

SYLLABUS: War and the United States, 1898–Present (50:512:376)

Class Times: Mo/We 2:05 – 3:25 p.m.

Class Location: Fine Arts, Room 242

Instructor: Prof. Kate Epstein

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Office Location: 429 Cooper St., Room 204

Office Hours: Mo / We 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Course Description: Cuba, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan: War has been central to modern US history. The nation currently spends about \$600 billion a year on its military, or more than the next seven nations combined. Even when the United States is nominally at peace, its military power reaches across the globe. There was not a single year in the 20th century that the United States did not have forces fighting or stationed overseas.

Why did war become so important to the United States? How has the growth of US military power affected its position in the world? This course attempts to answer those questions. It begins with the United States' first major overseas conflict, the Spanish-American War of 1898, and continues through the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We will study battles and generals, as well as the evolution of military institutions, labor markets, doctrine, technology, finance, logistics, and culture. Throughout, we will explore the relationship between Americans and their military in war and peace.

General Education: This course is approved for US in the World (USW) and Writing Intensive (WRI) General Education credit.

Learning Goals: The learning goals of this course are as follows:

- 1) To improve students' understanding of modern US military history, and to equip them for more advanced study.
- 2) To improve students' ability to analyze complex information, in the form of primary and secondary sources.
- 3) To improve students' ability to formulate and communicate original arguments about historical evidence, especially in writing.
- 4) To provide students with historical context for interpreting contemporary issues related to the US armed forces, and to develop their capacity to think critically about such issues.

Office Hours and Advising: You are very welcome to come see me with questions and comments. My office hours will be Monday and Wednesday, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. You are not required to make an appointment in advance, but I would appreciate it if you would do so so that I can avoid making people wait. If you wish to see me outside my office hours, please feel free to make an appointment.

Writing Resources: In addition to seeing me, there are two other on-campus resources for assistance with your writing that I recommend. One is the Writing and Design Lab (<https://wdl.camden.rutgers.edu>), through which you can arrange to receive one-on-one help. The other is the History Department's own writing tutor, Kari Thomas.

You can also check out the folder called “Writing Resources” on Sakai, which has some guides I’ve written on grammar and style, paragraph structure, and footnoting.

Readings: The required readings for this course combine primary sources (those written by people living at the time being studied) and secondary sources (those written by historians). All readings are available on Sakai. You are not required to purchase any books.

I have either scanned the primary sources from elsewhere or edited them myself. To assist you in reading them, most of them contain an introduction to the source providing context and questions (at either the beginning or end of the source) for you to consider. Please read the primary sources in the order they are listed on the syllabus, which is usually chronological.

There is no assigned textbook, but if you wish to consult one, I recommend Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America from 1607 to 2012* (New York: Free Press, 2012; 3rd edition). I have included the relevant page numbers from this book in the syllabus below, but again, reading this book is NOT required.

Assignments and Grading: All assignments in this class are mandatory. I take attendance.

The readings and lectures are intended mutually to reinforce each other. You should do the readings BEFORE the class for which they are listed on the course schedule, so that you can discuss them intelligently and do not encounter the information for the first time in my lecture.

In addition to the lectures and the readings, you will have three take-home papers. The first two will be 4–6 pages each and the last one will be 8–10 pages. We will discuss the specifics of what I want to see in your papers as the due-dates approach, but in general, you need to state your arguments clearly and support them with evidence. The due dates of the papers are as follows:

- Paper 1: Wednesday, February 12 (Week 4) [optional rough drafts due by Wednesday, February 5, optional rewrites due Wednesday, March 4]
- Paper 2: Monday, March 30 (Week 11) [optional rough drafts due by Monday, March 16]
- Paper 3: Wednesday, May 6 (Week 16)

You may, but are not required to, submit a rough draft of EITHER the first OR the second paper (but not both, and not the third). Due dates for these optional rough drafts are listed above and below. You will also have an opportunity—again optional, not required—to rewrite the first paper for a higher grade.

The grading is weighted towards the end of the quarter, because I expect you to improve over the course of the quarter. Your grade will be distributed as follows:

- 10% for attendance and participation
- 20% for the first paper
- 30% for the second paper
- 40% for the third paper

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is not a minor offense prosecuted by teachers in order to torment you: it is a major offense prosecuted to give justice to the victims and to deter the same behavior in the future. If I catch you plagiarizing—and there are tools to help me do so—I will report you. The consequences of plagiarism can include expulsion.

