George Mason University School of Public Policy

PUBP 771: Grand Strategy

Thursdays 4:30-7:00 PM
Founders’ Hall (Arlington) Fall 2017

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This course uses the traditional tools of history and theory to analyze the concept of grand strategy. The goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of past effective and ineffective grand strategies so as to inform U.S. policy, or the policies of other countries, in the future. It is a foundational course for anyone who makes policy at the highest level and for those who advise or work for them. It is also vital for those who operate at lower levels of policy-making so as to fully understand the strategic implications of their work, now and in the future. This course is about the long view of statecraft, about using current means to achieve large ends.

Grand strategy is “policy in execution.” It is the highest and most complex level of strategy, involving all the resources of the state (political, cultural, military, economic, etc.), and integrating all the tools of the government (diplomacy, economic aid, military force, trade, and so forth) to achieve the objectives of policy.

Objectives:

This course will help to prepare students for professional positions in public service, including in the executive or legislative branches of U.S. government at the federal (both military and civilian), state or local levels; private sector businesses dealing with public policy; non-profit organizations concerned with public policy; non-US governments; and international organizations. This advanced seminar tackles the challenging task of building an effective grand strategy in both theory and practice. It will prepare students for positions that involve the development of effective national strategy and policy.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will have gained a broad-ranging understanding of history, theory and strategy as it relates to the making of policy at the highest level. They will understand the importance of integrating a wide range of policy instruments, including economic, military, political, and diplomatic, into a balanced grand strategy that serves the broader interest. Having assessed numerous case studies of success and failure in the making and implementing of grand strategies, they will have a strong background and knowledge of best practices and classic pitfalls. Those who successfully complete this course (and all its readings) will be well poised to advise senior leaders,

write position papers on strategic issues, analyze strategic documents, place current events within a broader historical context, and plan future priorities with an in-depth knowledge of grand strategy.

**Readings:**

The following books are required reading in the course:


**Class Format**

The course will be conducted in both lecture and seminar formats, relying upon the Socratic method of teaching through interactive questions and answers. It is important that students read each week’s assignments prior to arriving in class. Active class participation is mandatory: the instructor will “cold call” on students, so please prepare. **Please note that this class will have a lot of reading.**

**Course Evaluation**

This course will rely heavily upon extensive reading, active class participation (responding to questions, reading aloud in class, participating in discussions, etc.) and a series of three short essays addressing questions provided in the syllabus (7-10 pages; 2500-3000 words maximum; 12 point font; double spaced; footnotes as required).

First Essay (on Thucydides Topics 2-3, due NLT 21 September) 25%
Second Essay (Topics 4-8, due NLT 26 October) 25%
Third Essay (Topics 9-14, due NLT 30 November) 25%
Class participation* 25%
* Class participation will be the average of the marks given for each class period. I will give you a grade for each class session. This weekly mark will reflect whether or not you have done the readings for that day’s seminar and can ask or answer questions about them, then go beyond them in seminar discussion with material drawn from your own creative thinking.

You are always welcome to ask me how you are doing in your class participation grades. The best way to do this is to visit during office hours. Quality of participation is more important than quantity of comments made, but students should aim to contribute to discussion in every class.

I reserve the right to give surprise in-class quizzes if it appears that some people in the class are arriving unprepared to discuss the readings. The grades on those quizzes will be incorporated into the class participation grade. I hope that this will not be necessary.

**Please always bring your copy of the book we are reading to class.**

**A note on the papers:** Again, they should be between 7-10 pages; 2500-3000 words maximum; 12 point font; one-inch margins; double spaced; including page numbers; also with footnotes as needed. The paper is a direct response to one of the questions in the assigned topics in the syllabus. **Please put the question you are answering on either the cover page or on the first page of your paper.**

**Late papers will be penalized one grade level (e.g., A- to B+) for each calendar day or part thereof, up to a full grade (e.g., A- to B-) each week.** Barring officially-validated emergencies, the instructor will not give extra credit assignments or incomplete grades.

Mobile Phones must be turned off during class. Taking notes on your laptop is allowed; other computer activity is not. Our purpose is to engage in discussion, argumentation and debate; civility and respect to all members of the class is mandatory.

Students who must be absent for work or other foreseeable events should inform me beforehand so that make-up work can be arranged, as necessary. You are responsible for getting notes from colleagues for missed class periods. Attendance is vital and has a large impact upon the class participation grade: it is difficult to imagine a student earning above a “B” in the course if more than two classes are missed for any reason.

**Students with Special Needs**

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please inform the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.
PART ONE: *Strategy, History and Theory*

1. Introduction and Course Overview
2. Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War I
3. Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War II
4. Machiavelli, War and Statecraft in the 15th Century
5. The State and War in European History, 1500-2000

PART TWO: *Analyzing the Nature of War and Peace*

6. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*
7. Clausewitz and Jomini
8. Revolutionary Warfare: Sun Zi and Mao

PART THREE: *Grand Strategy in the Industrial Era*

9. World War One and Woodrow Wilson
10. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and American Grand Strategy in World War II
11. Decolonization, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency
12. The Cold War, Containment, and Nuclear Strategy
13. Vietnam

PART FOUR: *Grand Strategy for the Twenty-first Century*

14. Lessons from the Past and Modern War
PART ONE:  Strategy, History and Theory

1. Introduction and Course Overview

Thursday, 31 August

Please come to class prepared to give your answer to the following two questions:

What is War?
What is Strategy?

Objectives:

Understand the basic structure of the course, its requirements and overall objectives.

Formulate a definition of “war” and “strategy,” and the crucial relationship between ends and means.

Understand the meaning of “grand strategy” and the relationship between tactics, strategy and grand strategy.

Think about the relationship between history, theory and strategy in the formulation of grand strategy and national policy.

Required Reading:


[Renowned as one of the main strategic thinkers of the pre- and post-WW2 era, Liddell Hart is most famous for his strategy of “the indirect approach.” Here he lays the basis for this theory, noting that the purpose of strategy is to diminish the possibility of enemy resistance by movement and surprise, bringing the enemy to advantageous battle. He also explains the meaning of “grand strategy.” What does Grand Strategy mean today?]


[Howard notes that strategy has many dimensions, many of which are ignored or missed in different historical contexts. Prior to Clausewitz, the focus of strategic thought was the raising and use of armies; Clausewitz expanded this to operational, logistical, and social dimensions. The technological dimension came later, and did not, despite the dominance of nuclear weapons, reduce the importance of the preceding elements. What are the forgotten dimensions of war--and peace--today?]

Recommended Reading:


2. **Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War I**

Thursday, 7 September 2017

“The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the understanding of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time.”

-Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, (Book 1, para 22, sent 4)

The first part of our course tackles *The Peloponnesian War*, considered the finest narration of the ancient world and a timeless classic examining the concepts of history, theory and strategy in the unfolding of a great systemic war. It is truly the first examination of “grand strategy” in war and peace, and demonstrates the practical consequences of leadership and an early kind of policy-making for the people of Athens and Sparta. The lessons of Thucydides have been studied by a vast array of statesmen and military leaders, ranging from our own founding fathers to President Harry Truman (who was fond of quoting from it). These lessons continue to be plumbed for parallels with current conflicts, with popular studies comparing the Peloponnesian War to the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and actions post-911, for example. You cannot become an effective grand strategist without knowing and understanding Thucydides’ great history. We may debate the validity of specific modern-day analogies but one point remains clear: as Thucydides identified and described them more than two thousand four hundred years ago, the complex human experience of war and the significance of fear, honor and interest in human affairs have remain unchanged.

**Objectives:**

Understand the reasons that Athens and Sparta, two former democratic allies, chose to go to war.

Analyze Thucydides’ “imponderables”—politics, human passions, and chance, among others.

Analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of the initial strategies of Athens and Sparta, and examine how these changed over time.

**Required Readings:**


Read all of the following selections:

Book1: --pages 3-85 (especially the speeches)

(Book 1 lays the historical groundwork for the Peloponnesian War. The two superpowers—Athens and Sparta—were firm allies in the Persian Wars against Xerxes, but over a short time, things changed.
Convinced of its moral superiority and benevolence, Athens expanded while Sparta watched with growing concern. As a maritime empire, Athen made itself virtually invulnerable by fortifying the city, while Sparta continued its traditional emphasis on honorable battle on land.

Book 2: --Outbreak of the War, pages 89-107
  --Pericles’ Funeral Oration, the plague and the policy of Pericles, pages 110-128

[When war comes, it is welcomed by much of Greece. Sparta and her allies see it as an end to Athenian domination, while the Athenians (prompted by Pericles) see it as an opportunity to unify Greece under their leadership. Pericles’ strategy is to wait out the inevitable Spartan attack behind city fortifications. Though logical and successful, this plan soon proves unpopular among citizens eager to fight. Pericles takes the unusual step of rallying the city with his famous funeral oration, laying out Athenian ideology and the reasons for war. When plague breaks out, Pericles is blamed and hauled before the assembly. He successfully defends his strategy but soon dies of the plague.]

Book 3: --Revolt of Mytilene, pages 159-167
  --The Mytilenian debate, pages 175-184
  --Civil War in Coreyra, pages 194-201

[Book 3 details many of the ethical and operational problems faced by both sides as the war drags on. The Mytilene debate is one of the most important dialogues in the work. Following the revolt of Mytilene (and its subsequent defeat), the Athenians argue about what should be done to the rebels. Cleon argues that the entire city is guilty and should be destroyed so as to demonstrate the power of Athens. Diodotus argues that such an action would further alienate tenuous allies. Diodotus wins (barely) in a classic display of realist versus idealist thought.]

