

WAR AND SOCIETY
PLSC 380N
Fall 2021

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Office hours held via Zoom: M 12:30-2:30, W 12-1, and by appointment

Course Purpose

This course will examine the interaction between domestic institutions and practices and international war. It is a companion to another class I teach regularly, the Political Economy of Security and Conflict (PLSC380U). That course stresses the interaction between war and the domestic and international economy, while this one emphasizes mainly non-economic considerations. The two courses cover many overlapping topics but approach them differently. This course deals with three major topics. First, we will first consider the way that different states and societies have defined their vital interests and used military force to pursue them. Next, we will examine some of the ways that war has affected modern social and political life. Finally, we will examine the role of military force in liberal, democratic societies.

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that students are expected to do at least 12.5 hours of course-related work or activity each week during the semester. This includes scheduled class lecture/discussion meeting times as well as time spent completing assigned readings, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.

This course counts toward the social science general education requirement (category N). It counts for several purposes within the political science major:

- Helps fulfill the requirement for 10 PLSC courses for political science majors.
- Fulfills the requirement of at least 1 course in international relations
- Helps fulfill the requirement for 6 upper-level courses (300- or 400-level)
- Fulfills the N (Social Science) general education requirement

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn about the relationship between war and domestic society in a range of historical settings. They will also use and develop their writing and critical thinking skills.

Course Materials

The assigned reading is a vital part of this class. We will sometimes spend all or part of a class period discussing a specific book or other reading. In addition to the three books listed below, which we will read in their entirety, there are a range of other articles and book chapters listed below. There are links to these materials in the Brightspace page for this class.

The following three books are available at the University Bookstore, as well as from other sources:

Karp, Matthew. 2016. *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Coyne, Christopher J., and Abigail R. Hall. 2018. *Tyranny Comes Home: The Domestic Fate of U.S. Militarism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Edstrom, Erik. 2020. *Un-American: A Soldier's Reckoning of Our Longest War*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class Discussion. Over the course of the semester, there are 11 scheduled discussions of assigned readings. The dates and topics of these discussions are noted in bold print in the course schedule below. Three are linked to books we are reading. Eight are tied to articles or sets of articles. Each will begin with a question posted in the online discussion board in Brightspace, setting the stage for an in-person class discussion. Tentative versions of the discussion questions are included in this syllabus but are subject to change as the semester goes along. The discussion board will present the final version of each question. You should post an answer by midnight on the day before each scheduled class discussion. Late answers will not receive credit. I may ask you to summarize or elaborate on your answer in class. After you post your answer, you will be able to see other students' posts and respond to them online if you like, though you are not required to do so.

For the three discussions tied to the books we are reading in their entirety, you do not have to submit a discussion board answer if you are writing an essay on the book. Each student is also permitted to miss 1 additional online discussion board question during the semester without penalty. The remaining 9 discussion posts will count for 45% of your final grade.

Essay. Each student will write an essay about one of the three books we will be reading in their entirety this semester. One book is assigned for each unit of the course. The question the essay for each unit should answer is listed below. Students may select any one of the three essay assignments listed below. The essay will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Unit 1. Karp explains how slavery shaped the foreign policy concerns of many American foreign policymakers before the Civil War. If slavery had been abolished at the time the country was founded, what would have been the biggest likely differences in the country's foreign policy during the first half of the 19th Century? (This essay is due by 9:00am on Monday, October 4th.)

Unit 2. Coyne and Hall discuss several overseas practices that have reappeared in American domestic life. Was the international use of these technologies and practices really necessary for them to have been used at home or do you think they have been used anyway? (This essay is due by 9:00am on Monday, November 1st.)

Unit 3. Edstrom writes passionately about the damaging effects of war on both society and the individuals who fight it. Are the effects he universal to all wars, or

are at least some of them unique to liberal societies like the United States? (This essay is due by 9:00am on Wednesday, December 8th.)

Final Exam. The final exam will consist of an essay question intended to tie together several of the major themes from the course. It will require you to use examples from the assigned reading to illustrate your argument. The question will be provided to students by noon on Wednesday, December 8th. The essay will be due by midnight on Wednesday, December 15th. The final exam is worth 25% of your grade for the semester.

