Foundations of Security Studies

Spring 2021
Wednesdays 7:20-10:00 PM
On Line via Zoom

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Course description
This course will provide an overview of key defense concepts and introduces a selection of the most cited and influential works in security studies. The initial few class sessions will introduce students to several influential military concepts that will be examined in greater detail via the readings. Some of the books that will be used in the course are classics that are literally centuries old. Others are recent modern works. Once students complete this course they will have an in-depth understanding of the theories that form the intellectual basis for security studies.

Goals
This course will help you develop:
1. An appreciation of the intellectual origins, substance, and key aspects of security studies.
2. An understanding of several important military concepts.
3. A working knowledge of the foundational theories and concepts of security studies.

4. An informed opinion about the degrees to which a number of classical theories and concepts are still relevant.

**Content and structure of the course**

This seminar is organized around several overarching issues:

- What does it mean to study security issues?
- What does it mean for countries and non-state actors to act and compete strategically?
- What are some of the most important military concepts the security studies students should be familiar with?
- Why do states go to war?
- How do states generate and employ military power?
- How do militaries develop concepts and innovate?

The first several class sessions (classes 1-4) will consist primarily of lecture and discussion on military concepts and security studies. To prepare for class sessions 2, 3, and 4, students will be assigned on-line readings.

Starting on Week 5 a different book will be covered each class session. On those evenings there will be a lecture lasting roughly one hour. That lecture will be related to the main focus of the book that will be discussed that class session. Following a break, a group of students will lead the discussion of that evening’s book. The group of students will have approximately 30 minutes to review key aspects of the book, the main topics and themes, the techniques the author used, and a critique of the work. The final 30 minutes of the class will be a group discussion of that week’s book by the entire class.

Based on the number of students in the course, the size of the groups will vary from 2 to 4. At the start of Class # 2, students will indicate their preference of books and final assignments will be made at the start of week 3. The first presentation will be made in class number 5.
This course will be conducted via Zoom. When group assignments are made the groups will coordinate in whatever manner they deem appropriate: in person meetings (please follow safety protocols) and/or setting up their own groups video sessions to coordinate their presentations. When it is a group’s turn to do their presentation, Zoom will be used to give the presentation to the entire class.

Course requirements and grading

Since *Foundations of Security Studies* is required by both Masters and PhD students, there are different assignments for each. However, all students will do the same readings.

Masters students

- Three writing assignments, each of 1,000 - 1,500 words (approximately 3-4 pages) on one of the books found on the syllabus. Students will describe and assess the core argument(s) the author is making, including the evidence the author uses. The merits of the book will then be described, including the applicability of the work to today's security studies field. Outside research is not required beyond reading the book that is selected.

- All students will write their first essay on John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. This essay will be due at the start of Class 5. Students will be provided feedback on the first essay during Class 6.

- The remaining two essays can be done on any other books on the syllabus. The second essay will be due on week 8 and the third and final essay will be due on week 12. All essays must be turned in by the start of that class session. Papers will be e-mailed, but you can submit a hard copy in class in addition to the electronic copy.

- Each of the three papers should be e-mailed to: jgordon@rand.org. Use the following convention to title each paper: YOUR NAME__GOVT 744__PAPER #.

- Late papers will be penalized one grade for each day they are late. For example, a paper due on Tuesday that is not turned in until Thursday would be reduced from an A to a B+.
• In class group book presentation grades will be based on (1) the degree of knowledge the students have of the material, (2) the clarity of the presentation, (3) the quality of the assessment of the author's work.

• Participation. Students should come to class prepared by having read the week's material. The participation grade will be based on (1) class attendance, and (2) the amount of effort the student has made in contributing to the in-class discussions of the week's material.

• Masters grades will be computed as follows:
  o Each of the three 1,500 word papers: 20 % (total 60%)
  o The in-class group presentation: 30 %
  o Participation: 10 %

• The intent is to retain the group presentations whether the course is conducted in the classroom or via Zoom.

PhD students

• Writing assignment. PhD students will write a 5,000 word literature review of one of the defense/security topics covered in the course (e.g. air power concepts, or nuclear weapons theory). The proposed topic for the paper will be provided to the professor no later than the start of class 4 for approval.

• Writing guidelines:
  o Outside research above-and-beyond the material covered in the course will be required.
  o Write the literature review as if you intended to submit the paper to a scholarly journal such as *International Security* or *International Organizations*. Use actual scholarly literature reviews as an example for your paper. Use footnotes and bibliography to highlight why and from where you are reaching your conclusions.
  o Evaluate the literature you have examined for your topic, highlight key aspects of the literature you consulted, and comment on the main themes (some of which may be conflicting) you encountered. Feel
free to comment on apparent adequacy of the literature, or lack there of (including biases).

- You should consult at least five sources on the topic you select. At least three of those should be book-length works. The remainder can be articles found in professional journals.
- The literature review will be due on 18 December, during exam week. Papers will be submitted via e-mail to the professor’s listed e-mail address.