Book 4: --Athens’ success at Pylos, pages 223-246
  --Brasidas in Thrace, pages 263-272
  --Brasidas captures Amphipolis, pages 279-285

[Book 4 describes the tactical diversity that is beginning to affect the war. Although the Athenians were raiding with their fleet throughout the conflict, for the first time they stay and fortify an area in Spartan territory at Pylos. This brings about an immediate response. The Spartans attack and are defeated, resulting in the surrender of a small Spartan force. This outcome stuns both sides and emboldens the Athenians to continue the conflict, despite a generous armistice offer from the Spartans.]
3. **Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War II**  
Thursday, 14 September 2017

We continue our study of Thucydides by examining the second phase of the war and the eventual Athenian over-extension into Sicily. During this period the role of personalities and human nature becomes increasingly important. Faced with a bloody stalemate, both sides are ready for peace; yet they begin fighting again almost as soon as they broker an agreement at Nicias. We follow the story through the invasion of Sicily, and the dramatic ending of the book.

**Objectives:**

Understand how the character of the war had changed by the time of the peace of Nicias.

Analyze the influence of political and domestic considerations on Athens’ ability to formulate strategy and wage war.

Analyze the reasons for the Sicilian expedition as a case study in the formulation of strategy.

Analyze the evolving, dynamic and interactive strategies of both combatants. What was successful, what was not, and why?

Summarize the grand strategies of each combatant.

Analyze why ultimately Sparta succeeded in the conflict—at least relative to Athens. Did anyone win?

Ponder the lessons of Thucydides that apply (and do not apply) to our time.

**Possible Essay Questions:**

1. Consider the impact of the “people” of both Athens and Sparta. Knowing fully what war was like, why were both sides so eager for conflict? What factors prolonged the war?

2. The strategies of Athens and Sparta seemed sound at the onset of conflict. Why did they fail?

3. What was the role of allies in the war? Did they help or hinder the cause of each superpower?

4. What were the “imponderables” described by Thucydides? How did they affect the course of the war? Should they have been anticipated by the combatants?

5. What were the grand strategies of each side in the conflict? How did they evolve?

6. Explain the changes in either Athenian or Spartan society that occurred over the course of the war. Why did this happen? Was it inevitable?
7. Analyze the leadership of either Pericles or Brasidas. Was he a great leader?

Required Readings:


   Book 5: --Peace of Nicias, pages 309-316
   --The Alliance between Athens and Argos, Battle of Mantinea pages 327-350
   --The Melian Dialogue, pages 350-357

   [By the tenth year of the war both sides are ready for peace. Nicias brok... they should not be required to join either side, prompting the famous realist response: “The strong do what they will and the weak do what they must.” As both sides maneuver, it becomes increasingly obvious that general war will soon break out again.]

   Book 6: --Launching of the Sicilian Expedition, pages 361-379; 412-416

   [Although war has not officially broken out, the Athenian Alcibiades continually looks for opportunity. He finds it in Sicily. When the Athenian assembly is approached by a minor city-state looking for an alliance, Alcibiades convinces them to invade the island and “liberate” city-states under Syracuse’s influence. Nicias argues against this course, noting that Sicily is far away for operations and that the peace with Sparta is fragile. Nicias loses this debate but, to his chagrin, is nonetheless voted to be one of three Athenian generals to lead a huge invasion fleet--which encounters difficulties from the start.]

   Book 7: --Athenian disaster, pages 427-478

   [Accused of involvement in sacrilege, Alcibiades is summoned back to Athens for trial. He promptly defects to the Spartans and provides inside information about how to defeat the Athenians in Sicily and Attica. The Spartan intervention spells doom for the Athenians’ Sicilian expedition. Nicias, who argued against the expedition from the start, sees the situation clearly but also realizes he will be blamed if he returns in defeat. He hesitates, allowing the Spartans and Syracusans to muster forces for attack. In the subsequent naval fight and land battle, the Athenians are completely humiliated and destroyed.]

   Book 8: --Reaction to Athenian defeat in Sicily, pages 481-483

   [The Athenians are stunned by the Sicilian disaster, with the loss of their fleet representing an almost complete reversal of fortunes. Regardless, they vow to continue the war and rebuild their fleet.]

   Epilogue: -The end of the war, pages 549-554.
[Thucydides’ account ends in 411, six years before the end of the war. From other histories, we know that Athens recovers much of her naval strength, but is defeated by the Spartan admiral Lysander in 406. The Spartan alliance, bolstered by the support of the Persians (who are more than willing to humiliate the former victors of the Persian wars) closed on the city. Without a fleet, Athens can be successfully blockaded and starved out—so, in the face of this threat, Athens surrenders. Considering the length of the war and the destruction wrought by both sides, the terms are relatively mild (for the time). Athens has to demolish its long walls and surrender most of its fleet. Sparta is supreme in Greece, but this supremacy is short-lived. The Greek city-states soon rebel against Spartan autocracy, aided by Persia which, in the long run, gains the most from the war, seeing the Greek Peninsula reduced to ruin. The Greek city-states limp along, drained of resources, in uneasy stalemate, and ripe for a conquest that ultimately arrives from Macedon.]

Recommended Readings:


________________ A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War (New York: Random House, 2005).


________________ The Wars of the Ancient Greeks and Their Invention of Western Military Culture (London: Cassell, 1999).


4. Machiavelli, War and Statecraft in the 15th Century

Thursday, 21 September 2017

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) was the author of *The Prince, The Art of War*, and other writings. *The Prince* played an important role in the rise of the modern state and its politics. Machiavelli, who was very much a Renaissance thinker, rediscovered the writings of Roman military leaders such as Vegetus and Tacitus and drew from them lessons for the Italian city-states, especially his native state of Florence. Machiavelli’s ideas about the nature of the state, the attributes and conduct of a wise and effective prince, and the role of military force/forces in state policy were a product of his effort to adapt the management of state affairs to the new social, political, economic, and technological developments of the late Middle Ages. We will focus on the specific advice Machiavelli offers for effective statecraft in war and peace, including concepts such as the role of fate, Fortuna, leadership, the use of history, and the relationship between leaders and their followers.

Machiavelli’s ideas were not the result of some purely theoretical and analytical exercise, but were his answer to the very real and practical problem of how best to conduct statecraft in the new conditions. Yet he was ultimately a victim of his system, relegated to political irrelevancy during his lifetime. How revolutionary were his ideas? Ultimately, were they correct?

**Objectives:**

Understand the role of *The Prince* in the rise of the modern state.

Analyze the specific advice given to modern leaders.

**Required Readings:**


   [This is Machiavelli’s most famous work on statecraft and is essential reading for anyone interested in enduring questions about effective governance of the modern state.]


   [Felix Gilbert first wrote this famous essay in 1943. It carefully examines Machiavelli’s thinking on the relationship between the military and civil life, and lays out the primary arguments in his writings on war and governance. It concludes that Machiavelli’s writings formed the foundation of the theoretical study of statecraft and war by numerous successors, including Clausewitz.]

**Possible Essay Question:**

Is *The Prince* a good manual for policy-makers today? Are there aspects that apply and others that do not? Be specific.

**Recommended Readings:**


5. **The State and War in European History, 1500-2000**

Thursday, 28 September, 2017

Following our examination of the origins of the modern state in 15\(^{th}\) century Italian city-states, we move to study the changing character of war in the West, from the wars of the Renaissance to the industrial era. Whether one argues that historical advancement has been revolutionary or evolutionary, warfare during this period underwent cyclical changes associated with social, political, economic, and legal factors aligned with the development of the modern state.

Professor Sir Michael Howard, Regis Professor of the History of War at All Souls’ College, Oxford University (now retired) draws us through dramatic periods of continuity and change in his famous survey *War in European History*. Howard demonstrates that war in the Western world experienced traumatic paradigm shifts, shifts that occurred as a result of macroscopic societal-level and non-military factors that were then in turn altered by military power itself. These shifts are and always have been reciprocal: war evolves within its historical, social, political and economic context, and major changes in war cannot be understood without a sophisticated understanding of that broader context.

**Objectives:**

- Analyze war, including both its enduring and changing aspects, and its connection to the changing nature of the modern state.
- Comprehend the impact of apparent “paradigm shifts” in modern war and peace, especially in the case of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era.
- Understand the reciprocal relationship between war and its historical, social, political and economic context.

**Possible Essay Question:**

How were the changes in warfare that emerged from 1789-1814 (or another key transition period of your choosing) shaped by and reflective of parallel social, economic, technological and political upheavals?

**Required Readings:**


[In a tightly written history, Michael Howard demonstrates the inter-relationships between the political, economic, social, technological and military dimensions of war. War reflects the societies from which it emerges, and in turn broadly affects them.]
PART TWO: Analyzing the Nature of War and Peace

6. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Thursday, 5 October 2017

As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always makes war a remarkable trinity--composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.