You can see the University's policy on plagiarism here:
<http://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/student-experience/academic-integrity-policy/>.

If you are ever in doubt whether or not you are plagiarizing, it is best to err on the side of caution and cite your source. You should also feel free to ask me.

CLASS SCHEDULE

THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*** READINGS ARE TO BE DONE BEFORE, NOT AFTER, THE CLASSES FOR WHICH THEY ARE LISTED***

Week 1

1) Jan 22 → Introduction

Week 2

2) Jan 27 → The Spanish-American War

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 252–281 [OPTIONAL]
- William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, pp. 38–46 (“There are three central considerations”... “after World War II”)
- David Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, pp. 13–14, 21, 42–43, 52–54, 58–59
- President McKinley's First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1897
- Petition from Businessmen to the Secretary of State, 17 May 1897
- President McKinley's First Annual Message to Congress, 6 December 1897
- Senator Redfield Proctor's speech of 3 March 1898
- President McKinley's message to Congress, 11 April 1898
- Congressional resolutions on war with Spain, April 1898
- Excerpts from *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, February–April 1898

3) Jan 29 → Discussion of Spanish-American War readings

Week 3

4) Feb 3 → Other Wars of Empire

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 282–308 [OPTIONAL]
- Brian Linn, excerpts from “‘The American Way of War’ Revisited”
- William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, pp. 46–57
- Albert Beveridge, “The March of the Flag,” 1898
- Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League, 1899
- Platt Amendment, 1901
- John Hay, first Open Door note, 1899

5) Feb 5 → World War I: Over There / OPTIONAL ROUGH DRAFTS OF FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 309–338 [OPTIONAL]
- Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916–1931*, 50–67
- President Woodrow Wilson, “Peace without Victory” speech, January 1917
- President Woodrow Wilson, Declaration of War, April 1917
- General John J. Pershing, “Combat Instructions for Troops of the First Army [of the American Expeditionary Force],” August 1918

Week 4

6) Feb 10 → World War I: The Homefront

Readings

- David Kennedy, *Over Here*, 99–106
- Christopher Cappozola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 1–17
- W. E. B. Du Bois, “World War and the Color Line,” 1914
- Carrie Chapman Catt, “The Crisis,” 1916

7) Feb 12 → Interwar I: Doctrine / FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 339–366 [OPTIONAL]
- Excerpts from Thomas Hone, Norman Friedman, and Mark Mandeles, *American and British Aircraft Carrier Development*
- US Army, *Field Service Regulations 1923*, pp. 11–19, 21–24

Week 5

8) Feb 17 → Discussion of first papers

Feb 19 → NO CLASS

Week 6

9) Feb 24 → Interwar II: War and Society

Readings

- Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys*, 170–78
- William Leuchtenberg, “The New Deal as Analogue of War,” 81–85, 104–10, 127–33, 142–43
- David Kinley, “Editor’s Preface,” *Federal Military Pensions in the United States* (1918)
- President Franklin Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, 1933

10) Feb 26 → The Coming of World War II

Readings

- Excerpts from Justus Doenecke and John Wilz, *From Isolation to War*
- President Franklin Roosevelt, Address in Chicago, October 1937
- President Franklin Roosevelt, “On the European War,” Fireside Chat, September 1939

- Charles Lindbergh, “Neutrality and War,” October 1939
- “Plan Dog” Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Secretary of the Navy, November 1940

Week 7

11) Mar 2 → World War II in Europe and the Pacific

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 367–381, 391–439 [OPTIONAL]
- Excerpts from Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed*
- Barton J. Bernstein, “The Atomic Bombings Reconsidered,” 148–51
- Gar Alperowitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth*, 663–68

12) Mar 4 → World War II at Home / OPTIONAL FIRST PAPER REWRITES DUE

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 381–391 [OPTIONAL]
- James Sparrow, *Warfare State*, 119–21, 133–56
- Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 62–100
 - Listen to this one-minute audio excerpt from an interview with Walter Morris, an African-American World War II veteran, speaking about racial discrimination on base: <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.02946/>
- The Atlantic Charter, August 1941
- “Where Does Mr. Hull Stand?” *Chicago Defender*, December 1942

Week 8

13) Mar 9 → Discussion of the Decision to Use the Bomb

Readings

- “Atomic Bomb Readings” on Sakai (introductory note—read this first)
- “Atomic Bomb Primary Sources” on Sakai
- Re-familiarize yourselves with the Bernstein and Alperovitz readings (from the class on “World War II in Europe and the Pacific”)

