

Political Science 4040: Military History and Politics

Fall 2011

Class Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 1:40 to 3:00

Class Location: 218 Coates

Professor: David Sobek (dsobek@lsu.edu)

Office Phone: 578-2134

Office Location: Stubbs 211

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00-10:00

Wednesday 9:00-10:00

Teaching Assistant: Jacob Seigler

TA E-mail: Jacob.Seigler.LSU@gmail.com

Summary:

This class examines the link between war and politics (both domestic and international). In particular, how does the conduct of war relate to the construction and function of states? While previous classes may have examined these issues separately, this class attempts to place them within the same framework.

In general, the main point to derive from the class is that those who hold the key to victory on the battlefield also tend to dominate the domestic politics of states. For example, the crucial battlefield role of cavalry in the Middle Ages led to their preeminent role in feudal society. Contrast that to Classical Greece, where the Phalanx (infantry) was predominant and democracy flourished (in places).

This class traces the development of military technology and history across time to examine how it relates to larger societal and political movements. At the end of the semester we will address issues that arise in the modern era and how events may develop in the future.

Required Books:

Hanson, Victor Davis. 2000. *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN-10: 0-520-2199-2.

Oman, Charles W. 1960. *Art of War in the Middle Ages A.D. 378-1515*. Cornell: Cornell University Press. ISBN-10: 0-8014-9062-6

Poggi, Gianfranco. 1990. *The State: Its Nature, Development, and Prospects*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. ISBN-10: 0-8047-1849-0.

Townshend, Charles, ed. 2000. *The Oxford History of Modern War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0-19-285373-2

Optional Books:

Brauer, Jurgen and Hubert Van Tuyl. 2008. *Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explains Military History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-10: 0-226-07163-4

Fuller, J.F.C. 1992. *The Conduct of War: 1789-1961: A Study of the Impact of the French, Industrial, and Russian Revolutions on War and Its Conduct*. New York: DaCapo Press. ISBN-10: 0-306-80467-0

Nagl, John A. 2005. *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-10: 0-226-56770-2

Parker, Geoffrey. 1996. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-10: 0-521-47958-4.

Assignments:

Term Paper (25%): You will have to write one 5-7 page term paper, which is due **November 17th**. For this assignment you need to read one of the optional books and place it within the context of the course. This means that you need to adequately summarize the book **and** show how it connects with the main themes of the course.

Midterm (30%): You will have a midterm examination on **October 20th**. This will be an essay exam where you will be required to answer 2 essays (out of 4 possible choices).

Final Exam (35%): The course will end with a cumulative final exam. Like the mid-term it will be essay and you will be required to answer 2 cumulative questions (there will be choices). The final exam is scheduled for **December 6th, 10AM-Noon**.

Participation (10%): Participation in class discussion is critical for this course. As such, you will need to actively participate in **6** classes throughout the semester. At the end of the classes in which you felt you participated, you need to write on a sheet of paper your name and how you participated and hand this in to me. I will either accept your participation and count it towards your grade, or reject it (in which case it will not be recorded).

Note on Grades: This syllabus provides you with both the requirements of the course and a schedule of events. If a problem arises that will affect your performance you need to notify me as soon as possible. Late assignments or absences will not be excused after the fact. Your grade is ultimately your responsibility and dependent upon your actions. I am quite willing to accommodate you in some circumstances, but I need as much advance warning as possible.

Academic Honesty: It is assumed that your performance in this class is solely yours. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated to any extent. My working hypothesis is that everyone is honest in his or her work and I do not need to provide all-encompassing oversight. If you are found to have cheated or plagiarized during the course of the semester, I will immediately report it to the proper academic office for further action.

Reading Schedule:

Part 1: The State: What is it and why is it important?

Week 1 (8-23, 8-25)

Poggi- pages 3-34.

Week 2 (8-30, 9-1)

Poggi- pages 34-69.

Week 3 (9-6, 9-8)

Poggi- pages 86-107.

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review*. 87:567-76.

Part 2: Classical Greece: The Phalanx, Decisive Battles, and Democracy

Week 4 (9-13, 9-15)

Hanson- pages ix-55.

Week 5 (9-20, 9-22)

Hanson- pages 55-135.

Week 6 (9-27, 9-29)

Hanson- pages 135-197

Week 7 (10-4, 10-6)

Hanson- pages 135-197

Week 8 (10-11, 10-13)

October 13: Fall Break

Hanson- pages 197-229

Part 3: The Supremacy of Cavalry and the Development of Feudalism

Week 9 (10-18, 10-20)

Oman- pages iii-31.

10-20: Midterm

Week 10 (10-25, 10-27)

Oman- pages 31-116.

Week 11 (11-1, 11-3)
Oman- pages 116-167.

Part 4: Military History and the Future of Politics

Week 12 (11-8, 11-10)
Townshend- pages 3-55.

Week 13 (11-15, 11-17)
Term Paper due on 11-17.
Townshend- pages 55-94.

Week 14 (11-22, 11-24)
November 24th: Thanksgiving Break
Townshend- pages 117-201

Week 15 (11-29, 12-1)
Townshend- pages 117-201, continued.

Final Exam: Tuesday December 6th, 10AM-Noon.