*The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.*

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Clausewitz's work was an enormous advance in the evolution of military thought but it was not popular at the time. The very aspect of *On War* that made it unattractive to military practitioners also made it supremely important. Although at times he did hope to systematize war to some extent, Clausewitz was not content with providing a clear checklist of steps to follow in order to wage war more effectively. First of all, he did not believe that such a checklist was possible because war was too complex and unpredictable to be reduced to formulas for success. Clausewitz wanted his book to reflect reality. Instead of prescribing how to wage war, he wanted to probe war’s fundamental nature and its place in the spectrum of human affairs. In so doing, he hoped to guide his readers—soldiers and statesmen alike—to a better understanding of war’s true essence and, thus, imbue them with the kind of holistic thinking that would help them solve the unique problems each would face in waging their own wars, regardless of time and place. In short, what we get from Clausewitz is a deepening of insight rather than a set of rules.

Clausewitz’s famous quotation regarding the “trinity of war” (cited above) stipulates the essential elements of war’s nature. More than any other construct, it is the ultimate refinement of his theory of war. Clausewitz did not perfect this idea until late in his life, in 1827, and, as he acknowledged in two notes you will read, he had only begun to incorporate it into *On War* before his untimely death.

Unfortunately, before he died, Clausewitz believed only Chapter One, Book One was in its final, refined form. Thus, as you read *On War*, recognize that everything after the first chapter is in draft and has not been revised to the author’s satisfaction. This is the cause of much of the confusion about *On War* and the source of many of the book’s apparent contradictions. It is also why quoting selectively from *On War* can be extremely misleading.

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To simplify your study—and to attempt to clarify the evolution of Clausewitz’s thought—I have arranged the reading for this lesson and the next in what we believe to be the chronological order in which he actually wrote the book. The assignment begins with Clausewitz’s discussion of what a theory of war should include, and then transitions to analysis of the engagement and the relative strength of attack and defense. The next reading is a note dated 10 July 1827, in which Clausewitz acknowledges that his theory of war is inadequate and thus “liable to endless misinterpretations” and “half-baked criticism” unless “reworked once more.” The assignment then returns to Book Six, where the more sophisticated theory begins to emerge, tracing its development through Book Eight—where you’ll find Clausewitz’s concept of “Center of Gravity.” Your reading assignment culminates at the very beginning (Chapter One, Book One)—the very last section Clausewitz revised to his satisfaction. This chapter, not surprisingly, is the clearest statement of his theory—the conceptual foundation upon which the entire revised work would have been based had Clausewitz lived to complete his life-long quest to lay out “the basic ideas the might bring about a revolution in the theory of war.” We will be devoting a great deal of seminar time to Book One.

Time devoted to these “basic” yet revolutionary ideas—to comprehend, dissect, analyze, and critique them—is time well spent. Clausewitz’s comprehensive understanding of war in all of its aspects, as well as his influence on all the great strategic thinkers and practitioners since Napoleon, make careful study of *On War* essential to the understanding of grand strategy. The line of argument in many portions of *On War* is nuanced and multi-faceted so that no two people come away from reading Clausewitz with the same understanding of his meaning. The significance of his work is likely to evolve over time for the individual reader as well, based on changes in your perspective and experience.

If you are reading *On War* for the first time, four techniques may help you along. First, begin by reading Peter Paret’s introductory essay (pp. 3-25), which provides the context for Clausewitz’s ideas, as well as the appropriate sections from Bernard Brodie’s "A Guide to the Reading of *On War*" beginning on page 641. Second, read all the subheadings, which outline the logic of Clausewitz’s thoughts, before reading the main body of the text. Third, after reading the text, read the introductory essay by Brodie (pp. 45-58) and see if you agree that Clausewitz’s concepts are eternal—as applicable to the 21st Century as they were to the 19th. (We will talk about this in class.) Last, close the book, clear your mind, and, after a while, reread Book One, Chapter One to grasp Clausewitz’s “trinity” concept thoroughly.

Objectives:

Analyze war, including both its enduring and changing aspects, and its connection to the changing nature of the modern state.

Examine key classical, contemporary, and emerging concepts and approaches for the strategic use of the military instrument in peace, crisis, and war.

Understand the nature, purpose and conduct of war as presented in Clausewitz’s classic study of Western warfare.

Grasp the key concept that war must serve a rational political purpose. The crucial relationship between war and politics is at the heart of grand strategy.
Required Reading:


[Paret serves as an excellent introduction to our reading of *On War*. In this brief introductory article he examines Clausewitz’s basic ideas, his military career, and the impact his writings had both during his lifetime and in latter years.]


Recommended Readings:


[Howard explains Clausewitz’s ideas in terms of both his experiences as a professional soldier in the Napoleonic wars and the intellectual background of his time. It’s a very sophisticated “cliff note” for the book. Strongly recommended, especially for first contact with Clausewitz.]


http://www.clausewitz.com (An excellent Clausewitz website created and maintained by Dr. Christopher Bassford.)
Clausewitz's understanding of the nature of war was based on his own military experiences, his study of military history, and his profound appreciation for the social and political upheavals of Europe’s revolutionary era that had fostered a corresponding transformation in military affairs. As you read the material assigned for this topic, remember that it was written before Clausewitz fully refined his theory of war along the lines of Chapter One, Book One. Thus, you should do some interpolation as you go along. Try to apply your understanding of the evolution of his theory to what you read, and decide if and how he might have revised these latter portions of the book, based on his ultimate conception of the essence of war.

Chapters 2 through 7 of Book One address the major factors that make war what it is. Note that the first characteristic of war Clausewitz addresses is “the relationship of purpose and means.” We are examining the relationship between ends and means in with respect to overarching national strategy. In military strategy, however, the means—and the consequences of their employment—are narrower. Reread paragraph 25, “The Diverse Nature of War,” from Chapter One, Book One, and try to reconcile it with Chapter Two, Book One, "Purpose and Means in War." Is Clausewitz contradicting himself, or merely elaborating on the same core concepts? Understanding the relationship between political and military objectives is fundamental to grand strategy.

In Book Three, "On Strategy in General," note in the first chapter how Clausewitz defines strategy, the objectives of the engagement, and the critical role the military commander plays in determining strategic success. Much of the remainder of Book Three focuses on the moral factors of war and, thus, offers plenty of food for thought. Pay particular attention to Chapter Eight, "Superiority of Numbers." There you will find the basis for Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart's 20th Century argument that a misunderstanding of Clausewitz was responsible for the slaughter of World War I. Think about the thrust of this chapter in light of Clausewitz's refined construct of the nature of war. Finally, as you read Book One, Chapter Three, “On Military Genius,” think about the imperatives of leadership in war. Then see if you can draw any parallels between Machiavelli’s “virtues” and Clausewitz’s analysis of those “qualities of intellect and temperament” required to cope with the danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance that are inherent in the nature of war and statecraft.

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Clausewitz is a master at explaining the enduring nature of war, its complex and irreducible reality; but during his lifetime he was not the most famous theoretician writing in the early 19th century. Baron Antoine Henri Jomini was Clausewitz’s contemporary, but Clausewitz’s major theoretical work, On War, was initially far less widely read and referenced than Jomini’s The Art of War. While Jomini remained an active military advisor and author, promoting and defending his military theory until his death in 1869, Clausewitz died two years before the publication of On War.

Jomini’s work was far more appealing to the vast majority of military professionals at the time. Jomini was a Swiss officer who rose to the rank of General of Brigade in Napoleon’s army and then, disappointed over lack of further promotion, switched his allegiance to Russia in 1813. He began publishing histories of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in the 1820s, but his most influential work was The Art of War, which first appeared in 1838. What Jomini provided was a straightforward, persuasive, systematic, and readily accessible manual for organizing, planning, and waging war. What Clausewitz was perceived to offer, on the other hand, was a complex, philosophical tome on the essence of war and the difficulties inherent in its conduct—unless possessed of the natural military genius necessary to cope with the uncertainties and ambiguities that permeate armed conflict. Jomini clearly seemed the more practical and useful guide to soldiers in the field.

Jomini is often acclaimed as “the father of the science of war.” A product of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, he was intrigued by the scientific method and sought to apply it to the study of military history. In the process, he discovered what he believed were common patterns in military operations. He codified those patterns into axioms and principles, designed to teach up-and-coming officers how to organize, plan, and conduct “modern” warfare. In truth, he developed what today we would call military doctrine.

Earlier 18th Century military thinkers dedicated their efforts primarily to describing battle formations, fortifications, and the ways in which forces should deploy on the battlefield. Jomini, in contrast, sought to grasp—and convey to others—how operations were best conducted. He saw in Napoleon a man who could successfully employ military forces on a large scale because he could envision an entire military campaign as it evolved through time and space. In other words, Jomini made the conceptual leap from 18th Century’s preoccupation with tactics—that is, actions conducted on the battlefield to achieve a specific, limited objective—to what he called “the science of strategy.”

Jomini’s life work was a search, through scientific analysis of historic warfare, for those universal principles that were most likely to result in strategic success. His contribution to military thought was tremendous: Jomini lifted our sights from the tactical level of war to levels that are operational—that is, focused on achieving the overall objectives for a particular theater of war, such as Western Europe or Southwest Asia—and strategic—that is, focused on achieving the overall war aims of a nation, such as “unconditional surrender” in World War II. However, in trying to reduce the complexity that is war to a set of neatly classified elements, governed by universal, immutable principles, he may have misled generations of subsequent students—and commanders—as to the true essence of war.

Objectives

Analyze Clausewitz’s principal ideas on the nature, character, and conduct of war and assess their continued applicability today and tomorrow.

