War in the Modern World II
(1945 to Present)
History 241
(CRN 32676)

Spring 2016
Mon./Wed: 2-3:20
182 Lillis

Professor Alex Dracobly
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Office: MCK 329 (from main entrance, take staircase on immediate left up one floor, exit left, go right down the hall to second time it opens out: my office is where it opens out a second time)
Office hours: Thurs. 2-3:30; Friday 10-12; or by appointment

I wish to emphasize by appointment. I am on campus and available nearly every day (though less so on Monday and Wednesday afternoons when I have a class scheduled). If you want to meet, get in contact with me.

Graduate Teaching Fellows: Lucas Erickson and John Bedan (see Canvas for contact information)

Topic

This course is an introduction to the history of war 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), though HIST 240 is not required to take HIST 241.

Much more than in HIST 240, a focus on recent trends in the nature and conduct war leads to the point where history and strategic studies converge. A central premise of this class is that the development of a coherent security strategy requires an understanding and recognition of recent trends in war. In other words, answers to the security issues facing the U.S. and the world are intimately bound up with the question of what war is in the contemporary world: its nature, its objects, and its main characteristics. The only way to obtain an understanding of what war might look like in the near future is by looking at the wars of the last several decades, which is to say, by studying the history of recent wars.
We will start the term in the aftermath of World War II and several of the regional conflicts that were left unresolved with the defeat of Germany and Japan in 1945. We will continue with an examination, on the one hand, of the Cold War between the U.S. and U.S.R.R. and, on the other hand, the era of the wars of decolonization of the 1950s and 1960s. After a look at the civil conflicts of the later Cold War, we will turn in the last third of the course to "war in the very modern world": military developments and war since the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1990. We will conclude with an examination of terrorism as a form of war and some thoughts on what the future of war might hold.

**Learning objectives: what I expect you to get out of this class**

1. An understanding of both the main trends in the conduct and nature of war from the end of World War II to the present and the different ways that we can account for those changes. War has been changing over the last half century. What are the nature of those changes and how might we account for them?

2. A sense of some of the major concepts, problems and themes common to military history and strategic studies as these are practiced today. This course will introduce you to some of the conceptual language specific to military history and strategic thought; it will also expose you to several of the exemplary issues that that strategists and military history historians are grappling with today.

3. Practice and familiarity with several of the basic methodological moves that historians commonly employ. In particular, we will be comparing different interpretive explanatory frameworks that historians have used, either to explain specific events (such as the outcome of the Chinese Civil War: why did the Communists win?), or to explain general trends. Especially toward the end of the term we will be looking at why these interpretative frameworks matter and what their strategic implications might be.

**Grades and assignments**

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

- Four on-line quizzes: 5 points for first; 10 for the rest
- Midterm exam: 25 points
- Final exam: 25 points

The due dates are as follows:

- First quiz: March 31 (on-line submission, 11 pm)
- Second quiz: April 14 (on-line submission, 11 pm)
- Midterm: April 28 – in class, bring blue-green book
- Third quiz: May 5 (on-line submission, 11 pm)
- Fourth quiz: May 19 (on-line submission, 11 pm)
- Final: June 10 (Friday), 10:15 am – bring blue-green book
The quizzes, midterm and final all require written work. I encourage collaboration but you may not plagiarize others' work (plagiarism: "the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own" - for the purposes of this class, greater emphasis is placed on "work" (as in "written work"), than ideas but you should credit ideas as well). For tips on avoiding plagiarism, see http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html

Written work will be evaluated according to the general grading standards posted at http://gradeculture.uoregon.edu/ under the link for History.

**Readings**


*All other readings* can be found on Canvas under “Modules.”

**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)

**Pt. I: Aftermath wars of WWII and the early Cold War**

March 28: Introduction: "War no longer exists." Or the problem of war since WWII

  Read: General Rupert Smith (Ret.), *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (2005), 1-8 (first part of the "Introduction")

March 30: Guerrilla warfare according to Mao


April 4: The Chinese Civil War: How the communists achieved victory

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 serving in Korea later in the war) – Niu Jun’s piece (below) explains the connection.

>>>>>> First on-line quiz due: Thursday, March 31, 11 pm

April 6: What's in a name: Chinese Civil War versus Chinese Revolution; or the Victory of the Chinese Communists


April 11: The Korean War

Read: "The Korean War, 1950-1953,” chapter 8 in Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History* (2009), volume II (available as a download via the link on Canvas)

April 13: Korea as a limited war


>>>>>> Second on-line quiz due: Thursday, April 14, 11 pm

April 18: Nuclear strategy, military power and the Cold War

April 20: France in Indo-China


April 25: In-class midterm – please bring something to write in (blue/green book, purchased in bookstore)

Pt. II: War in the era of decolonization and the later Cold War: two examples

April 27: The U.S. in Vietnam


May 2: Explaining U.S. failure in Vietnam


May 4: Wars of independence in Africa: the example of Mozambique


>>>>>>> Third on-line quiz due: Thursday, May 5, 11 pm
May 9: Civil war, regional war during the Cold War: the example of Mozambique


Pt. III: War since 1990

May 11: War in our world (post-1990): setting up the problem

Read: Black, chs. 1 and 2; and Eliot A. Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare," Foreign Affairs 75 no. 2 (March/April 1996): 37-54 (pdf version posted along with link).

May 16: A conventional account and the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)


May 18: Signs of difference and "unconventional" warfare: two takes


>>>>>> Fourth on-line quiz due: Thursday, May 19, 11 pm

May 23: The War on Terror

May 25: "A multitude of conflicts"


May 30: No class (Memorial Day)

June 4: Into the future: weak states and "small wars"

   Read: Black, chs. 7, 8 and 9, "Into the future" (both) and "Conclusions"

**FINAL EXAM**: Friday, June 10, 10:15 am – in our classroom, bring blue-green book