
HISTORY 428: The American Military Experience Since 1899

Spring 2013
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison
Class Meetings: MWF, 9:55 PM - 10:45 PM
Humanities 1651

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Office hours: M, 1:30-3:00

1. Course description.

This course surveys the American military experience from the dawn of the 20th century to the present day. It takes a broad view of military history, examining the influence of warfare on all aspects of American society. We will not omit the traditional mainstays of the field—the study of battles and leaders—but we will consider them within the broader American experience and in an international context. Ultimately, this course will provide an appreciation of how war has shaped America and, in many regards, defined its interaction with the world.

2. Course Objectives. Students will understand:

- a. How the United States has attempted to use military power to advance its interests and ideals around the world—and to what effect.
- b. How and why American military policies, establishments, and practices evolved over time—and the role of technology in this evolution.
- c. How concepts of identity (to include race, ethnicity, kinship, gender, and religion) influence the character of war and how war can, in turn, influence identity.
- d. Warfare as a human experience endured on the battlefield, at sea, in the air, on the homefront, at desolate outposts, and in councils of government.
- e. How to analyze, synthesize, and interpret historical process and events.

3. Course format.

This course consists of three complementary, core components: lectures, seminar discussions, and readings. To master the course objectives, students must afford each component sufficient attention. Lectures will address the broad themes, important events, and significant issues in American military history. Readings from Murray and Millet, *For the Common Defense*, will generally align with lecture topics and provide a context for discussion. These readings lack the breadth and depth of the lectures, however, and will not suffice as a substitute for attending class. Moreover, several lectures will address topics covered only fleetingly—if at all—in the assigned reading. Your other course texts provide more thorough treatment of selected topics in American military history and represent various forms of historical writing. These readings, each focused on a different aspect of the American military experience, will provide the basis for weekly seminar discussions. These sessions provide students opportunities to interactively engage the materials

and each other. To improve group discussions, students must complete all assigned readings prior to each seminar discussion. Students will also attend one special presentations at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (designated on the course schedule below).

4. Graded requirements. All students will be graded on a 1000-point scale.

a. Seminar participation / quizzes: 150 points.

The quality of seminar discussions is entirely dependent upon student preparation and contributions. Accordingly, Teaching Assistants (TAs) will circulate a discussion question at least four days prior to most seminar meetings. Over the course of the semester, students must respond to at least seven of these prompts with a 300-word essay, submitted on Learn@UW at least twenty-four hours before the respective seminar meeting. Each response is worth 15 points (contingent upon student participation in this meeting). Student will have opportunities to earn the remaining 45 points through unannounced quizzes (but students with unexcused absences will receive zero points for missed quizzes).

b. Lecture quizzes: 50 points.

Student may earn up to 50 points in unannounced quizzes administered during select lectures. As in seminar, students with unexcused absences will receive zero points for missed quizzes.

c. Research proposal: 100 points.

In preparation for the writing requirement, students will submit a research proposal consisting of the following elements:

1. A brief biography of your prospective interview subject, identifying his or her experience and its relevance to the course themes.
2. A research question that (a) you can answer with the sources available to you and (b) relates the interview subject's experiences to the broader course themes.
3. An annotated bibliography comprising at least four secondary and two primary sources.

This requirement is due at the beginning of the 18 February class meeting.

d. Mid-term examination.

Students will receive a take-home, mid-term examination in class on 13 March. The examination will consist of two questions and will account for 200 points (100 points per

question). Students will answer each question in an essay of 900 to 1,100 words. Essays must present a compelling thesis substantiated by specific historical evidence and demonstrate a mastery of the material covered in lectures, readings, and discussions. Poor writing, grammatical errors, and ineffective organization will result in grade deductions. Students may discuss the questions with one another outside of class, but the essays must be entirely their own work. **Completed examinations are due at the beginning of lecture, 18 March.**

e. Writing requirement.

Students will write a 6-8 page essay based on an oral history interview that they conduct. Students may interview any person whose personal experiences offers insights on the American military experience in the 20th or 21st centuries. The most common subjects for such interviews are veterans of American wars, but students may elect to interview anyone with a valuable perspective regarding the influence of war on American society. Potential interview subjects also include “gold star mothers,” mental health care professionals who have treated veterans suffering from PTSD, defense policy-makers, or organizers of anti-war activities. Students should take great care in selecting someone with a suitable depth of relevant experience and must always treat their interview subject with respect. Under no circumstance will students solicit an interview with adversarial intentions. Essays must relate the individual’s experiences to the broader themes of this course—an endeavor that will require additional research and citation. This writing requirement will account for 200 points. **Essays are due at the beginning of the 22 April class meeting.**

f. Final examination.