Analyze the major ideas of Swiss theorist Henri Jomini so as to compare and contrast them to the writings of Clausewitz (his contemporary).
Possible Essay Questions:

1. The most famous quote from Clausewitz is, “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.” But this translation from the German is subject to dispute. The German word Clausewitz actually used, “politik,” may be translated as either “policy” or “politics.” What difference do you think this translation makes in our understanding of Clausewitz and, indeed, in our understanding of the appropriate relationship between civilian and military roles?

2. Again, Clausewitz states that: "War is merely the continuation of policy (or politics) by other means." German World War I Field Marshal Erich Ludendorff, on the other hand, saw warfare as “the highest expression of the national will to live” and argued that “politics must, therefore, be subservient to the conduct of war.” American military historian Russell Weigley, in contrast, maintains that: "War, once begun, has always tended to generate a politics of its own: to create its own momentum, to render obsolete the political purposes for which it was undertaken, and to erect its own political imperatives." Which of these constructs best reflects your own view of the relationship between war and policy? Use examples to support your view.

3. What impact, if any, does a nation’s form of government have on the Clausewitzian trinity? Give specific examples.

4. Do the concepts of On War apply to non-state entities, such as terrorist organizations? Explain.

4. Some argue that Jomini is the intellectual father of such modern approaches as operations research and systems analysis. What is the proper role and place of these approaches in contemporary policy-making? What is the relative utility of metrics, cost effectiveness calculations, body-counts, sortie rates, numbers of incidents, etc.? Do concerns with quantification distract policy-makers from such core issues as political and military objectives, end state, and moral factors in war?

5. How should Clausewitz’s theory of war influence the selection of political and strategic objectives, and shape the employment of military power to attain those objectives?

6. “For almost two hundred years, the maxims of the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz had dictated that mass—concentrated formations of troops and guns—was the key to victory. To achieve victory, Clausewitz advised, a military power must mass its forces at the enemy’s ‘center of gravity’.” Tommy Franks (with Malcolm McConnell), American Soldier (New York: Regan Books, 2004), p. 165. Is this statement correct?

Required Readings:


[Overshadowed by Clausewitz in modern times, Jomini’s influence was nevertheless significant in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic era. Jomini attempted to quantify Napoleon’s art of war in “scientific” terms, distilling his method into operational principles. Ultimately eclipsed by Clausewitz, Jomini’s influence still must be considered, especially as his writings continue to exert a growing influence.]

**Recommended Readings:**


8. Revolutionary Warfare: Sun Zi and Mao

Thursday, 19 October, 2017

War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied.

Sun Zi

All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near. Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him. When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him. Anger his general and confuse him. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance. Keep him under a strain and wear him down. When he is united, divide him. Attack where he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you. These are the strategist’s keys to victory.

Sun Zi

Today we return again to the theory of war, focusing on the strategic thinking of Sun Zi and The Art of War, the first comprehensive military theory ever devised. The text was written sometime between 400 and 320 B.C. (The first known translation of The Art of War into a Western language appeared in 1722, thanks to a French Jesuit priest.) Sun Zi’s life is shrouded in uncertainty: scholars do not even know for sure whether he actually existed or was a fictional compilation of several writers. It was written during the Warring States era (403-221 B.C.), a time of revolutionary socio-political, economic, technological and military change in what is now China. Sun Zi (if he was an individual) was apparently an opportunist, shifting his allegiances among various rulers, getting by on his wits and the strength of his advice. His text, like so many other seminal texts in history, was a response to difficult times – times that demanded a “paradigm shift” in Chinese strategic culture and especially in the relationship between war and the state. Sun Zi’s illusion-free, anti-heroic prescriptions were arguably facilitated by the growing bureaucratization and increasing capacity to exploit manpower and materiel resources of these nascent Chinese states.

Like Thucydides, Sun Zi was an unsentimental realist, giving his work resonance centuries later. He is also relevant to us for three reasons: 1) his importance as a source of inspiration for a variety of more recent thinkers, including Mao Zedong and Basil Liddell Hart; 2) his creation of a comprehensive theory of warfare based on indirection, rather than on an “industrial” strength-on-strength approach; and 3) his status (in some eyes) as a proto-chaos theorist who helped modern thinkers reacquaint themselves with the increasing diffusion and nonlinearity of war. The seeming simplicity of The Art of War is deceptive. There is depth of thought here, particularly when Sun Zi explores indirect ways to succeed in war. So, as you read, do not focus on each maxim individually; try instead to absorb Sun Zi’s concepts as a whole.

One notable fan of Sun Zi’s dictums was Mao Zedong, a contemporary historical figure whose writings are widely accessible and much more easily translated. This accessibility has led to a more

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detailed analysis and consideration of Mao’s thoughts on guerrilla warfare and insurgency, for example. But careful analysis of the words of both Sun Zi and Mao Zedong reveals the impact of one on the other. Central to Mao’s strategy was his ability to build a 100,000-man army that would only attack when strong and retreat when weak, for example.

Sun Zi remains a vital source of wisdom for the modern strategist today; yet The Art of War is much less thoroughly studied and understood in the West than it is in many parts of Asia. While important in his native country, however, knowledge of Sun Zi and his writings is certainly not confined to China: indeed, Sun Zi’s writings are even better known in Japan than they are in the PRC. In any case, his theories have been influential for centuries, throughout the world.

Objectives:

Analyze Sun Zi’s theory of war and assess its applicability for those using military power today.

Comprehend the historical context during the time of Sun Zi.

Apply Sun Zi’s theory of war and assess its applicability in counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, conventional warfare, and special operations.

Comprehend the similarities and differences between Clausewitz’s and Sun Zi’s theories of war.

Assess the validity and relevance of ‘the indirect approach,’ particularly in today’s security environment. Consider the applicability (or not) to on-going operations, and assess its value in planning future operations.

Possible Essay Questions:

1. Support or refute the argument that battles, campaigns, and even wars can be won in the moral sphere before a clash of arms even occurs.

2. How does Sun Zi define the nature and character of war? According to him, what are its causes? Are his answers to these questions different from those of Clausewitz? If so, how and why?

3. Does Sun Zi agree or disagree with Clausewitz’s conclusions about the proper relationship between war and politics? Do they have their own respective versions of “the trinity,” for example?

4. Explain Sun Zi’s arguments with respect to the roles of intelligence and information in warfare. Is his thinking relevant to today’s security environment?

5. As illustrated by their writings, which one of the theorists we have studied is the most helpful to us in combating global terrorism today? Why?

6. What do Clausewitz and Sun Zi have to say about “military genius” or leadership that is beneficial for grappling with today’s challenges?

7. Sun Zi wrote his great treatises to realign increasingly outdated paradigms of war with new societal and military realities. But what about peacetime? Is The Art of War a useful guide for those trying to anticipate and manage transformational change when states are at peace?

8. Are the forms and tactics of war advocated in The Art of War unethical? What is the role of legitimacy in this book?

9. In the modern age, are there examples of US strategy applying Sun Zi principles? Explain.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


[Mao’s work is often considered the “classic” work for the study of guerilla war, not only for its obvious practicality but also for its widespread use in irregular conflict following the Communist victory in China. The similarity of Mao’s tactics with those advocated by Sun Zi and his clear link of operations to policy make this work especially relevant to our course themes.]


[Snow provides a historical perspective of why guerilla (partisan) warfare was successful in China., the key element of which (as noted by Mao) was the overwhelming support of the people upon whom the very existence of the partisans depended.]


[Mao provides far more detail of his philosophy in these writings, addressing such concepts as Just and Unjust wars from the Communist perspective. Note also his selective use of Clausewitz when discussing politics and war, describing actions against Japan as a revolutionary war involving an entire nation.]
Additional Recommended Translations:


Additional Resources:


Charles Chao Rong Phua, “From the Gulf War to Global War on Terror: A Distorted Sun Tzu in US Strategic Thinking?” RUSI Journal, Vol. 152, No. 6 (December 2007), pp. 46-52.


PART THREE: Grand Strategy in the Industrial Era

9. World War One and Woodrow Wilson
Thursday, 26 October, 2017

Should a war break out now, its duration and end cannot be foreseen. The largest powers of Europe, armed as never before, would take the field. None could be so completely defeated in one or two campaigns that it would declare itself vanquished and that it would have to accept the hard peace conditions imposed upon it. None would promise not to rise up again, even if only after years to renew the struggle. Such a war could easily become a seven years’ or a thirty years’ war. Woe to him who applies the torch to Europe, who is the first to throw the match into the powder cask.

Helmuth von Moltke (The Elder),
14 May 1890

If any question why we died/ Tell them because our fathers lied.

Rudyard Kipling (after learning that his son, Jack, had died on the Western Front, 1915)

World War I had as profound an impact on the evolution of modern warfare and Western military thought as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars did—indeed, possibly even more. One of the legacies of the French Revolution was the cultivation of intense, militaristic nationalism throughout Europe over the remainder of the nineteenth century. This nationalism glorified the state as the embodiment of all that was admirable in its population and as an institution whose destiny, in turn, was to go to war to defend the reputation, courage and honor of the nation.

The character of the war that followed emerged from the very heart of that state. The economic fruits of the industrial revolution combined with militant nationalism and Social Darwinist philosophies to create a military capacity unprecedented in its intensity and scope. The industrial revolution had yielded the capacity to draft, train, mobilize, equip, transport, and supply mass armies—and had created the ability to reconstitute and resupply these armies while maintaining the livelihoods of the civilian population. In turn, militaristic nationalism glorified the state-nation and even viewed armed conflict as a normal, even preferable, tool of statecraft. At its most extreme, war was described as a form of "spiritual hygiene." In the end, entire generations sacrificed themselves at the altar of national greatness and power.

