

Strategies for Modern Warfare
PSCI / IS-3135

Department of Political Science
Virginia Tech
Spring 2018

Paul Avey

Course Information

Course Time: MWF 10:10 – 11:00 AM

Course Room: 318 McBryde Hall

Contact Information

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Office Hours: MW 11:15 – 12:15 and by appointment

Teaching Assistant

Course Description

This course explores conventional military strategy and organization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Students will apply social scientific tools to understand modern warfare. The goal is not to learn how to fight a war but to better understand the use of force in the modern era. Modern wars have killed hundreds of thousands, even millions and seen the destruction of states and empires. Deterring and preventing such conflagrations is understandably at the center of many states' foreign and national security policies. It is therefore important to have an understanding of modern warfare in order to better inform, evaluate, and critique these policies.

The course is divided into five overlapping sections. Part I begins with a discussion on the study and nature of war and strategy. In Part II, the course turns to evaluating the core operational and tactical elements of modern mid- and high-intensity land warfare. Part III examines variation in combat effectiveness across countries. In Part IV, we explore the role of strategic air power in compelling adversaries. Part V examines debates surrounding American strategy and operational planning in the twenty-first century.

Grading

There are 200 total points in the class. Grades are based on attendance, two homework assignments, group presentation, group workshop, film questionnaires, midterm exam, and final exam. Any late assignments will automatically lose 10% of the grade for each day that it is late. There are no extensions for any assignment except in the case of documented health or family emergencies. If you are not able to come to class the day an assignment is due for any reason that you know of in advance, including excused absences for athletics, religious holidays, etc., you must turn that assignment in *prior* to that class period.

Class Attendance (15 points)

I will take attendance each class. Students earn ½ a point for every class they attend up to 15 points. You do not lose points for missing a class, but can only earn points by attending.

Group Presentations (30 points)

Each student will be assigned to one of ten groups. Each group will present a set of cases from the assigned readings. Grades will be partially based on overall group performance (25 points) and individual performance (5 points). That means that every member of the group needs to be involved during the presentation. If you are not present during your group presentation you cannot receive credit for the individual performance. If you know that you will be absent on particular days in the semester you must inform me and I will assign you to a group that does not present on that day. If the group decides that a group member is not participating they should inform me immediately. If the group is unanimous that one student is not participating, then that student will not receive credit for the group portion of the grade.

The presentation should focus on communicating the basics of the case(s) under review, how that fits into the author's broader argument, as well as your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the case. Students are encouraged to incorporate visuals and outlines through presentation tools such as PowerPoint during their presentation. On the day of the presentation the group will also hand in a 2-3-page paper summarizing the key points they will make in the presentation.

Note that the group presentations require detailed reading of multiple chapters or articles. That means frequently 50-100 pages of material to cover. I strongly encourage groups to begin to meet at least two weeks in advance to begin preparing their presentation.

Film Questionnaires (10 points each – 20 points total)

We will watch two films during the class. I will hand out a short questionnaire at the start of each film. The questionnaires will be worth 10 points each. If you are unable to watch the film during class you will be responsible for watching the film on your own, including purchasing the film if necessary.

Homework (10 points and 5 points each – 15 points total)

There are two short homework assignments that will cover material in the readings and lectures. Details on the assignments will be discussed when they are distributed.

Workshop Homework (5 points)

There is one group workshop during the semester that will assign a Tactical Decision Game to your group. The group will be responsible for completing the game and a 1-2-page summary explaining your decisions. Each member of the group will receive the same grade.

Midterm Exam (40 points)

The midterm exam is a closed book and closed note exam that contains fill in the blank questions, short identification questions, and one essay question. It will cover material from Part 1 and 2 of the course, including material presented by your peers during their group presentations.

Final Exam (75 points)

The final exam is a closed book and closed not exam that contains fill in the blank questions, short identification questions, and two essay questions. The final exam is cumulative but will be weighted toward material covered in the second half (Parts 3-5) of the course.

