
10-16 days late: 50%

You must contact me to submit anything after 16 days. **If you find yourself falling behind, you should talk to me. The sooner the better.**

If you join the class after January 17, please talk to me about the first quiz.

The quizzes, midterm and final all require written work. I encourage collaboration but you may not **plagiarize** others' work. **Plagiarism** is "the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own." For the purposes of this class, greater emphasis is placed on "work" (as in "written work") than ideas but you should credit ideas as well. If you are using an argument that you are drawing primarily from one of our readings, you should make that explicit (you do not need to cite class lectures, however).

For tips on avoiding plagiarism, see  
<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Written work will be evaluated according to the general grading standards posted at <http://gradeculture.uoregon.edu/> under the link for History.

## **Readings**

Jeremy Black, War in the Modern World, 1990-2014. Routledge, 2015.

**All other readings** can be found on Canvas under “Modules.”

**Schedule of topics and readings** (readings are listed for the day on which they will be discussed in class. Anything listed below after “Read” is required; anything listed after “Suggested” or “Also” is optional)

## **Pt. I: Aftermath wars of WWII and the early Cold War**

**Jan. 10:** Introduction: "War no longer exists." Or the problem of war since WWII

Read: General Rupert Smith (Ret.), The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World (2005), 1-8 (first part of the "Introduction")

**Jan. 12:** Guerrilla warfare according to Mao

Excerpts from Mao Tse-Tung, Guerrilla Warfare (Yu Chi Chan), pts. 1 and 2 (“What Is Guerrilla Warfare?” and “The Relations of Guerrilla Hostilities to Regular Operations”); and selected documents from Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung (Harper, 1970), pages 333, 341-42, 367-72; and for a critique of Mao as military strategist,

William Wei, “Political Power Grows Out of the Barrel of a Gun’: Mao and the Red Army,” in David A. Graff and Robin Higham, eds., A Military History of China (2002), 229-248.

**Jan. 17:** The Chinese Civil War: How the communists achieved victory

Read: Bruce Elleman, Modern Chinese Warfare, 1975-1989, 217-232 (ch. 13, “China’s Nationalist-Communist Civil War”); and Civil War section of the “China” article from the New Encyclopedia Britannica. You can also find **maps** on the Canvas site.

We'll also watch the first part of “The Assembly,” which takes place in the north. If you wish to watch it in its entirety, the movie provides a bridge to the Korean War (the hero ends up serving in Korea later in the war) – Niu Jun’s piece (below) explains the connection.

**>>>>> First on-line quiz due: January 18, 11 pm**

**>>>> If you are just joining the class (that is, after January 17), please talk to me about when you will submit the first quiz**

**Jan. 19:** What's in a name: Chinese Civil War versus Chinese Revolution; or the Victory of the Chinese Communists?

Read: Edward L. Dreyer, “Conclusion,” from China at War, 1901-1949, pages 350-361; Niu Jun, “The Birth of the People’s Republic of China and the Road to the Korean War,” in The Cambridge History of the Cold War, vol. 1 (2010), 221-243, provides a bridge to our next topic.

**Jan. 24:** The Korean War

Read: “The Korean War, 1950-1953,” chapter 8 in Richard W. Stewart, ed., American Military History (2009), volume II (available as a download via the link on Canvas); and reading TBA (it will be posted to the Canvas module for this day)

**Jan. 26:** Korea as a limited war

Read: William Stueck, "Why the War Did Not Expand beyond Korea, November 1950 - July 1951," chapter 5 in Rethinking the Korean War (2002), 118-42.

>>>>> **Second on-line quiz due: Sunday, Jan. 29, 11 pm**

**Jan. 31:** Nuclear strategy, military power and the Cold War

Read: Michael Howard, "The Classical Strategists," in Studies in War and Peace, 154-183; and Bernard Brodie, "War in the Atomic Age," from Gerard Chaliand, The Art of War in World History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 991-1003.

## **Pt. II: War in the era of decolonization and the later Cold War: two examples**

**Feb. 2:** France in Indo-China

Read: Black, War since 1945, 34-40 ("War of Decolonisation"); Bernard Fall, Vietnam Witness 1953-66 (New York: Praeger, 1966), chs. 1 and 3, pages 15-21 and 30-40; and Bernard Fall, Street without Joy: Indochina at War, 1946-54 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1961), 137-58.

**Feb. 7:** The U.S. in Vietnam

Read: George Herring, "The Vietnam War, 1961-1975: Revolutionary and Conventional War in an Era of Limited War" (from Doughty, Warfare in the Western World, vol. 2); and two documents (3.2 and 3.6 from Michael H. Hunt, ed., A Vietnam War Reader): Communist Party Central Committee, resolution 9, on strategy, Dec. 1963; and McGeorge Bundy, memo to President Johnson, Dec. 1963.

**Feb. 9:** Explaining the U.S. failure in Vietnam

Read: Peter M. Dunn, "The American Army: the Vietnam War, 1965-1973," in Ian F. W. Beckett and John Pimlott, eds., Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 77-111.

**Feb. 14: In-class midterm** – please bring something to write in (blue/green book, purchased in bookstore)

**Feb. 16:** Wars of independence in Africa: the example of Mozambique

Ian F. W. Beckett, "The Portuguese Army: the Campaign in Mozambique, 1964-1974," in Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott, eds., Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency (1985), 136-162.

**Feb. 21:** Civil war, regional war during the Cold War: the example of Mozambique

Read: Gerhard Seibert, "The Vagaries of Violence and Power in Post-Colonial Mozambique"; and for a more colorful account, "Mozambique," in Jeremy Harding, The Fate of Africa: Trial by Fire (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 195-259.

**Pt. III: War since 1990**

**Feb 23:** War in our world (post-1990): setting up the problem

Read: Black, chs. 1 and 2; and Eliot A. Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare," Foreign Affairs 75 no. 2 (March/April 1996): 37-54 (pdf version posted along with link).

**Feb. 28:** A conventional account and the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)

Read: Black, ch. 3 ("A conventional account, 1990-2000"); Doughty, Warfare in the Western World, vol. 2, 980-994; and documents and articles in Ch. 15, "The Persian Gulf War," in John Whiteclay Chambers II and G. Kurt Piehler, eds., Major Problems in American Military History (1999), 454-487.

**March 2:** Signs of difference and "unconventional" warfare: two takes

Read: Black, ch. 4 "Signs of Difference, 1990-2000"; and John Mueller, "Ordering the New World," ch. 7 from Remnants of War.

>>>>> **Third on-line quiz due: Thursday, March 2, 11 pm**

**March 7:** The War on Terror

Read: Black, ch. 5, "The War on Terror"; Michael Horowitz, "Suicide Terrorism as a Major Military Innovation" (pages 170-174 of Diffusion of Military Power (Princeton, 2010); and David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," Journal of Strategic Studies 28: 4 (Aug., 2005): 597-617.

**March 9:** "A multitude of conflicts"

Read: Black, ch. 6,; and Christopher Dandeker, "What 'Success' Means in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya," in James Burk, ed., How 9/11 Changed Our Ways of War (Stanford, 2013), 116-48 (link to ebook on Canvas)

**March 14:** Into the future: the rivalry of major powers?

Read: Black, ch. 7

**March 16:** Into the future: weak states and "small wars"?

Read: Black, chs. 8 and 9; and Lawrence Freedman, "The Drone Revolution: Less Than Meets the Eye," Foreign Affairs Nov./Dec. 2016, 153-158 (see Canvas for link to Foreign Affairs on library website).

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, March 23, 8:00 am – in our classroom, bring blue-green book