As Michael Howard has pointed out (and von Moltke the elder had predicted in some fourteen years beforehand), the intensity of the violence that erupted in August 1914 was not unanticipated; but its

7 Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings; translated by D.J.Hughes and H. Bell (California: Novato, 2007), p.29.
8 Some speculate that Kipling felt deep guilt at his son's death, as he had pressured colleagues to get him a commission in the Irish guards despite Jack's poor eyesight and young age (17). George Webb, "Foreword" to Rudyard Kipling, The Irish Guards in the Great War. 2 vols. (Spellmount, 1997), p. 9.
scale dwarfed expectations. Able to discern the outlines of catastrophe but unable to grasp its longterm implications, the combatants threw huge numbers of troops into combat, pitting strength against strength for weeks, months, and eventually years at a time. As early as December 1914, millions of lives lost precluded any thought of a negotiated settlement: the only option was to press on toward a "victory" to justify the blood spilled and the treasure lost. As a result, the nations of Europe spent the next three years searching for operational, and tactical solutions that would somehow break the stalemate. The end was ambiguous: the bleeding might certainly have continued; but political and societal-level exhaustion, particularly in Germany, brought an inconclusive armistice in 1918.

World War I is important to us for a host of reasons. Among these is the failure of decision makers and strategists to appreciate fully all the signposts pointing to the coming disaster. This failure gets to the heart of one of the themes of this course: the ability or inability to learn from history and experience, to develop strategic insight and judgment that transcends the immediate, the emotional, and the tactical. The ultimate question is whether European leaders should have seen World War I coming--and whether they could have done anything to prevent the war from taking it’s devastating trajectory. Just as important, when the war ended, should they have understood the fundamental weaknesses in the peace that they crafted?

Objectives:

Analyze the grand strategies of the major belligerents before and during the Great War in light of the strategic and military theories studied thus far.

Analyze how factors such as capabilities, force structure, resources, and processes of innovation affected the military strategies of each of the belligerents.

Analyze the strategic leadership provided by political and military leaders at the time.

Analyze the impact of the First World War on European societies at the time, and since.

Analyze the reasons for the emergence of this kind of war within its historical context.

Possible Essay Question:

Analyze the grand strategy of Woodrow Wilson. Was it effective?

Required Readings:


[Howard traces the seemingly paradoxical development prior to WWI of support for the military offensive, while leaders and scholars appear to appreciate and understand the potential costs in lives due to recent developments in modern weaponry. He goes on to observe how tactics changed to attrition warfare when neither side could secure ground, and thus set the stage for modern industrialized powers to continue a grueling and costly conflict.]

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[Geyer follows the transformation of German unified strategy through multiple stages; from Schliefen’s campaign of Gesamtschlacht led by military experts and designed to isolate war from political and societal influences, to the disaster at Verdun, described as a benchmark in the fragmentation between strategy, battle design and tactics, and finally culminating in the (Third) Supreme Command’s efforts that totally reversed the traditional strategic calculus relating ends to means. You will be reading the section on WWI now, and will read sections in WWII in Topic 15.]


[Gopnik reexamines some familiar themes from WWI through the pages of “revisionist” histories, focusing on Hew Strachan’s theme the war was tragic, but essentially fought for a good cause. He goes on to review the imperialistic goals, complex alliances and mobilizations that could not be stopped, incapable or unwilling leaders, political-military disconnects, moral justifications and the perceived need for national cleansing of bourgeois attitudes that led to war. Finally, Gopnik closes by asking with all the possible outcomes, could the results have turned out any worse, i.e. Europe poised for another war, and did the ends really justify the means?]


[Rothenberg examines the development of the Schlieffen Plan, described as a rigid, time-table driven operation to envelop and annihilate the French, then turn to the second front in the east. When the younger Moltke became chief of the general staff, he developed a new plan containing elements of the Schlieffen plan, but expanded to include the flexibility to present a double envelopment; Moltke bore the brunt of criticism due to the perceived modification to the Schlieffen Plan, and subsequent failure on the battlefield. But ultimately, the failure of Germany’s scheme lay in the chasm between political and military strategy development.]


[The chapter describes Woodrow Wilson’s difficulties in devising peace terms at the Treaty of Versailles following World War One.]

Recommended Readings:


10. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and American Grand Strategy in World War II

Thursday, 2 November, 2017

“National Socialist Germany wants peace because of its fundamental convictions. And it wants peace also owing to the realization of the simple primitive fact that no war would be likely essentially to alter the distress in Europe... The principal effect of every war is to destroy the flower of the nation.... Germany needs peace and desires peace!”

Adolf Hitler - 21st May 1935

“This is a sad day for all of us, and to none is it sadder than to me. Everything that I have worked for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed into ruins. There is only one thing left for me to do: That is, to devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much.... I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established.”

Neville Chamberlain - 3rd September 1939

“Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan ... As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.... With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounded determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.”

President F.D. Roosevelt - 8th December 1941

Europe was materially and spiritually exhausted after the carnage of the First World War. Over thirteen million died in the four year conflict, a war that in the view of many accomplished nothing but a return to a corrupt and antiquated status quo. Disillusionment, revolution, isolationism and antimilitarism were widespread in the war’s aftermath. Yet twenty years later Europe was well on the path to a new war that threatened to be even more destructive than the last. Why after the carnage of the First World War was Europe ready to do it again?

The origins of the Second World War were complex. The roots of conflict lay to some degree in the Treaty of Versailles whose harsh terms fed the sense of betrayal in Germany that contributed to the rise of the Nazi party. Many experts (including Philip Bobbitt) have argued that Versailles was not a peace treaty at all, but rather a temporary interlude in an ongoing war between nations. Yet Versailles cannot be the only answer. The global economic depression of the interwar period created societal unrest and political radicalization: Italian Fascism predated German Fascism by over ten years; Japan’s increasing militarism was intensely cultural, based on the glories of a remembered (and some would argue invented) past, but also germane is that economic depression struck Japan as early as 1922. Despite international abhorrence for war in 1918, even codified in the outlawing of war under the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, war was again seen as not only as necessary but in some cases desirable (or at least unavoidable) by 1939.

The Second World War was a war of paradoxes and extremes. While constrained to some degree by the Geneva conventions, the war also saw heretofore inconceivable violence against civilians as part of
an organized strategy. Modern armies relied on high technology weapons, but the German Army, considered the most formidable in the world in 1939, depended as much on horses as on armor during the war. It was a total war for unlimited objectives, actively promoted by ideologies in the pre-war period that were espoused by proponents who were apparently ignorant (or self-delusional) regarding the destruction that would result.

The subject of the Second World War is rich in lessons for the modern strategist and could easily encompass several courses. For the purposes of our examination of the relationship between history, strategy and theory, however, the following are important to consider:

1. **Pre-war planning and the role of theory**: by the early 1930s it was clear that war was a possibility in Europe. The rise of Italian and German fascism and Japanese imperialism actively promoted militarization and war as legitimate and healthy for the nation. In this environment the “peace” of the 1930s was an illusion. Japanese Imperial expansion in China began in 1931, the laboratory of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, and the Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939; all these conflicts were closely studied on all sides as illustrations of the “new” types of war that could be expected. During the inter-war period theorists such as Douhet, Guderian, and Liddell Hart attempted to reconcile the use of new technologies with the idea of “total” war in which civilians would play an important role in supporting—and suffering from—the war effort. In the United States, the Naval War College, Marine Corps planners, and Air Corps theorists at Maxwell Field all made great strides in developing strategies to carry out national security objectives. While these theorists and groups strove to develop military strategy that would support national strategy, none adequately addressed the issue of conflicting service cultures.

Military strategists in the inter-war period were in a difficult position. Rapidly evolving technology was the subject of intense debate, but actual application was difficult. Technology was viewed very differently among the major powers and largely in accordance with their political ideologies. The tank, for example, was seen in Germany as a weapon of offense that could be used to break the deadlock of trench warfare. Western nations saw the weapon’s value but marginalized it— Britain and France, mired in defensive thinking, relegated it to infantry support as if it were a mobile pill box, while too many senior American military officers viewed it primarily as a challenge to the traditional cavalry arm. (Indeed, two young tank theorists, Majors Patton and Eisenhower, were personally disciplined by the Army Chief of Staff for writing articles—swiftly withdrawn—that argued for mass tank warfare.)

By 1939 the end result of interwar planning and theoretical argument was national operational strategies that were very different. Germany was committed to the doctrine of offensive Blitzkreig, relying on a revolutionary combined arms operational approach followed by rapid mobile exploitation. France had spent years developing a comprehensive defense-in-depth centered on the fortifications of the Maginot line. Britain maintained a land expeditionary force, but had spent much time and resources developing a large bomber fleet based on the offensive theories of Douhet, while focusing on the Royal Navy as its primary national strategic force. Japan, taking lessons from its operations in China, relied on the spirit of Bushido to drive its infantry and developed an extensive naval air arm for extended operations, while also suffering from a breakdown in governance that led to the military dominating national policy. Russia, hurrying in 1941 to catch up after years of Stalinist purges, developed a large armor arm that would eventually dominate the Germans with its size and
effectiveness. And America remained largely isolationist, cutting Army funding during the Depression and for the most part delaying modernization (except in the Navy and the Air Corps).  

