International Security

Class: TBD
Instructor’s Office Hours: TBD

Instructor: Costantino Pischedda
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Course Overview
This is an advanced undergraduate/graduate introduction to the field of international security. The course focuses on issues concerning the conduct of war and military strategy, surveying both classic texts and recent works on important security policy issues.

Questions animating this course include: Why is force used? What causes peace? How does the possibility of war shape international relations and domestic socio-economic arrangements? By what criteria should the use of force be considered legitimate? How can governments effectively prepare to prevent wars, or to win them if they occur? Is the world safer after the Cold War? What are the similarities and differences between inter-state wars, civil wars, and armed conflict between states and transnational actors (such as terrorist groups)?

The syllabus is organized in 14 thematic sections (with frequent use of historical examples and case studies); the reading list is divided by class meeting.

Learning objectives
The course has three main objectives: (1) to introduce students to the complexities of the relationship between political ends, military means, and their “bridge” – strategy; (2) to familiarize students with major theoretical perspectives in international security; and (3) to survey key substantive areas and debates in the field.

Requirements
This course will be run as a lecture, but student participation is encouraged. To maximize reading time (given the substantial reading load), there is no paper assignment; instead, there will be an in-class midterm and a final exam, corresponding to 35 and 65 percent of the overall grade, respectively.

Students are expected to do all the readings, except for the recommended ones, which are included in the syllabus as suggestions for those especially interested in a given topic.

Prerequisites
Introduction to International Politics or equivalent

1. Introduction: The Nature of War and Competing Philosophical Approaches (classes 1-2)

Instrumental rationality and war
Functions of war
War’s insanity and obscenity
Between pacifism and militarism
Class 1


Sun-Tzu, *The Art of Warfare*, Roger Ames, trans. (Ballantine, 1993), chaps. 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11 (The Sawyer, Griffith, Mair, or Huang translations are also acceptable.)


Class 2

Paul Fussell, *Wartime* (Oxford University Press, 1989), chap. 18


Recommended:

2. War as a Historical Phenomenon: Continuity and Change
*What goals have wars been fought over?*

Greed
Honor
Fear
Justice
Power

Class 3
Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford University Press, 1974), chaps. 4-6


**Recommended:**

### 3. Crisis Management and Coercion  
(classes 4-6)
*The Spectrum of choice: concession, compromise, combat*
*Deterrence, reassurance, crisis management, and “accidental” war*
*Credibility and reputation*
*Air power*
*Economic sanctions*
*Cases: Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, Gulf War I, Kosovo*

**Class 4**

Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale University Press, 1966), chaps. 2-4


**Class 5**


**Class 6**


**4. Policy, Strategy, and Operations: Integrating Political Ends and Military Means**
*Three levels of analysis*
*Plans: organization, doctrine, tactics, obstacles*
*Military effectiveness: what produces success in combat?*
*Attack and defense: aggressive, preventive, preemptive, and defensive war*
*The Feedback loop between ends and means*
*Cases: NATO vs. Warsaw Pact*

**Class 7**
Clausewitz, *On War*, Book I, chap. 7; Book II, chap. 3; Book III, chap. 1; Book VI, chaps. 1, 3, 5.


**5. Technology and War** (classes 8-10)
*Offense/Defense balance*
*Innovations and interactions*
*Revolution in military affairs?*
Drones and arms control
Cases: Afghanistan, Gulf War II, Libya

**Class 8**


**Class 9**
Biddle, *Military Power*, chap. 10


*Recommended:*

**Class 10**


Andrea Gilli and Mauro Gilli, “The Diffusion of Drone Warfare: Industrial, Infrastructural and Organizational Constraints” (manuscript, 2015).

*Recommended:*
6. Ends and Means in Total War and Limited War (classes 11-12)
Assessing costs, benefits, and feasibility
Finding culminating point of victory
Total war: World Wars I and II
Limited war: Korea and Kuwait
Total or limited? Gulf War II, Afghanistan

Class 11
Clausewitz, On War, Book VII, chap. 22; Book VIII, chaps. 1-3, 6.


Class 12

Bob Woodward, Obama’s Wars (Simon & Schuster, 2010), chaps. 18-19, 21-25, 28, 30.

In-class midterm review
Midterm exam

7. Society, Regime Type, Culture, and Capabilities (classes 13-14)
Small unity cohesion
Ideology
Nationalism
Culture
Democracies and autocracies at war
Case: Iran-Iraq war

Class 13

Omer Bartov, Hitler’s Army (Oxford University Press, 1991), chaps. 3, 4.


Class 14


Recommended:

8. Modern War: Constraints, Conditions, Conduct (classes 15-17)

*Political will and public opinion*
*Economic resources and military power*
*Geography*
*Campaigns, logistics and allies*
*Military implications of unipolarity*

Class 15


**Class 16**


**Class 17**


**9. Nuclear Weapons**
(classes 17-19)
*Deterrence and compellence*
*Rationality, uncertainty, and credibility*
*MAD*
*Prevention*
*Limited war and escalation*
*Nuclear war plans and doctrine*
*Nuclear taboo*
*Proliferation*

**Class 17**


*Recommended:*


**Class 18**


**Class 19**


**10. Grand Strategy**

*Liberal interventionism*  
*Isolationism*  
*Selective engagement*  
*The benefits of primacy*
Class 20


Class 21


11. Threat Assessment and Intelligence (classes 22-23)
Deliberate aggression or security dilemma?
Deterrence and spiral models
Intentions and capabilities
Intelligence and Uncertainty
Cases: pre-WWI and pre-WWII Germany, Pearl Harbor, China, Iraq

Class 22


Class 23
Richard K. Betts, Enemies of Intelligence (Columbia University Press, 2007), chaps. 1, 2.


Paul R. Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq,” Foreign Affairs (March/April 2006).

12. Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (classes 23-24)

Asymmetric conflict
Rationality and fanaticism
Global Jihad
Resolve
“Political judo”

Class 23
Martha Crenshaw, “The Strategic Logic of Terrorism,” in Richard K. Betts, ed., Conflict After the Cold War.


Marc Sageman, “Jihadi Networks of Terror,” in Richard K. Betts, ed., Conflict After the Cold War.
Osama bin Ladin, "Speech to the American People," in Richard K. Betts, ed., *Conflict After the Cold War*.

**Class 24**

Clausewitz, *On War*, Book VI, chap. 26


**13. Morality and War**

*Just war doctrine*

*Absolute principles and the morality of responsibility*

*The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)*

*Case: Gaza*

**Class 25**


**14. Future Wars and The Future of War** (classes 26-27)

*The obsolescence of war?*

*Cyber-security and cyber-deterrence*

*Global warming and violent conflict*

*The rise of China*

*Mass-casualty terrorism*

**Class 26**

Martin C. Libicki, *Cyberdeterrence and Cyberwar* (RAND Corporation, 2009), chap. 3.


**Class 27**


**Final review** (date TBD)

**Final exam** (date TBD)