Grading Scale. Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 94-100 = A; 91-93 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 = D; 0-64 = F.

Course Policies

COVID-19. While we all wish the COVID-19 pandemic had ended this summer, it continues. Binghamton University follows the recommendations of public health experts to protect the health of students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. Safeguarding public health depends on each of us strictly following requirements as they are instituted and for as long as they remain in force. Health and safety standards will be enforced in this course.

Current rules require everyone to wear a face covering that completely covers both the nose and mouth while indoors. A face shield is not an acceptable substitute. If these requirements change, a campus-wide announcement will be made to inform the University. If you forget your face covering or it does not meet the requirements, you will be asked to leave the room immediately. You may not return until you meet the requirement. If a student does not comply with the requirement or my request to leave the classroom, I will immediately cancel the remainder of the class session and inform the dean's office, which will work with the Student Records office to issue a failing grade ("F") for the course regardless of when in the semester the incident occurs. The Dean's office will also inform the Office of Student Conduct. If a student's refusal to comply is a second offense, the Office of Student Conduct may recommend dismissal from the University.

Even if you are vaccinated and wear a mask indoors, breakthrough cases of COVID-19 are still possible. If you develop symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), your top priorities should be getting medical treatment and avoiding further spread of the virus. Do not come to class. If you are on campus, call the Student Health Service for instructions at 607-777-2221. Once you are able, let me know about your situation. There is no need to ask the Student Health Service or your doctor for a note confirming your illness. I will take steps to help you make up the work you miss. I will do the same for other personal and family emergencies that may arise this semester. Please let me know about these issues as soon as you can. It is much easier for me to help you if I know about your situation before it critically affects your academic performance. I will not pry into the details any more than is necessary to assist you.

Office hours. I will hold office hours through Zoom this semester. I will be available on Mondays, 12:30-2:30, and Wednesdays, 12-1, and at other times by appointment. If you would like to meet with me during these times, send me an email and I will respond with a Zoom link.

Technology. Although this is an in-person class, we will still use Brightspace, our new learning management system, for some purposes. I am new to this system, just as most of you are, so I may not be able to resolve technical issues you encounter. I encourage you to turn to the technical support the system provides:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>.

E-mail. I will use your university e-mail address for course announcements and other official purposes. Check this account at least once a day. I recommend setting your university e-mail account to forward messages to whatever e-mail address you use most often. I will respond to student messages in a timely manner but do not count on receiving an answer in less than 24 hours.

Grade Appeals. All grade appeals must be made in writing. If you believe a grade I assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief memo explaining your concerns. I will review your concerns and respond to you in writing.

Cheating and Plagiarism. All work submitted as part of this course, including comments posted on discussion boards, must be original, with your sources cited. It is fine for you to introduce and use outside material that you think is relevant to the course but you should credit the original authors. You may use any citation system you like for this purpose. Violations of this rule will result in a failing grade for the course and will be submitted to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for further disciplinary action.

Decorum. I encourage you to express your views on the course material both in class and on the discussion boards. You are free to disagree with me or with your fellow students, just as others are free to disagree with you. In doing so, however, please refrain from personal insults or inflammatory rhetoric. Be respectful of one another and always remember that there is a real person on the other end of your comments. This isn't Twitter.

Tentative Course Schedule and Assigned Materials

(All dates are subject to change during the semester)

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Topic and Reading Assignment:</u>
August 25	Introduction and Overview

Part I. The Influence of Social Structure on National Interests and War-Fighting

August 30	How Can Social Structure Influence National Interests and War?
September 1	Ancient Mediterranean City-States: Cornford, Francis MacDonal. 1971 [1907]. <i>Thucydides Mythistoricus</i> . Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1-76.

September 6
and 8

No class meetings

September 13
and 15

The Roman Republic and the Roman Empire:

Mattern, Susan P. 1999. *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1.

Kagan, Kimberley. 2006. "Redefining Roman Grand Strategy." *Journal of Military History* 70(2): 333-62.

Discussion for September 15: Does the fact that the Romans did not engage in policy planning as we currently understand it make foreign policy fundamentally different for them?

September 20
and 22

The Transition from Feudalism to the Absolutist State in Europe:

White, Lynn. 1962. *Medieval Technology and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1-38.