2. **The Onset of war:** Much like the experience of Athens and Sparta, strategies were altered as the scope of World War II became apparent, but the U.S. military benefited from dedicated operational and strategic research during the inter-war years. France’s strategic reliance on defensive fortification was rapidly defeated by the outflanking blitzkrieg. All the combatants learned that reliance on strategic bombing as claimed by Douhet and other airpower advocates was not adequate to defeat a powerful enemy, given the technologies available during World War II, while Britain also found that its surface navy was inadequate in the face of the new airpower. Stalin’s paranoia about the ideological reliability of his officer corps (enforced by frequent bloody purges during the 1930s) produced a mediocre leadership that broke and ran at the first attack of German panzers. Japan’s surprise attack at Pearl Harbor did not lead to America suing for peace but had the opposite effect, infuriating the nation and leading to massive mobilization for war. Even Germany, spectacularly successful in the early part of the war, continued to rely on Blitzkrieg tactics that became outdated as the Allies armed and adjusted, a fact that was obvious to all but Hitler (and his acolytes) who increasingly meddled in day-to-day operations.

3. **Coalition warfare:** The requirements of global industrial war forced the combatants to quickly adapt to a rapidly evolving strategic situation. World war meant coalition warfare on an unprecedented scale. The fact that allies had often been former enemies made the successful use of coalitions problematic. The much-vaunted American-British alliance is but one example. Until Pearl Harbor, the overwhelming majority of the American public did not favor intervention in Europe; even after December 7th the “Europe first” policy was widely questioned, referred to derisively as “Britain’s war” or “the war for Empire.”

The problems of coalition warfare were most evident in coordinating large scale military operations. The U.S. service chiefs resented their more experienced but resource-starved British counterparts, while the latter viewed their new allies as well-intentioned amateurs at best. This dissonance led to unnecessary losses, as exemplified in the refusal of the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Ernest King, to recognize the need to escort convoys in American coastal waters. American and British air chiefs disagreed vehemently about the efficacy of daylight vs. night bombing, which led to duplication and wasted assets. By 1944 the U.S. had gained dominance in the coalition begrudgingly acknowledged by the British as a reflection of their material superiority (vice operational skill, in many British minds). Stalin, ever paranoid about the West, never trusted his allies and conducted operations largely independent of them, confining “cooperation” to receiving lend lease and calling stridently for a second front.

Coalition problems were not confined to the Allies. The so called “Pact of Steel” was based solely on Germany and Italy’s shared fascist ideologies and driven by the personalities of their respective dictators. Japan, a signatory to the Pact, never cooperated to any significant degree with her allies. Operationally, coordinated military operations between German and Italy (as well as with the other states that contributed troops, such as Hungary) were notoriously poor. This division was exploited time and again by the Allies, such as in Montgomery’s operations in Africa, Allied offensives in the Sicily-Italian campaigns, and ultimately throughout post-June 1944 operations on the continent.

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It is noteworthy, however, that the Allies achieved a degree of cooperation at the level of grand strategy that eluded the fascist powers. This was accomplished largely through the forceful personalities of Roosevelt and Churchill, who recognized the clear need for a combined effort among the allies, and understood the need to ensure that military strategy properly supported national and coalition strategy—as demonstrated in their decision to launch the invasion of North Africa in 1942, in the face of opposition by their Chiefs of Staff. It should be noted that cooperation may not have occurred without the unique combination of talents of these two men. Pressures against it were enormous; as noted above, the respective militaries of the allied powers were suspicious of each other at best. And, as elected leaders, Roosevelt and Churchill had to answer to political forces at home; each was under constant political scrutiny by political opponents, especially during the early stages of the war when the United States was technically neutral.

Even after 1941, when they openly faced a common enemy, there was a great degree of mistrust among the allied powers. Adding Stalin to the mix was disruptive: while Roosevelt and Churchill had cultivated a long-standing friendly relationship, Churchill disliked Stalin intensely and was constantly warning of Soviet expansionism. Stalin was wildly paranoid about Western motives toward his country, a paranoia that was not entirely unjustified given Western intervention in the Russian Revolution and what he perceived as a delay in opening a second front. Roosevelt, a consummate politician, tried with little success to work as a buffer between the two. Early meetings between Roosevelt and Churchill, at Washington during 1941 and 1942, and at Casablanca in 1943 were not simple expressions of political unity—putting aside individual feelings, they managed to hammer out a grand strategy and agree on major strategic goals that effectively drove the course of the war—although translating grand strategy to military operations was a huge challenge.

4. **War against civilians:** While it is true that all of the major combatants planned for “total war” in the inter-war period (in the United States, for example, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces was formed in 1920 specifically to study and plan for national economic mobilization), the mass destruction and widespread killing of civilians that occurred during the war was not fully anticipated, despite Douhet’s theories and the example of the Spanish Civil War. The realization that civilians were integral to a nation’s ability to wage war and therefore were legitimate targets had been theorized by Mao Zedong in the 1930s, but Western strategists slowly recognized that fact. Although atrocities had always been part of war, actions against civilians during the Second World War were ideologically rationalized and well organized. These ranged from imprisonment of suspected “enemies” (which occurred in all nations, including the United States) to organized wholesale slaughter such as the infamous “Rape of Nanking” and the Holocaust. Militarily, the loosely defined “production” and even more nebulous “morale” were legitimate targets for unrestricted submarine warfare and mass firebombing of cities which culminated in atomic explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

5. **Effects and the Peace that followed:** World War Two and its aftermath defined the modern era. The global strategic situation soon assumed a bi-polar state as the United States and Soviet Union emerged from the war with clear superpower status. The Cold War between the new superpowers dominated world affairs for over 40 years. Militarily, although much of the war was “irregular,” large scale conventional doctrine—significantly modified by the advent of nuclear weapons—dominated the strategies of the United States and Russia as they re-militarized during the Cold War. Nuclear power and the demonstrated will to use it became foremost in strategic thinking. Cold War strategists saw World War II as the “big war”—and in the minds of those who defeated fascism, future war would be fought not over land, but over ideology. The advent of the nuclear age also signaled
unprecedented power for national leaders such as the U.S. president, the sole decision-maker for launching potentially devastating weapons.

**Objectives:**

Analyze the unique nature of WW II as the culmination of industrialized warfare.

Understand the impact and importance of WW II as a "model war" for the American public and American military.

Assess the impact of industrialized warfare and reliance upon technology on US military culture.

Analyze WW II as a textbook case of alliance/coalition-based warfare.

Analyze the grand strategy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

**Possible Essay Question:**

Analyze the grand strategy of any of the Allied leaders during World War II (e.g., Churchill, Stalin, FDR). Was it effective?

**Required Readings:**


[The reading incorporates the last two sections of Geyer’s comprehensive review of German professional military thought from the pre-WW1 period until its final defeat in 1945. (You read the sections on WW1 last week.) Geyer analyzes Hitler’s strategy, particularly its ideological foundations, and the inability or unwillingness of German senior officers to challenge it.]


[This is an analysis of coalition warfare. Matloff addresses the popular misconception that the Allies won through blunt mass production vice coordinated strategy. He suggests that while the Allies started with an immature strategy at the onset of war, by the end it was completely effective in the military sense. It was a hybrid strategy based on American directness, British caution, and Soviet bluntness.]


[James argues that the U.S. and Japan went to war in 1941 because their national strategies had become irreconcilable. The article provides rich detail in pre-war assumptions and the difficulties of changing strategy as the war progressed. The attack on Pearl Harbor, envisioned as ultimately leading to a negotiated settlement by the Japanese, failed miserably. American strategy focused on keeping China in the war and decisive defeat of Japan within the confines of the “Europe first” commitment.]

[This chapter describes Roosevelt’s strategic dilemmas during the war, the compromises he was forced to make during the war, and the seeds of the US-Soviet confrontation following it.]


[Kissinger describes the differing approaches of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill and the implications for the peace settlement following the Second World War.]

Recommended:


Additional Resources:


The year 1954 was a momentous one for France and her military forces. Mired in a guerilla war in Vietnam since 1946, the culminating battle of that conflict took place at an isolated outpost named Dien Bien Phu. Desperate heroism on the part of the French forces was matched by equally desperate heroism on the part of the Vietnamese. Completely isolated, with no hope of relief, the surviving French forces surrendered on the 7th of May. The French government then decided to relinquish its hold on this particular colony. Peace negotiations in Geneva resulted in an agreement to divide the country at the 17th parallel, pending a nation-wide vote to select a government. The French army was left to determine how a seemingly rag-tag band of ill-equipped guerrillas was able to defeat a modern military with every advantage in fire-power, manpower, and logistics support. They would not have to wait long to put their conclusions to the test. On 1 November 1954, the French army found itself once again at war, this time in Algeria.

The attitude of the French toward the Algerian revolutionaries was hardened by their defeat in Vietnam, by the status of Algeria as an actual “department” of the French Republic rather than a mere colony, and by the presence in Algeria of a significant population of European expatriates, many of them French, the pieds noirs. Perhaps most importantly, French attitudes were hardened by unresolved socio-political and civil-military divisions within France itself. These divisions went back to 1789 and turned on fundamental issues of governance, class, religion and France’s concept of itself as a nation. Algeria thus became a prototypical war of national liberation (at least in the insurgents’ eyes), but it was also a stage for France to play out its long-standing domestic contradictions and quarrels.