Students will receive a take-home, final examination in class on 10 May. The examination will consist of three essay questions, two requiring short answers of 400 to 500 words and one requiring an essay of 1500 to 2000 words. The final examination will cover all materials presented in the course and is worth 300 points (60 points per short answer and 180 points for the long essay). Each answer should present a compelling thesis substantiated by specific historical evidence and demonstrate a mastery of the material covered in lectures, readings, and discussions. Poor writing, grammatical errors, and ineffective organization will result in grade deductions. Students may discuss the questions with one another outside of class, but the essays must be entirely their own work. **Completed examinations are due at your TA’s office no later than 2:25 p.m. on 14 May.**

g. Grading summary.

Seminar participation / quizzes:	150 points	15%
Lecture quizzes:	50 points	5%
Proposal:	100 points	10%
Mid-term examination:	200 points	20%
Writing requirement	200 points	20%

Final examination 300 points 30%

h. Grading scheme.

92-100%	A
87-91.9%	AB
82-86.9%	B
77-81.9%	BC
72-76.9%	C
67-71.9%	D
0-66.9%	F

5. Grading standards for written work.

a. Organization:

(1) Does the essay begin with an effective introduction that (a) engages the reader, (b) identifies historical problem under consideration, and (c) posits the student's thesis?

(2) Do paragraphs comprise discrete ideas defined by identifiable topic sentences?

(3) Does the student make effective use of transitions (especially between paragraphs)?

(4) Does the student arrange his or her paragraphs (ideas) in a logical sequence that furthers the argument while maintaining a coherent, chronological narrative?

(5) Does the student conclude with a summary of the paper's most salient findings and (if appropriate) an allusion to their broader significance?

b. Use of sources:

(1) Is the student's research adequate?

(2) Does the student make significant / sufficient use of primary sources?*

(3) Does the student over-rely on select secondary sources or non-scholarly sources?

(4) Does the student make appropriate use of the *best available* sources?

(5) Does the student effectively use evidence from these sources to further his or her argument?

(6) Does the student understand the historiography of his or her topic?*

(7) Does the student make excessive or inappropriate use of direct quotations?

c. Overall:

(1) Does the student present an original, compelling argument substantiated by appropriate historical evidence? Would a general, educated reader find the argument compelling?

(2) Does the student demonstrate mastery of the subject matter?

(3) Is the essay well written? Would a general, educated reader understand it and enjoy reading it?

(4) Is the essay properly formatted and free of errors?

* Research paper only.

6. How to succeed in this course.

- a. Do the reading.
- b. Attend all class meetings (lectures and seminar discussions).
 - (1) Be seated and prepared to take notes at 9:55 p.m.
 - (2) Turn off cell phones in class. Prof. Hall or the TAs will answer phones that ring; repeat offenders will be asked to leave.
 - (3) Coordinate anticipated absences, late arrivals, and early departures ahead of time.
 - (4) Prof. Hall expects personal explanations for unanticipated tardiness immediately following class.
- c. Contribute to discussions.
- d. Take notes—in class and while reading. Laptops are permitted in class for note-taking and referencing purposes only. Prof. Hall reserves the right to revoke laptop privileges for those who abuse them.
- e. Work ahead on all graded requirements and submit them on time. **Late submissions will be penalized 10% the moment they are late with additional 10% deductions every twenty-four hours unless students negotiate an extension prior to the original due date.** Submissions will not be accepted after the return of other students' graded submissions.
- f. Do your own work. Doing otherwise defeats the purpose of taking the course. Prof. Hall will investigate and punish suspected cases of plagiarism in accordance with Chapter 14 of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code.
- g. Seek assistance from the professor or TA if you are struggling or do not understand the expectations.

7. Course texts.

- a. Students are responsible for acquiring the following texts:

Finkel, David. *The Good Soldiers*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

Millett, Allan R., and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*. Revised and expanded ed. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.

Schmidt, Hans. *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987.

Slotkin, Richard. *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005.

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

b. The following essays are available on Learn@UW.

Birtle, Andrew J. "PROVN, Westmoreland, and the Historians: A Reappraisal." *The Journal of Military History* 72, no. 4 (2008): 1213-1247.

Davidson, Phillip B. "The Strategy of Revolutionary War." In *Secrets of the Vietnam War*, 17-27. Novato, CA: Presidio, 1990.

Fall, Bernard B. "Revolutionary War in South Vietnam." In *Last Reflections on a War*, 218-223. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967.

Flint, Roy K. "The Truman-MacArthur Conflict: Dilemmas of Civil-Military Relations in the Nuclear Age." In *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States, 1789-1989*, edited by Richard H. Kohn, 223-267. New York: New York University Press, 1991.

Krepinevich, Andrew F. "A Strategy of Tactics." In *The Army and Vietnam*, 164-193. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Sledge, E. B. "Chapter 5: Another Amphibious Assault." In *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*, 114-138. New York: Presidio Press, 2007.

Course schedule.

LSN	Date	Topic	Reading
1	1/23	Introduction	None
<i>American Identity & Interventionism</i>			
2	1/25	Review & Summary: American Military History to 1899	Schmidt, 1-37
3	1/28	An Imperial Constabulary	Schmidt, 38-95; M&M, 334-38
S1	1/28-29	Seminar Discussion 1	~
4	1/30	Modernizing the Military Establishment, 1899-1914	Slotkin, 1-29; M&M, 316-34
5	2/1	Identity & Preparedness	All: M&M, 338-42; Slotkin, 29-34 Group A: Slotkin, 35-71 Group B: Slotkin, 72-111
<i>The Great War</i>			
6	2/4	WWI to American Entry	M&M, 346-60; Slotkin, 112-51
S2	2/4-2/5	Seminar Discussion 2	~
7	2/6	Over There: America Enters the War	M&M, 360-72; Slotkin, 153-212
8	2/8	The Great War at Sea	Slotkin, 213-39; Schmidt, 96-109
9	2/11	Building the AEF, Breaking the Stalemate	M&M, 372-76; Slotkin, 241-74
S3	2/11-12	Seminar Discussion 3	~
10	2/13	Trial by Fire: The Meuse-Argonne Offensive	Group A: Slotkin, 275-303 Group B: Slotkin, 305-63
11	2/15	German Defeat, American Disappointment	Slotkin, 395-461
12	2/18	Conducting Oral History	PROPOSALS DUE!
S4	2/18-19	Seminar Discussion 4	-
<i>The Interwar Years</i>			
13	2/20	Military Policy between the Wars	M&M, 380-407; Schmidt, 202-51
<i>World War II</i>			
14	2/22	Germany First...?	M&M, 413-27, Overy, 25-44
15	2/25	Economies at War	M&M, 427-35; Overy, 180-244
S5	2/25-26	Seminar Discussion 5	Overy, xii-24
16	2/27	Victory at Sea by '43	M&M, 435-46; Overy, 44-62
17	3/1	War without Mercy in the PTO	Sledge
18	3/4	The Soviet Contribution	Overy, 63-100
S6	3/4-5	Seminar Discussion 6	~
19	3/6	The Promise of Airpower	M&M, 450-66, 474-78; Overy, 101-33
L1	3/7	<u>The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Losing War in 1943</u> , Prof. Robert Citino, U. of North Texas	7 PM, Wisconsin Veterans Museum

20	3/8	The Invasion of Normandy	M&M, 466-74; Overy, 134-79
21	3/11	Strategic Leadership	M&M, 478-86; Overy, 245-81
S7	3/11-12	Seminar Discussion 7	~
22	3/13	Why <i>did</i> the Allies win? Mid-Term Review & distribution of take-home exam questions	Overy, 282-330
~	3/15	Compensatory drop—no lecture	~
<i>Colonialism, Revolution, & the Origins of the Cold War</i>			
23	3/18	The Truman Doctrine	M&M, 494-507; Westad, 8-38; Submit exams
S8	3/18-19	Seminar Discussion 8	S8
24	3/20	Race, Civil Rights, & the Cold War	Westad, 39-72
25	3/22	The Korean War: KMAG & TF Smith	M&M, 508-27
26	4/1	Korea: Limited War	Flint
S9	4/1-2	Seminar Discussion 9	~
27	4/3	The New Look: Nuclear Deterrence & Revolution	M&M, 531-52; Westad, 73-109
28	4/5	The Flexible Response: Intervention in the '60s	M&M, 553-63; Westad, 110-57
<i>The Vietnam War</i>			
29	4/8	Roots of Conflict	M&M, 570-89; Westad, 158-180
S10	4/8-9	Seminar Discussion 10	Westad, 180-194
30	4/10	<i>Dau Tranh</i> —the People's War	Davidson; Fall
31	4/12	Westy's War	Krepinevich
32	4/15	Tet & the War at Home	TBD
S11	4/15-16	Seminar Discussion 11	~
33	4/17	"A Better War" Considered	M&M, 589-93; Birtle
34	4/19	The Helicopter War (special presentation by Rick Berry)	M&M, 593-601; Westad, 194-206
35	4/22	Legacies, Foreign & Domestic	Submit writing requirement
S12	4/22-23	Seminar Discussion 12	~
<i>From Cold War to GWOT</i>			
36	4/24	The Cold War in Iran & Afghanistan	M&M, 607-14; Westad, 288-330
37	4/26	The Reagan Offensive	M&M, 614-28; Westad, 331-63
38	4/29	Apparent Victory: Collapse of the Soviet Union & the Gulf War	M&M, 628-42; Westad, 364-95
S13	4/29-30	Seminar Discussion 13	~
39	5/1	"Peacekeeping": The 1990s	Westad, 396-407
40	5/3	Afghanistan & Iraq, pt. 1	Finkel, Chapters 1-3
41	5/6	Afghanistan & Iraq, pt. 2	Finkel, Chapters 4-6

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S14	5/6-7	Seminar Discussion 15	Finkel, Chapters 7-8
42	5/8	Panel Discussion: Modern War	Finkel, Chapters 9-10
43	5/10	Review & distribution of take-home examination questions	Finkel, Chapters 11-13
	5/14	Examination essays due at TA's office no later than 2:25 PM	