Please note that students must take the final exam at the assigned time. University policy allows two general exceptions. First: "Students with conflicting examinations or with more than two examinations in 24 hours may reschedule an examination. Arrangements must be made with the instructor and permission obtained from the student's college dean." The deadline for rescheduling is Friday, April 13. If you have not received permission from the dean of your college by that date, then you cannot reschedule the final for this class even if you have two other finals within twenty-four hours. Pay attention to final times and plan ahead. Second, in the event of a documented serious illness or circumstances beyond your control such as a family emergency or government order, students may reschedule the final. Please note that I require the student to provide documentation of the illness, emergency, or order. Wanting to leave the semester early, travelling for personal reasons, holidays, weddings, graduations, Star Wars parties (the final is on May 4th) etc., do not constitute an emergency. It is your responsibility to make other arrangements. If you cannot make other arrangements, then you will not be able to take the final exam. You may not be able to do everything you like and will need to prioritize accordingly, including not taking this course if you value the other activity more. Details on university finals policy and important dates are available at: <http://www.policies.vt.edu/6810.pdf>; and <https://registrar.vt.edu/dates-deadlines-accordion/index1/Spring-2018.html>.

Required Reading

The following books are required and are available at the University Bookstore or through online distributors such as Amazon.

Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)

Jasen J. Castillo, *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014)

Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate Over US Military Strategy in Asia* (London: IISS, 2014)

John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996)

Dianne Pfundstein-Chamberlain, *Cheap Threats: Why the United States Struggles to Coerce Weak States* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016)

Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015)

Additional readings marked with an * are available on the Canvas course webpage. You can access Canvas at <https://vt.instructure.com/> or vial the Quick Links tab on the Virginia Tech homepage. To access the readings, click on the Files tab and open the Class Readings folder.

A note on the readings. We will be reading seven books throughout the course of the semester in addition to articles and chapter selections from other books. In some weeks we will cover an entire book, meaning that you will be reading an entire book in one seven-day period. Plan ahead as necessary; DO NOT wait

and try to read multiple books and articles in the days before an exam. That is a recipe to do poorly and not at all necessary with a little bit of planning.

Academic Integrity

All students must abide by the Virginia Tech Honor Code.

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states: “As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.” Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit: <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/> Please note that I take academic integrity very seriously and pursue all avenues if I detect violations.

Computer Policy

I do not allow the use of laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices during class. There is growing evidence that electronic devices hinder learning for yourself and for those around you. First, recent research has shown that students taking longhand notes do better on conceptual questions than those taking notes on laptops. Second, not surprisingly, there is a tendency for anyone to multitask by checking email, watching videos, reading websites, etc. I’m guilty of this myself in meetings. Unfortunately, this sort of multitasking inhibits your learning. Third, and perhaps most importantly, use of a laptop or tablet can distract those around you and inhibit their learning. For discussion on these points see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2014/08/26/ditch-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen-class-researchers-say-its-better-for-note-taking/>; AND <http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2014/08/25/why-im-asking-you-not-to-use-laptops/>; AND <http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/02/opinion/leave-your-laptops-at-the-door-to-my-classroom.html>

Students with Disabilities

I am strongly committed to working with students who have any disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure that they are able to fully participate in class activities. If you feel you require reasonable accommodations please follow the process outlined by the Services for Students with Disabilities office, at: <http://www.ssd.vt.edu/>.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I. Introduction

January 17 (W)	Class 1	Introduction
January 19 (F)	Class 2	War
January 22 (M)	Class 3	Strategy and Force, I
January 24 (W)	Class 4	Strategy and Force, II
January 26 (F)	Class 5	Civil-Military Relations
January 29 (M)	Class 6	Air-Ground Forces

Part II. Land Warfare

January 31 (W)	Class 7	Continental Land Warfare, I
February 2 (F)	Class 8	Continental Land Warfare, II
February 5 (M)	Class 9	Continental Land Warfare: World Wars
February 7 (W)	Class 10	Continental Land Warfare: Gulf War
February 9 (F)	Class 11	Continental Land Warfare: 21 st Century
February 12 (M)	Class 12	Film - <i>Stalingrad</i>
February 14 (W)	Class 13	Film - <i>Stalingrad</i>
February 16 (F)	Class 14	Film - <i>Stalingrad</i>
February 19 (M)	Class 15	Conventional Deterrence
February 21 (W)	Class 16	Conventional Deterrence: World War II
February 23 (F)	Class 17	Conventional Deterrence: Postwar
February 26 (M)	Class 18	Midterm
February 28 (W)	Class 19	Workshop, I
March 2 – 9 (F-F)	No Class	<i>Spring Break</i>
March 12 (M)	Snow Day	Class Cancelled due to Weather