Regardless of its motives, the French government was determined to crush this revolt. The Algerian revolutionaries, in turn, were uninterested in the technicalities of their political status. Since they were denied the full rights and benefits of French citizenship, they viewed themselves as colonial subjects under the thumb of an occupying foreign power. For them, Dien Bien Phu was an indicator of French weakness, and they were determined to follow the Vietnamese example and win their independence.

For us, the Algerian insurgency and the French response is a fascinating case study. While we all understand the perils of making inappropriate analogies, there are several interesting parallels between this case and how the situation evolved in Iraq. We will consider those parallels, as well as analyze the case in light of the theories we studied in the previous topic.

Objectives:

Comprehend the French experience in Algeria as a case study in insurgent and counterinsurgent tactics and strategies, operating within the broader context of grand strategy.

Comprehend the effects of the war on French civil-military relations, and vice versa.

Analyze possible lessons learned from the Algerian insurgency and consider their relevance to our operations in Iraq and in the global “war” on terror.

Evaluate the role of French and Algerian strategic-level leadership in creating a climate conducive to torture and terrorism.
Possible Essay Questions:

1. Which elements of the FLN strategy were most effective? Which were the most ineffective? Why?

2. Which elements of the French strategy were most effective and ineffective? Why?

3. What were the primary causes of the French defeat in Algeria? Could they have won?

4. Why did both sides engage in atrocities? What role did senior leaders play in permitting these actions? Why?

5. What overarching lessons should we draw from the French war in Algeria?

Required Readings:


[Trinquier was one of the first counterinsurgency theorists of 1960s whose theories had direct applicability to military operations. Citing lessons from Algeria, his work is generally considered a classic in the genre.]


[Heggoy provides a good overview of both French and Algerian strategy during the insurgency, and the problems faced by each side. He also notes the roles of neutrals and various paramilitary groups in the conflict.]


[Zervoudakis provides an interesting counter-weight to Assaresses’ argument that torture was necessary in Algeria, describing the successful pacification techniques of one battalion the worked with the local population against the insurgency.]


[Told from a unique firsthand perspective, Assaresses’ book created a firestorm when first published with its graphic details of the French interrogation methods used to break the Algerian insurgency. Unrepentant, Assaresses has been a strong advocate for harsh interrogation in the wake of 9/11.]

Recommended readings:


   [RAND reprinted this memoir, which recounts Galula’s experiences as a company commander and deputy battalion commander in the Kabylia District east of Algiers. Strongly recommended.]


**Additional Resources:**


The Cold War emerged out of the Second World War, as two superpowers with very different ideologies developed spheres of influence amidst the postwar wreckage. Competition between the two, with their very different economic systems, domestic government, and approaches to alliances, defined the remainder of the twentieth century. At its most basic level, the Cold War was a fight over the legitimacy of the state, with one side devoted to democracy and free market capitalism, and the other to Communist Party rule and a controlled economy. With the advent of nuclear weapons, this bipolar relationship became literally a balance of terror, with each side easily able to obliterate the other in minutes. The era thus became characterized by indirect proxy wars in the Third World, in addition to periodical direct conflict in the air over Korea, in incidents at sea, in the Cuban missile crisis, and on the periphery of the Soviet Union. In this lesson we will examine the successes, failures and evolution of “containment,” the grand strategy of the United States in the Cold War first devised by George F. Kennan.

Nuclear weapons—or the threat of their use—was a key part of Containment strategy. Nuclear weapons were met by the belief that the evolution of warfare had come to an abrupt halt, that their almost unimaginable destructive power made prior history, theory and strategy anachronistic. Seen from one perspective, nuclear weapons were the ultimate expression of industrial warfare – “just another bullet,” although uniquely deadly, with a justifiable place for them in the arsenals of the world. The countervailing *jus in bellum* argument characterizes them as different *in kind* from any other weapon. Their indiscriminate nature, in other words, outstripped all possible justification for their use. This ethical argument received a realist’s boost in 1949 when the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic weapon. Thereafter, as the two superpowers raced to improve and enlarge their arsenals, as both sides perfected thermonuclear warheads with almost unimaginable destructive potential, as they moved from delivery systems that could respond within hours (manned aircraft) to land- and sea-based missiles that could strike within minutes, it became more and more apparent that they were holding hostage each other’s very survival.

As the mutually destructive heft of the two superpowers increased, the political leaders of both sides instituted tighter and tighter controls over their nuclear arsenals. Increasingly devoted to keeping the Cold War cold, especially after the frightening experience of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the two sides for the most part avoided direct confrontation. As the Soviet Union sought to enlarge its sphere of influence, the U.S. countered with a strategy of containment, and both powers found themselves engaged in a series of limited proxy” wars.

Military strategists were ill-equipped to cope with this state of affairs. Their experience of total, industrialized warfare had “dumbed down” the problem of military strategy to that of being a mere targeting exercise, or so Carl Builder and others have argued. (See the *Icarus Syndrome*.) When the political goal is the annihilation of the enemy regime and state, the relationship between military operations and political objectives is clear-cut. The strategist seeks to connect battles and campaigns together until the enemy signs the unconditional surrender papers. The post-war nuclear world, however, was an ambiguous one where enemies could not be overcome with straightforward military means. Success now depended on deterrence and it had a negative aim (i.e., to ensure that nothing happened). So, under the old paradigm you had “victory”; under the new paradigm, your capacity to
deter was mathematical. It equaled your capability \( X \times \) your intent to use that capability \( X \times \) your opponent’s perception of your willingness to use it.

To cope with these confusing and troubling developments, civilian theorists stepped into the breach and created elaborate theories of nuclear deterrence and a new body of work on limited warfare. These (mostly) civilian thinkers came to dominate the strategic discourse, especially in the U.S. in the mid-twentieth century. Our topic today explores their ideas on deterrence, in both the classic sense, as developed in the 1950s and early 60s, and as the concept assumed different guises thereafter. But there are also two new and particularly troubling areas of concern today, both related to proliferation. First, are nonstate actors who seek to use nuclear weapons (or other so-called weapons of mass destruction) deterrable? Do the elaborate statecentric deterrence theories and strategies developed in the Cold War actually apply to them, or are new concepts now necessary? Second, what is the role of bilateral concepts of deterrence in situations where there are multiple global and regional powers to deter? Are we on the verge of state use of nuclear weapons? What can and should the major powers and/or international institutions do to preclude such an outcome? Does the proliferation of nuclear weapons to new states undermine global stability?

**Objectives:**

Understand classical and current theories of deterrence and assess their applicability in today’s international security environment.

Analyze how nuclear weapons changed strategic thinking about warfare and the utility of military power.

Analyze the relationship between civilian and military leaders in the development of Cold War strategies and theories of deterrence.

**Possible Essay Question:**

According to Liddell Hart, “the object in war is to attain a better peace—even if only from your point of view. Hence it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire.” Did the United States do that in the Cold War?

Have theories of deterrence changed sufficiently to reflect the post-Cold War strategic environment? Explain.

**Required Reading:**

John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, Chapters 2-8, pp. 24-271.

[Gaddis presents the grand strategy of the United States, containment, as an evolving series of vacillating approaches between strong point and perimeter defenses.]

[Suri argues that no one person or factor was responsible for the end of the Cold War. He presents a parsimonious yet comprehensive explanation for the collapse of the Soviet Union.]

**Recommended Reading:**


13. **The Dilemma of Vietnam**  
Thursday, 30 November, 2017

A President searches his mind and his heart for the answers, so that when he decides on a course of action it is in the long-range best interests of the country, its people, and its security. That is what I did—when I was alone and sleepless at night in the Executive Mansion, away from official cables and advisors; when I sat alone in the Aspen Lodge at Camp David; when I walked along the banks of the Pedernales River or looked out over the Texas hill country. In those lonely vigils I tried to think through what would happen to our nation and the world if we did not act with courage and stamina—if we let South Vietnam fall to Hanoi.

---Lyndon Baines Johnson, from *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969*

*It took us eight years of bitter fighting to defeat you French, and you knew the country and had some friendships here. Now the South Vietnamese regime is well-armed and helped by the Americans. The Americans are much stronger than the French, though they know us less well. It may perhaps take ten years to do it, but our heroic compatriots in the South will defeat them in the end.*  
---Ho Chi Minh to Bernard Fall, 1962

*Every quantitative measurement we have shows that we are winning this war.*  
---Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, 1966

Shortly after President George H. W. Bush announced a cease-fire in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, he proclaimed, “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all.” The legacy of the Vietnam War played a large role in how the United States approached the initial conflict against Saddam Hussein, and memories of the eight-year struggle in Southeast Asia have continued to shape America’s strategic outlook. Comparisons between Vietnam and Afghanistan, or Vietnam and Iraq, are frequently made today, indicating that the syndrome that the first President Bush referenced may not have been kicked all that far. Given that our wars since Vietnam have been distinctly irregular (or have devolved into such), Vietnam remains highly relevant to the strategist today.

In strictly numerical terms, the Vietnam War cost the United States more than 58,000 lives and 150 billion dollars. Yet those costs do not really begin to measure the war’s true toll on this country. Vietnam, for the American military, American political leaders, and the American people was a watershed event that continues to shape the nation’s domestic and foreign policy.