Gat, Azar. 2006. *War in Human Civilization*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 14.

Discussion for September 20: Are there other examples of technological innovations causing a change in social organization, as White argues the stirrup did in early medieval Europe?

September 27
and 29

War and National Interests in Modern States:

Gordon, Michael R. 1974. "Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and the German Cases." *Journal of Modern History* 46(2): 191-226.

October 4

Slaveholders and American Foreign Policy

Karp, Matthew. 2016. *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Discussion of Karp book, October 4: Karp explains how slavery shaped the foreign policy concerns of many American foreign policymakers before the Civil War. If slavery had been abolished at the time the United States was founded, what would have been the biggest likely differences in the country's foreign policy during the first half of the 19th Century?

Part II. The Impact of War on Modern Societies

- October 6, 11,
and 13 Nationalism, International Threat, and War:
Snyder, Jack, and Karen Ballentine. 1996. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 21(2): 5-40.
- Discussion for October 13:** Should freedom of the press be limited in new democracies to prevent the exploitation of nationalism by unscrupulous politicians, as Snyder and Ballantine suggest?
- October 18 War and the State:
Higgs, Robert. 1998. "War and Leviathan in Twentieth-Century America: Conscription as the Keystone." In John V. Denson, ed., *The Costs of War*, 2nd Edition (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers), 375-88.
- October 20, 25,
and 27 War and Social Change:
Campbell, D'Ann. 1993. "Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union." *Journal of Military History* 57(2): 301-23.
Korstad, Robert, and Nelson Lichtenstein. 1988. Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement. *Journal of American History* 75 (3): 786-811.
Skrentny, John David. 1998. The effect of the Cold War on African-American civil rights: America and the world audience, 1945-1968. *Theory and Society* 27: 237-285.
- Discussion for October 27:** On balance, was the Cold War helpful or harmful to the civil rights movement in the United States?
- November 1 Wartime Methods in Domestic Life:
Coyne, Christopher J., and Abigail R. Hall. 2018. *Tyranny Comes Home: The Domestic Fate of U.S. Militarism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Discussion of Coyne and Hall Book, November 1:** Coyne and Hall discuss several methods and practices that originated in international warfare but have reappeared in American domestic life. Was the wartime use of these technologies and practices really necessary for them to have been used at home?

Part III. War and Liberal Societies

- November 3, 8,
and 10 Liberal Societies and War:
Sagan, Scott D., and Benjamin A. Valentino. 2017. "Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans Really Think about Using Nuclear Weapons and Killing Noncombatants." *International Security* 42(1): 41-79.
- Discussion for November 8:** Have norms about violence changed in ways that limit war in the contemporary world?
- November 15
and 17 Liberal Societies, International Order, and Empire:
Desch, Michael. 2007. "America's Liberal Illiberalism: The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy" *International Security* 32(3): 7-43.
- Discussion for November 17:** Is the liberal international order really a disguised form of imperialism?
- November 22 The Politics of Remembering Past Wars:
Nolan, Alan T. 2000. "The Anatomy of the Myth." In Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 11-34.
Smith, Clint. 2021. "The War on Nostalgia." *The Atlantic* 327(5): 52-61.
- Discussion for November 22:** Is "Lost Cause" mythology an important determinant of some people's political positions, or is it mainly a rationalization for positions they would have taken anyway?
- November 29 War in Popular Culture:
Alonge, Giaime. 2019. "Playing the Nazis: Political Implications in Analog Wargames." <https://analoggamestudies.org/2019/09/playing-the-nazis-political-implications-in-analog-wargames/>
- Discussion for November 29:** How significant are the social and political implications of interest in playing the Nazis in war games?
- December 1 and
6 Counterinsurgency Warfare:
Hazleton, Jacqueline. 2017. "The 'Hearts and Minds' Fallacy: Violence, Coercion, and Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare." *International Security* 42(1): 80-113.

December 8

The United States and Recent Wars:

Edstrom, Erik. 2020. *Un-American: A Soldier's Reckoning of Our Longest War*.
New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Discussion of Edstrom book, December 8: Edstrom writes passionately about the damaging effects of war on both society and the individuals who fight it. Do the effects he discusses apply universally to all societies involved in wars, or are at least some of them unique to liberal societies like the United States?