

War and International Security
POLS 364-91, Summer 2014
Eight-Week Session (6/16-8/7)

Professor Brian Smith
All Online: Course will be conducted via Canvas
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course aims at giving students an understanding of basic concepts in grand strategy, war, and diplomacy, largely via a study of strategic history and international relations since the 19th century. By studying the concepts and practices at the hard edge of international politics, students will acquire an understanding of the forces that shape global peace and conflict. Along the way, they will sharpen their critical reading and writing skills, preparing them for more advanced coursework in political science and other allied disciplines.

Course Goals

Students will improve their ability to interpret texts as well as enhance their written and verbal expression. They will also refine their understanding of important issues in international politics and various prominent attempts to grapple with them. Knowledge of these ideas and their consequences will help prepare students for more advanced courses in political science.

Course Expectations

First and most importantly: Read this syllabus carefully. Clearly understanding the class requirements will save us all trouble later.

I will post a weekly power-point lecture by Sunday evening each week of the course. The lecture will primarily focus on helping you consider the readings and some of the broader implications that flow from them.

The discussion of each week's readings will open on Monday. Students can and should contribute to the online discussion as it unfolds by Thursday. While these contributions will not receive an individual grade, I will be checking to ensure you participate and advise you if you are not participating enough (or seriously) in the first couple weeks of class. Every Friday but the last, one short paper (1-2 pages) will be due in response to the questions. I will attempt to have written comments on your writing each week by Tuesday.

As this is an online class, timely and active participation on the discussion board each week will be important to refining your understanding of each text and thinking through its applications to international politics. This participation is required and will count for 35% of the final grade. On average, in order that it actually become a discussion forum rather than an isolated set of monologues, I ask that students make a minimum of one or two comments per week to the

unfolding conversation. Thoughtful questions to others count as a form of participation. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions. Expect to be challenged, but look on it as an opportunity, not a threat.

Students should post arguments that directly reference the readings. In order to be prepared for this, you should take notes on the readings that identify key passages for discussion, or which you do not understand. Under each class meeting, I have listed one or two questions designed to guide your reading of the texts and which will appear on the discussion forum as a starting point.

Some additional observations about reading for the class: These are not standard textbooks with bold lettering around every word you need to know. A casual reading or one undertaken with various distractions present will probably not get you very far. If you get confused, reread the passage, and if you still cannot make sense of the subject matter, raise your confusion as a question in the discussion forum. Because of all this, you should probably allot at least an hour of focused attention per week to the material. If you fail to do this, your ability to follow the online discussion will be reduced and your chances of doing well on any of the writing assignments will be slim.

In terms of notes on the class readings, I recommend all students both mark up their books and take extensive notes with page references that essentially index the readings. You should type these up so that they are searchable. This is very time-consuming, but will benefit you tremendously both for the short papers I assign as well as the take-home final.

This syllabus is subject to change, but I will always provide advance notice both in class and via email. You can always find a copy of the most up-to-date syllabus on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading

I will determine your grades using the following breakdown:

Weekly Essays:	35% (7 essays, 5% each)
Final Exam:	30%
Online Participation:	35%

Both the individual components and final grade will be calculated on and entered into the gradebook under the slightly more generous 4.0 scale. So, A = 3.71-4.0, A- = 3.31-3.70, B+ = 3.01-3.3, and so on.

Essay Assignment Instructions:

Choose one of the options listed in each week of the syllabus and answer it in 1-2 double spaced pages (12 point font, double spaced). Read the instructions below carefully.

You should not attempt to outline or laundry list every idea you have, rather choose one focused line of argumentation that brings a handful of the most important points you think support your case to bear on the subject. The best method of accomplishing this is to engage in a close reading of the text(s) and marshal evidence from them to support your claims. Do not use any outside sources.

Avoid editorializing. These essays demand careful textual analysis. I am looking for a sustained effort on your part in each to understand what these authors are saying and I am not at all interested in what you think about the merits or deficiencies of their arguments. So, unless I have specifically asked for your judgment about something in the question, do not waste the space and effort.

Cite both direct quotes and all specific references to the text. By this, I mean: each and every time you use or refer to a specific passage to help develop your essay, you must use a citation (either line or page number) to tie this to the book. Failure to cite sources is plagiarism and will result in an automatic F on the assignment. Severe cases (any work simply copied without attribution) will be reported to the Dean of Students and result in an automatic final grade of F in the class.

I will mark down all essays that deviate from the formatting requirements, and that are under or over the page limit; part of what I am testing here is your clarity of thought, and whether you can determine what really bears on the subject at hand and what does not.

Yes, writing counts, so proofread your papers carefully. I will provide comments on grammar and style. If I ask you to see a writing tutor, please do so.

Each short essay will be due by 6 pm on Friday of each week via upload to Canvas, and will be worth 5% of your final grade in the class. There will be no revisions allowed. Late essays without verified medical excuse will be graded down one minus increment each day after the deadline. This means you have a maximum of ten days before the assignment automatically counts as an F. Failure to complete this or any other essay in the class in that time frame will result in a zero for this assignment, as well as a maximum of D- for your final course grade.

Required Texts:

Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2012)

Elinor C. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012)

Course Schedule and Readings

All readings not in the two texts can be found on Canvas under “Files.”

Week 1 (6/16-6/20): On the Nature of Military Power in International Relations

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Preface, Introduction, and Chs. 1-2, pp. xv-xvi and 1-33
Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, Introduction and Chs. 1-3, pp. 1-48
Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 145 (Nov.-Dec. 2004), pp. 52-62

Canvas Discussion Questions:

In what ways do international relations theorists explain the place of war in the international system? Does this account differ from the more historical account Gray provides, or the strategist’s view in Sloan?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 6/20):

- 1) Explain the concept of friction and how it affects the conduct of war and diplomacy.
- 2) How do the three major elements of military power (land, sea, and air) interact with one another?

Week 2 (6/23-6/27): On the Long Shadow of the 19th Century

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Chs. 3-5, pp. 34-89
Buzan and Lawson, “The Global Transformation: The Nineteenth Century and the Transformation of Modern International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (2013), pp. 620-634

Canvas Discussion Questions:

What are the principal lessons Buzan, Lawson, and Gray believe we might learn from studying war and diplomacy in the nineteenth century? Does Gray differ from Buzan and Lawson in emphasis or argument?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 6/27):

- 1) What was the single most important strategic development in the 19th century? Why?
- 2) Why do scholars attempt to argue that technology plays a more important role in shaping strategic history than the choices of leaders?

Week 3 (6/30-7/4): World War I and the Inter-War Years

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Chs. 6-10, pp. 90-140
Keir Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2007), pp. 155-191

Canvas Discussion Question:

As Lieber notes, many scholars argue about World War I as if no one believed it would be as bloody as it was. But if Germany (and the other powers) knew how destructive the war would be, does this change the way we commonly think about why people fight wars?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 7/4):

- 1) If World War I was not the product of stupidity, what best explains the conduct and termination of the war?
- 2) What is the most significant change that mechanization brought about in the way nations had to conceive of strategy?

Week 4 (7/7-7/11): The Lessons of World War II

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 11-13, pp. 141-208
Jeffrey L. Hughes, "The Origins of World War II in Europe: British Deterrence Failure and German Expansionism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1988), pp. 851-891
Scott D. Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1988), pp. 893-922

Canvas Discussion Questions:

What errors of the interwar years best explain the severity of World War II? Why?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 7/11):

- 1) To what extent are the causes of the European and Pacific wars similar? Why?
- 2) Can irrationality adequately explain either (pick one of the two countries) the German or the Japanese choice to embark upon war?

Week 5 (7/14-7/18): The Terrors of the Cold War

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Chs. 14-15, pp. 209-244
Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, Chs. 7, pp. 100-116
Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and the Cold War,"
International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 110, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 157-181

Canvas Discussion Question:

What made the concept of mutually assured destruction seem rational?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 7/18):

- 1) Does the presence of nuclear weapons change the fundamental nature of war?
- 2) What best explains the continued presence of life on earth despite the nuclear arsenals developed in the Cold War?

Week 6 (7/21-7/25): From the End of the Cold War to 9/11

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 16-17, pp. 245-278
Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, Ch. 4, pp. 49-64
John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War,"
International Security, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Winter, 1992-1993), pp. 5-58

Canvas Discussion Question:

With the end of the Cold War, many scholars argue that the old paradigms of war and peace no longer apply. To what degree do these claims explain the world we inhabit today?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 7/25):

- 1) What is the most important distinction that Gray attempts to draw between "new" and "old" wars?
- 2) According to Gaddis, what difficulties do social scientists share when attempting to explain major events like the Cold War?

Week 7 (7/28-8/1): New Forms of War?

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Ch. 18, pp. 279-306

Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, Chs. 5-6, pp. 65-99

Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 42-78

Canvas Discussion Questions:

Terrorism, insurgency, and guerilla war are not new. What best explains their prevalence today? Are these temporary conditions?

Short Essay Topics (due on Canvas by 8/1):

- 1) What characteristics does terrorism share with strategic bombing in conventional war?
- 2) To what extent do irregular forms of warfare require the use of indiscriminate violence?

Week 8 (8/4-8/7): Permanent Factors in War and Peace

Read: Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Chs. 19-21, pp. 307-347

Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, Ch. 8 and Conclusion, pp. 117-135

John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War"

Canvas Discussion Questions:

What elements have changed the most in strategic affairs since the nineteenth century?
What elements have changed the least?

No Short Essay This Week – Write Final Exam Instead

Take-home final exams due via Canvas on Friday, August 8th by 11:59 pm.

For the final exam, in no more than 6 pages (12 point font, double-spaced), please answer the following prompt:

To what degree can war be waged in a way that spares civilians in the modern world? Use at least three sources from the class to explain your answer.

The instructions listed above on essay-writing apply here as well. Please reference them. I will post final course grades as soon as I grade the finals.