War in the Modern World II
(1945 to Present)
History 241
(CRN 36995)

Spring 2013
MW 10-11:20
123 GHS

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Office hours: Mon. 2-3; Wed. 11:30-12:15 (at Global Scholars Hall), Thursday 12-1:30, or by appointment

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See Blackboard, “contacts” content area, for contact information.

Aims

This course is an introduction to the history of warfare since 1945. The main focus of the course is changes in the nature and conduct of war in the context of social, economic, political and technological change. The course thus continues the main themes developed in HIST 240 (War in the Modern World, I) but HIST 240 is not required to take HIST 241. In contrast to HIST 240, which looks at developments in the long term, this course places greater emphasis on how specific political contexts shape the conduct of war. Toward the end of the quarter we will look at more recent trends in warfare.

Grades and assignments

Grades for this course are calculated on the basis of 100 points for the term. The points are distributed as follows:

Two papers: 20 points each
Two on-line quizzes: 10 points each
Midterm exam: 20 points
Final exam: 20 points
The due dates are as follows:

First quiz:   April 18
First paper:  April 29
Midterm:     May 6 – bring blue-green book
Second quiz: May 21
Second paper: June 6

Final:       Tuesday, June 11, 10:15 – bring blue-green book

The materials for the papers and places to submit papers and quizzes will be found on the course Blackboard site in the “Papers and quizzes” content area. The quizzes and papers will be submitted on-line.

Readings


And Blackboard: All other readings can be found on Blackboard under “Course Readings.”

Schedule of topics and readings (readings are listed for the day on which they will be discussed in class. Anything listed below after “Read” is required; anything listed after “Suggested” or “Also” is optional)

April 1: Introduction: The Legacy of WWII

April 3: Guerrilla warfare according to Mao

April 8: Chinese Civil War

Read: Bruce Elleman, Modern Chinese Warfare, 1975-1989, 217-232 (ch. 13, “China’s Nationalist-Communist Civil War”); and Civil War section of the “China” article from the New Encyclopedia Britannica. You can also find maps on the Blackboard site.

We'll also watch the first part of “The Assembly,” which takes place in the north. If you wish to watch it in its entirety, the movie provides a bridge to the Korean War (the hero ends up in Korea on Friday) – Niu Jun’s piece (below) explains the connection.

April 10: Victory of the Chinese Communists


April 15: Limited war: the Korean War


April 17: Korea in the context of nuclear weapons


Also: NSC 68 (I’ve posted a pdf copy. For an analysis you can get Ernst R. May, ed., American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68; but you’ll have to get this on your own)

Quiz #1 due: April 18, 11:00 pm

April 22: Insurgency/counter-insurgency warfare: setting up the problem

Read: John A. Nagl, Learning to Eat Soup, introduction and chs. 1, 2, 3
April 24: The Malayan Emergency,

Read: Nagl, Learning to Eat Soup, chs. 4-5

April 29: France in Indo-China


First paper due: 11 pm on Blackboard

May 1: The U.S. in Vietnam

Read: Nagl, Learning to Eat Soup, chs. 6-7

May 3: Does history offer lessons?

Read: Nagl, Learning to Eat Soup, chs. 8, 9 and preface to paperback edition

Suggested: For those interested in the rhetorical question that is today’s theme, I have also posted Michael Howard’s reflections on the subject, “The Use and Abuse of Military History.”

May 6: In-class midterm – please bring something to write in (blue/green book)

May 8: Nuclear strategy, military power and the Cold War


May 13: Operational Warfare in the post-war period: the example of the Arab-Israeli Wars

May 15: Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)


May 20: Kosovo and the limits of air power


Quiz #2 due: May 21, 11:00 pm

May 22: Rebellions and Coups: the example of Mozambique


May 27: Memorial Day

June 3: The Kalashnikov Age?


Some of you might also want to read ch. 9 of Singer, Children at War, “Fighting Children,” 163-182 (these chapters consider the problem that military professionals face when confronting child soldiers).
June 5: Iraq, Afghanistan, COIN and after


Second paper due: June 6 11:00 pm

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, June 11, 10:15 – bring blue-green book