Part III. Sources of Combat Effectiveness

March 14 (W)	Class 20	Workshop, II
March 16 (F)	Class 21	Combat and Authoritarian Regimes
March 19 (M)	Class 22	Combat and Authoritarian Regimes: Vietnam
March 21 (W)	Class 23	Combat and Authoritarian Regimes: Iran-Iraq War
March 23 (F)	Class 24	Military Cohesion
March 26 (M)	Class 25	Military Cohesion: World War II
March 28 (W)	Class 26	Military Cohesion: Vietnam

Part IV. Air Power and Compellence

March 30 (F)	Class 27	Air Power
April 2 (M)	Class 28	Film – <i>Twelve O’Clock High</i>
April 4 (W)	Class 29	Film – <i>Twelve O’Clock High</i>
April 6 (F)	Class 30	Film – <i>Twelve O’Clock High</i>
April 9 (M)	Class 31	Air Power: World War II
April 11 (W)	Class 32	Air Power: Korea and Vietnam
April 13 (F)	Class 33	Air Power: Gulf War
April 16 (M)	Class 34	Air Power: Kosovo
April 18 (W)	Class 35	Compellence

April 20 (F) Class 36 Compellence: Iraq

Part V. Power Projection and 21st Century Great Power Conflict

April 23 (M) Class 37 Command of the Commons

April 25 (W) Class 38 Air-Sea Battle, I

April 27 (F) Class 39 Air-Sea Battle, II

April 30 (M) Class 40 Inadvertent Escalation

May 2 (W) Class 41 Open Day

May 4 (F) Final Exam 1:05 – 3:05 PM

COURSE READING SCHEDULE

January 17 (W) Class 1. Introduction

- No Reading

January 19 (F) Class 2. War

- * Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret (trans.), pages 75-89
 - NOTE: Please use the Howard and Paret version on Canvas even if you have another translation.

January 22 (M) Class 3. Strategy and Force, I

- * Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pages 3-9
- * Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3-28

January 24 (W) Class 4. Strategy and Force, II

- * Excerpts from Robert J. Art “To What Ends Military Power?” and Terence Roehrig, “Deterrence.”

January 26 (F) Class 5. Civil-Military Relations

- * Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist No. 8: Consequences of Wars Between the States,” (November 1787)
- * Michael C. Desch, “Bush and the Generals,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (May-June 2007), 97-108
- * [Spoiler Alert - Optional] Theo Milonopoulos, “Clausewitz as the Last Jedi? Culminating Points of Victory, Civil-Military Relations, and Strategy in Star Wars,” *War on the Rocks* (December 2017), <https://warontherocks.com/2017/12/clausewitz-last-jedi-culminating-points-victory-civil-military-relations-strategy-star-wars/>

January 29 (M) Class 6. Air-Ground Forces

- No reading
- Homework 1 distributed during class

PART II: Land Warfare

January 31 (W) Class 7. Continental Land Warfare, I

- Biddle, *Military Power*, pages 1-13, 28-51

February 2 (F) Class 8. Continental Land Warfare, II

- Biddle, *Military Power*, pages 52-77
- Homework 1 due at the start of class

February 5 (M) Class 9. Continental Land Warfare: World Wars

- Biddle, *Military Power*, pages 78-131
- Group 1 Presentation

February 7 (W) Class 10. Continental Land Warfare: Gulf War

- Biddle, *Military Power*, pages 132-149, 181-190
- Group 2 Presentation

February 9 (F) Class 11. Continental Land Warfare: 21st Century

- Stephen D. Biddle, “Speed Kills: Reevaluating the Role of Speed, Precision, and Situation Awareness in the Fall of Saddam,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (February 2007), pages 3-46

February 12 (M) Class 12. Film - *Stalingrad*

- No reading
- Begin film during class
- Film questionnaire handed out at start of class