What kind of war was Vietnam, and why did American political leaders believe that the United States had to fight there? Multiple classifications suit the conflict—it was a civil war, an insurgency, and a Cold War clash—and that Cold War mindset, focused on the policy of containment, was a key reason for America’s involvement. President Lyndon Johnson’s quote above from his memoirs reveals much about why he thought the US had to act in Vietnam. Many of his advisors agreed with that assessment, although opinions varied regarding how America should intervene.

“How to intervene” was a particularly thorny proposition for the President, because he had strong concerns besides stopping the advance of communism in Vietnam. Johnson’s priority was domestic
affairs—in particular, improving the plight of America’s poor and underprivileged through his “Great Society” programs. This emphasis caused Johnson to downplay US actions in Vietnam to keep the public’s attention focused on domestic social reform; he believed that highlighting America’s Vietnam involvement would cause the public (and Congress) to emphasize spending for troops in harm’s way instead of his social programs. Thus, the President faced a tortured personal dilemma—how to accomplish both goals simultaneously. He later stated:

“I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs. All my hopes to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. All my dreams to provide education and medical care to the browns and the blacks and the lame and the poor. But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser, and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe.” (Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Signet, 1976), p. 263)

By the summer of 1965, however, South Vietnam was in serious danger of falling to Viet Cong insurgents and their North Vietnamese allies. Despite beginning Operation Rolling Thunder, the sustained bombing of North Vietnam, in March 1965, and expanding America’s ground troop presence to 75,000 men, the Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam, the ARVN, appeared incapable of halting the increasing tide of enemy resistance. Thus, at the end of July, Johnson convened a meeting of his key advisors to determine the course of action for the United States in Vietnam.

“Clausewitz 101” states: “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.” As basic as that principle is, American political and military leaders had trouble defining—and convincing others—as to the kind of war that they waged in Southeast Asia. The US military, particularly the US Army, never came to grips with the strategy of its enemy, focusing instead on the tactical elements of the fight. Generals argued that American units should concentrate on the expanding North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in the South, rather than on the indigenous Viet Cong guerrilla force, which could be left to Special Forces and South Vietnamese troops. They were confident that despite the NVA’s combat prowess, American advantages in firepower could destroy the North’s manpower until the North Vietnamese could no longer fight. The result of this mindset was starkly revealed by the well-known exchange between American Colonel Harry Summers and his North Vietnamese counterpart after the fall of Saigon in 1975: “You know, you never defeated us on the battlefield,” said Summers. “That may be so,” the NVA colonel replied, “but it is also irrelevant.”

For most of the war during the Johnson presidency, the NVA as well as the VC waged a classic guerrilla campaign that required virtually no outside logistical support. That changed during the conventional fighting of the 1968 Tet Offensive, but the change was a brief one, and until the March 1972 Easter Offensive, the NVA again reverted to guerrilla warfare—Tet had decimated the leadership cadres of the VC and severely damaged the VC’s viability as a fighting force. The character of the war, in terms of how the enemy fought, made a dramatic difference in the ability of the US and ARVN to achieve success.

So too did the nature of the government in South Vietnam. The Saigon regime, which the United States had endorsed since Vietnam’s partition into North and South in 1954, was fundamentally corrupt and out of touch with its populace; its key element that garnered US backing was its adamant opposition to communism. Pacification efforts to win “hearts and minds” accordingly had varying degrees of success,
and the effort to secure Lyndon Johnson’s goal of a “stable, independent, non-communist South Vietnam” was consistently challenged by the quality of the government that America endorsed.

For American military leaders charged with translating political goals into military objectives, the war proved enormously difficult. A multitude of political constraints on military operations increased the friction inherent in wartime civil-military relations. All proved incapable of devising a formula that would produce “victory.” Indeed, the American notion of victory changed during the conflict, and proved extremely difficult to define for both the American public and those in uniform charged with achieving it. In the end, the public chose to define success by the number of American troops deployed and the number who had died; the fact that the US consistently won the weekly “body count” against the NVA and the VC had no resonance for Americans back home. Ultimately, 58,000 Americans made the supreme sacrifice, 300,000 more were physically wounded, and countless others were mentally maimed. For the Vietnamese collectively, the war claimed 1 million dead and 3 million wounded out of a total population of 40 million. The magnitude of such losses, highlighting the complexity of war, assures that the Vietnam Syndrome will endure for many years to come.

Objectives:

- Evaluate the application of military power during the early stages of America’s Vietnam War in light of the theories studied thus far.
- Identify Vietnam’s legacies that continue to have relevance for the way in which the United States approaches war in the twenty-first century.
- Critique the role of senior US political and military leaders in designing and implementing strategy during the conflict.

Possible Essay Questions:

1. From the US perspective, what were the fundamental assumptions about the type of war waged and the aims of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese? What was/were their center(s) of gravity? Were the center(s) of gravity the same for the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese? Why or why not? Which enemy was most important?

2. In July 1965, what would you have selected as military objectives for American—and ARVN—forces? How would you have achieved them? What other instruments of power, if any, would you have used in concert with military force?

3. From the Viet Cong perspective, what were the fundamental assumptions about the type of war waged and the aims of the United States? What was/were the US center(s) of gravity? In July 1965, what would you have selected as military objectives for the VC? How would you achieve them?

4. What elements of North Vietnamese strategy were most effective? Which were most ineffective? Why?

5. What elements of US strategy in Vietnam were most effective and ineffective? Why? What fundamental assumptions underpinning US strategy were fundamentally flawed? Were American political and military leaders guilty of “crossing the Rubicon” in their thinking?
6. How long did American leaders perceive that it would take their strategy to produce success? What role should the time element have played in the design of US strategy?

7. What were the most significant legacies of Vietnam in terms of US military thought and practice? Are there any lessons to draw from Vietnam for current-day counterinsurgency efforts? Are there any to be avoided?

Required Readings (70 Pgs):


PART FOUR: *Grand Strategy for the 21st Century*

14. 9/11 and the ‘Global War on Terrorism’: Every War Must End?
Thursday, 7 December, 2017

*The object of war is to establish a better peace – even if only from your own point of view. Hence it is essential to conduct war with a constant regard to the peace you desire.*

*B. H. Liddell Hart*¹¹

*It is the way in which a war is brought to an end that has the most decisive long-term impact.*

*Fred C. Iklé*¹²

As we come to the end of this course, let us pause and review for a moment our objectives that we set out in lesson one: to use the traditional tools of history and theory to gain an in-depth understanding of past effective and ineffective grand strategies. While this has largely been done through the eyes of conflict, we must remember that, in Sun Zi’s words, “war is of utmost importance to the State.” As a global superpower—and the United States most certainly is a superpower—we must always be ready for conflict. That being said, a successful grand strategy is not necessarily one that leads to victory in war, but one that can avoid war while still achieving its ends.

In the modern era, this can be difficult, not for the least of reasons that “war” in the aftermath of 9/11 may have lost its classical meaning. Are we “at war” against global insurgencies as the post-9/11 “GWOT” would have us believe? Are drone strikes, conducted globally, a “war?” And perhaps most importantly, how does such a “war” (if indeed it is one) end? We focus a great deal in our theoretical strategic frameworks on the question of objectives, usually arguing that they must be closely aligned with national interests if states are to initiate the use of force—i.e., go to war. Carl von Clausewitz also focuses on the theoretical importance of limited and unlimited objectives in *On War*; these are hardly new concepts. But ending a war is another matter. Thucydides lamented a common refrain that immeasurable human passion often called for “just one more battle” in the pursuit of victory, which in turn moved further from one’s grasp.

Today war termination is perhaps more difficult. Reflecting the evolving nature of the state and the international context, war has evolved to a point where it is not the “on” or “off” phenomenon that it has been in some earlier eras. The questions we face are not merely well-defined issues related to changing (or disappearing) rituals of surrender, improving the military’s ability to handle “phase four” operations, enhancing the roles

of civilian personnel, and supporting post-conflict stability and reconstruction—as important as all of those challenges are. They are actually even more fundamental than that. Is the purpose of war to create a better peace? What does peace mean today? How can we tell when “war” has ended and “peace” has begun? Is “stability” an objective that can be factored into a conflict before it is begun? And if stability becomes the goal in the wake of a conflict, how do we judge (or affect) the legitimacy of the state that is left behind?

Armed with the knowledge you’ve gained in this course, tonight’s discussion will focus on the modern era, specifically your final essay question:

If grand strategy is looking beyond the war to the nature of the peace, what is the grand strategy of the United States and its allies today? What should it be?

**Objectives:**

To review and summarize the major concepts and cases studied in this course.

Discuss the relationship between war and peace in the 21st century and its practical implications for strategy and the use of military force.

To determine the relevance of grand strategy for the current ‘Global War on Terrorism’.

To formulate a grand strategy for the United States (or any other major power), integrating all the instruments of power (diplomacy, military, economic, etc.) on the basis of the history, theory and strategic concepts analyzed in this course.

What is the grand strategy of China, Russia, Brazil, India, or any other major power today? What should it be?

Does Thucydides’ *The Peloponnesian War*, Clausewitz’s *On War*, or Sun Zi’s *Art of War* (choose one) provide insights regarding war termination that are directly relevant to current American conflicts? Be specific.

Is grand strategy a useful concept for the US ‘Global War on Terrorism’? If it is, explain specifically how. If it is not, explain why not—and what concept or strategic framework would be better suited instead.

**Required Reading:**


Recommended Reading:


