

**UNIVERSITY**  
**A681 History through Wargaming: Case Studies in Decision Making**

**Advance Sheet**

**Instructors:** Dr. Jonathan Abel, DMH, and Dr. James Sterrett, DSE

**Course Meetings:**

**Location:**

**Contact:**

**Course Objective**

This course provides students the opportunity to examine historical decision making in a digital simulation environment, as well as to gain a better understanding of the evolution of tactics and the operational art. Students will make tactical- and operational-level decisions in order to discuss the ramifications of their choices. Ultimately, the course fosters a better understanding of decision-making.

To achieve the objectives stated above, students study the evolution of tactics and the operational art from the late medieval period through the modern era. Students will be presented with a different medium each week that is dedicated to a particular scenario and time period. They will run the simulation, either in teams or individually, and then they will assess the simulation and lessons learned via AARs.

**Scope of the Course**

To achieve the objectives stated above, the students study the evolution of operational art from the late medieval period through the present. This seminar uses the case method to explore issues of leadership as well as logistical and tactical/operational decision-making throughout history. The officers will use case studies to analyze historical operational and tactical decision-making. Officers will be divided into small teams, each tasked with planning the attack or defense of a specific map/real location. The teams will use historical doctrine, logistics, and tactics to inform the planning of their actions. They will meet in the classroom to develop their critical thinking skills and their understanding of the use of history, and they will incorporate elements of design into their decision making and analysis.

**Course Philosophy and Methodology**

This course is predicated upon the assumption that true learning is the responsibility of the student and that the goals of this course (comprehension of principles, analysis of complex developments, and stimulation of interest in the subject) are best achieved through the active interplay of:

- (1) Positive student initiative
- (2) The exchange of knowledge, insights, and experiences within the class
- (3) Proper instructor guidance

A681 will be conducted as a fully interactive seminar with only introductory or summary commentary by the instructor. Class discussion and decision-making exercises will focus upon topics outlined in the course material.

The seminar format assumes **active** student preparation and participation.

**Conduct of the Course**

The course will consist of eight three-hour classes that will meet digitally during the assigned class time. Before class, students will explore the various decision games they will use in class. Classes will consist of a mix of game explanations, execution, and discussion. The students will give oral AARs of their plans and decision making and will critique the plans and decision-making of other students.

### Course Requirements

- a. Attendance and Participation in all simulations.
- b. Written AARs, due before the beginning of the subsequent class meeting.

### Evaluation Procedure

Student grades for the course will be based on the instructor's subjective evaluation of student participation in class discussion, student oral presentation, and the assigned written paper. Course requirements are weighted as follows:

- (1) **Class participation** will account for **30%** of the course grade.
- (2) **AARs** collectively will account for **70%** of the course grade.

Grades will be awarded as prescribed in CGSS Bulletin No. 903, *Academic Performance, Graduation, and Awards Policies and Procedures*.

Feedback will be provided to the student and the SGA via CGSC Form 1002 at the end of the course for students receiving an "A", "C", or "U". Any student whose performance is identified by the instructor by lesson 5 as marginal or failing will be notified informally by the instructor, with suggestions for improvement.

### Lesson Plan

- Battle for Moscow
  - Tutorial/demonstration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j9h28sjKuQ>
  - Teaching BfM to a 10-year-old: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3rpskENdFQ>
  - Discussion Questions
    - What challenges did the Germans face in conquering the USSR?
    - What challenges did the Soviets face in defending against the German attack?
- Drive on Paris
  - Discussion Questions
    - What challenges did the Germans face in conquering France?
    - What challenges did the French face in defending against the German attack?
- Napoleon 1806 (same system as 1807)
  - How to Play/Review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-schhVOy20>
  - Discussion Questions
    - What challenges did Napoleon face in fighting his war in Poland?
    - What issues did the Russians have in defending against the paradigm army of the period?
- Friedrich
  - How to Play: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv-cr7G62\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv-cr7G62_Q) Start 1:20 in.
  - Discussion Questions

- How did Friedrich win the war? What does that illustrate about his strategic thought?
    - The Allies had far more power than Prussia. Why could they not easily defeat it?
- Nevsky
  - Sequence of 3:
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VSW-ys6M94&t=94s>
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vYH3L4t7BU>
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0sIIWpMenI>
  - Discussion Questions
    - What challenges did medieval war leaders face?
    - What lessons might be learned from medieval warfare?
- Supply Lines of the American Revolution
  - How to Play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLLVfdNm9LA>
  - Discussion Questions
    - What issues did the British have in putting down an insurgency and defeating a conventional enemy?
    - What issues did the Patriots have in defeating a superpower?
- Race to the Rhine
  - Intro/review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIOJVMAM-5E>
  - Intro/review: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYHZFGH\\_Fnc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYHZFGH_Fnc)
  - Discussion Questions
    - The Germans are not even a playable character. Why did the Allies struggle to overcome them, based on the game?
    - Do operations drive logistics, or do logistics drive operations?
- Triumph & Tragedy
  - Extended demo playthrough/tutorial, part 1 of 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p-E2KuZK2A>
  - Discussion Question
    - What role does each element of national power play in competition and conflict?