February 14 (W) Class 13. Film - *Stalingrad*

- No reading
- Continue film during class

February 16 (F) Class 14. Film – *Stalingrad*

- No reading
- Finish film during class

February 19 (M) Class 15. Conventional Deterrence

- Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pages 13-66
- Film questionnaire due at start of class

February 21 (W) Class 16. Conventional Deterrence: World War II

- Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pages 67-133
- Group 3 Presentation

February 23 (F) Class 17. Conventional Deterrence: Postwar

- Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, pages 134-188

February 26 (M) Class 18. Midterm

- Exam during class
- No Reading

February 28 (W) Class 19. Workshop, I

- E.D. Swinton, “The Defence of Duffer’s Drift,” in *Journal of the United States Infantry Association*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1905), pages 139-182
- Tactical assignment handed out at start of class

March 2 – 9 No Class: *Spring Break*

March 12 (M) Class 20. Workshop, II

- No Reading
- Tactical assignment due at start of class

PART III: Sources of Combat Effectiveness

March 14 (W) Class 21. Combat and Authoritarian Regimes

- Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army*, pages 1-40

March 16 (F) Class 22. Combat and Authoritarian Regimes: Vietnam War

- Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army*, pages 41-138
- Group 4 Presentation

March 19 (M) Class 23. Combat and Authoritarian Regimes: Iran-Iraq War

- Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army*, pages 139-232
- Group 5 Presentation

March 21 (W) Class 24. Military Cohesion

- Castillo, *Endurance and War*, pages 1-43

March 23 (F) Class 25. Military Cohesion World War II

- Castillo, *Endurance and War*, pages 44-140
- Group 6 Presentation

March 26 (M) Class 26. Vietnam War

- Castillo, *Endurance and War*, pages 164-215
- Group 7 Presentation

PART IV: Air Power and Compellence

March 28 (W) Class 27. Air Power

- Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pages 12-86

March 30 (F) Class 28. Film – *Twelve O'Clock High*

- No reading
- Begin film during class
- Film questionnaire handed out at start of class

April 2 (M) Class 29. Film – *Twelve O'Clock High*

- No reading
- Begin film during class

April 4 (W) Class 30. Film – *Twelve O'Clock High*

- No reading
- Continue film during class

April 6 (F) Class 31. Air Power: World War II

- Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pages 87-136, 254-313
- Film questionnaire due at start of class
- Group 8 Presentation

April 9 (M) Class 32. Air Power: Korea and Vietnam

- Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pages 137-210
- Group 9 Presentation

April 11 (W) Class 33. Air Power: Gulf War

- Pape, *Bombing to Win*, pages 211-253
- Daryl G. Press, “The Myth of Air Power in the Persian Gulf War and the Future of Warfare,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pages 5-44
- Group 10 Presentation

April 13 (F) Class 34. Air Power: Kosovo

- Andrew L. Stigler, “A Clear Victory for Air Power: NATO’s Empty Threat to Invade Kosovo,” *International Security* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Winter 2002/03), pages 124-157

April 16 (M) Class 35. Compellence, I

- Pfundstein-Chamberlain, *Cheap Threats*, pages 19-94

April 18 (W) Class 36. Compellence, II

- Pfundstein-Chamberlain, *Cheap Threats*, pages 123-147

April 20 (F) Class 37. Compellence: Iraq

- Pfundstein-Chamberlain, *Cheap Threats*, pages 148-212
- Homework 2 distributed at start of class

PART V: Power Projection and 21st Century Great Power Conflict

April 23 (M) Class 38. Command of the Commons

- * Barry R. Posen, “Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony,” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer 2003), pages 5-46

April 25 (W) Class 39. Air-Sea Battle, I

- Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, pages 11-72

April 27 (F) Class 40. Air-Sea Battle, II

- Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, pages 73-152
- Homework 2 due at start of class

April 29 (M) Class 41. Inadvertent Escalation

- * Caitlin Talmadge, “Assessing The Risk of Chinese Nuclear Escalation in a Conventional War with the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Spring 2017), 50-92

May 1 (W) Class 42. Open Day

- No reading

May 4 (F): Final Exam. 1:05-3:05pm.