- Grading for PhD students will be as follows:
  - Literature review: 60%
  - In-class group presentation: 30%
  - Participation: 10%

**Required books**

- Karl von Clausewitz *On War*
- Stephen Biddle *Military Power, Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*
- Barry Buzan and Lene Hanson *The Evolution of International Security Studies*
- Julian Corbett *Principles of Maritime Strategy*
- John Mearsheimer *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*
- Robert Pape *Bombing to Win*
- Stephen Rosen *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*
- Mao Ze-Dung *On Guerilla Warfare*
- Toshi Yoshihara *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age*
Weekly Schedule:

Class 1: Course introduction
The purpose of the course and the plan for the semester will be reviewed. A framework for discussion and learning during the course will be discussed.

Assignment:

Prior to attending class students should read Stephen M. Walt’s *The Renaissance of Security Studies*, [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8833%28199106%2935%3A2%3C211%3ATROSS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8833%28199106%2935%3A2%3C211%3ATROSS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4)

Class 2: Overview of key military concepts
Several of the weekly readings will deal with important land, maritime, and air power theories and concepts. This class session will serve as a preview to those readings and acquaint students with several important military ideas that have influenced security theory, actual strategic and operational planning, and the development of ideas about the nature of conflict and warfare.

Assignment:

“This is the Airpower Theory that the Air Force Needs”, [https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/airpower-theorist-air-force-needs-and-already-has-44697](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/airpower-theorist-air-force-needs-and-already-has-44697)


Class 3: Clausewitz’s On War
Karl von Clausewitz’s 1832, *On War*, is still regarded as a one of the classic works on military theory and the relationship of strategy and military operations. In this class
we will review some of the key concepts in *On War* as well as discussing the applicability of the document in today’s world.

**Assignment:**

Clausewitz, *On War*, Books 2&2, pp. 75 – 182 and Book 8, pp. 577 – 610

“Clausewitz and the New Wars Scholars”,
https://www.clausewitz.com/opencourseware/Schuurman-NewWars.pdf

**Class 4: The Future of Conflict and Warfare**

Throughout history military leaders and civilian theorists have tried to determine what the future of conflict will look like. In this class we will examine some of the key ideas about the nature of future warfare such as “Hybrid Warfare” and “Revolutions in Military Affairs”.

**Assignment:**


“Robots, Soldiers, and Cyborgs: The Future of Warfare”,

**Class 5: John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics**

This class will be the first of the book discussions and in-class presentations.

*First essay due for Masters students*

**Class 6:** Buzan and Hanson, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*

**Class 7:** Stephen Biddle, *Military Power, Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*

**Class 8:** Julian Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*
Class 9: Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win*

*Second essay due for Masters students*

Class 10: Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*

Class 11: Mao Ze-Dung, *On Guerilla Warfare*

Class 12: Toshi Yoshihara, *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age*

Class 13: Review of military concepts and theories covered in the readings

This class will be a review and group discussion of all the theories discussed in the readings.

Class 14: Course conclusion

The key learning objectives of the semester will be reviewed.

*Third essay due for Masters students*

**Analytical Writing**

For purposes of scholarly writing it is important to write analytically. Analytic writing is more than merely describing what others have said or describing institutions of government or public policy making (though description is often an essential aspect of analysis). Analysis involves more. In analysis you are asking and answering questions about the causes and consequences of whatever you are examining. You are seeking explanations for behavior. You are developing categories and frameworks that will help us understand political behavior and generalize insights from one case to other cases.

When analyzing scholarly writing: Engage different ideas. Show how they differ and where they agree. Compare and contrast. Contrast different methods of understanding a phenomenon. What different types of evidence are adduced to make a point? Contrast different perspectives or approaches to a topic. Judge whether the reasoning is valid. Does the author’s evidence support the conclusion of the article?

In Writing an Essay, remember: The introduction should say what the paper is about and how you will approach the topic. The paper should address one central question and have a thesis. The paper should be organized logically, with an evident
structure. The reader should be told how each part of the paper is related to the other parts. Use subheadings to label different sections. Outline your paper after it is written to see if it flows logically. Proofread your paper for spelling and syntax. Be sure to cite all of your sources and use quotation marks when you use another's words.

Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Schar School of Policy and Government. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined. Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the Schar School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the school policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Citations for Research Papers

The purposes of scholarly citations are several:

1) To show the source for a direct quote or fact not commonly known.
2) To give credit for an idea to the author of a work
To show the reader that you are familiar with other scholarship on your topic or to indicate where further information or analysis can be found.

You may also use endnotes to explain something in the text or comment on the source. The intention is to give the reader enough information to find the source you are using so that he or she can see if you have quoted it correctly, interpreted it soundly, done justice to the author cited, or do further research on the topic in question themselves.

Format: use the standard Chicago Manual of Style format, also known as “Turabian.” (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), or most recent edition.

**Books:** author, title (place of publication: publisher, date), page number(s). [Titles of books should be in italics or underlined.] Example:


**Articles:** author, title, name of journal (volume, number), page number(s). [Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks, names of journals underlined or in italics.] Example:


After first full citation, you may use a shortened version:


**Chapters in edited Books:** author of chapter (or article), title of chapter, “in” editor of book, title of book (place and date of publication), page numbers. Example:


**Web Site Citations:** In addition to author, title, etc, include the following information: Who put up the site, full URL, date of access.

**End Notes:** Number endnotes consecutively for the whole paper, with each note referring to the number in the text with the number in superscript or parentheses. Endnote numbers should be placed at the end of the sentence containing the information being cited. A bibliography of all the sources used in the paper along with other useful sources may be useful or required.
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

**Office Hours:** By appointment