14) Mar 11 → Strategies of Containment

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 440–453 [OPTIONAL]
- Excerpts from John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*
- Aaron O’Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps*, 187–95, 204–15
- Excerpts from Harold Lasswell, “The Garrison State,” 1941
- George Kennan, the “Long Telegram,” February 1946
- NSC-68, 1950

Week 9→ NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Mar 16→ OPTIONAL ROUGH DRAFTS OF SECOND PAPER DUE

Week 10

15) Mar 23→ The Korean War

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 453–460 [OPTIONAL]
- Excerpts from William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*
- Dean Acheson, Speech to the National Press Club, January 1950

Mar 25→ NO CLASS

Week 11

16) Mar 30→ From New Look to Flexible Response / SECOND PAPER DUE

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 460–506 [OPTIONAL]
- Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, “The Evolution of Foreign Policy,” January 1954
- NSC 5810/1, May 1958
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Address,” January 1961
- President John F. Kennedy, Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs, May 1961

17) Apr 1→ Vietnam I

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 507–568 [OPTIONAL]
- Robert Buzzanco, “The Politics of Escalation in Vietnam during the Johnson Years”
- Transcript of telephone conversation between President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Richard Russell, May 1964
- Documents on the Gulf of Tonkin incident, August 1964
- Memorandum from National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy to President Johnson, July 1965

Week 12

18) Apr 6→ Vietnam II

Readings

- Michael Allen, *Until the Last Man Comes Home*, 9–11, 24–29, 40–47, 69–76, 179–81
- President Lyndon Johnson, Address to the Nation, March 1968
- Richard Nixon, Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention, August 1968
- President Richard Nixon, Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, November 1969

- Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*, 4–8, 116–28, 137–46, 149–50, 153–63, 201–03, 227–31, 264–70, 276–85, 299–306, 314–37, 341–43

19) Apr 8 → Vietnam III

Readings

- Meredith Lair, *Armed with Abundance*, 183–221
- Reviews of Lair’s book by Marc Leepson and other members of the Vietnam Veterans of America
- Excerpts from Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*

Week 13

20) Apr 13 → Discussion of the Vietnam War

21) Apr 15 → The Hollow Force

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 569–576 [OPTIONAL]
- Beth Bailey, *America’s Army*, 21–24
- Report of the Gates Commission [President’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force], 23–28
- Robert Altmeyer, “Is the Army a Welfare State? Let’s Hex the PX,” *National Review* 22 (24 March 1970): 300
- General Harold Moore [Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel], “A Busy Year of the ‘Hard Look’ at People Policies,” *Army Magazine* (October 1975): 45–46 [“We must be able” to end]

Week 14

22) Apr 20 → Hot War

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 576–624 [OPTIONAL]
- Michael Reynolds, “The War’s Entangled Roots: Regional Realities and Washington’s Vision,” 23–32
- President Ronald Reagan, Address to the National Association of Evangelicals, March 1983
- Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, “The Uses of Military Power,” November 1984
- President George H. W. Bush, Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council, March 1991
- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, “US Forces: Challenges Abroad,” 1992

23) Apr 22 → The “Peace Dividend”

Readings

- Excerpts from Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*

- Admiral William Owens, “The Emerging U.S. System-of-Systems,” February 1996
- General Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal,” January 1999

Week 15

24) Apr 27→ The “Long War,” Part I

Readings

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 624–680 [OPTIONAL]
- Conrad Crane, “Military Strategy in Afganistan and Iraq: Learning and Adapting under Fire at Home and Abroad”
- Excerpts from the Presidential Debate between George W. Bush and Al Gore, October 2000
- *Quadrennial Defense Review*, 30 September 2001, pp. 29–31
- Excerpts from FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*
- Excerpts from Evan Wright, *Generation Kill*
- Excerpts from Sebastian Junger, *War*

25) Apr 29→ The “Long War,” Part II

Readings

- Ditto

Week 16

26) May 4→ Conclusion

Readings

- Greg Jaffe, “Combat Generation,” February 2010
- Don Gomez, “When Hero Rings Hollow,” June 2011
- Andrew Exum, “US Needs Perspective, Not Pedestal, for Military,” August 2012

May 6→ NO CLASS, CLASSES OVER / FINAL PAPER DUE BY EMAIL