

HIST 5683: Specific Topics in Military History

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Spring 2021

Contact Information

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**Course Description**

This course examines warfare and its influence on society, identity, and state building in Europe from the medieval through the Cold War periods. It significantly differs from many other courses on military history at other institutions, because its philosophical foundation rests on the idea that war and conflict are a natural and immutable part of the human condition, and that violence is often a legitimate undertaking. The students will critically explore the history of conflict, particularly the so-called “Western Way of War”, develop an understanding of how humans and governments adapted to changing methods and philosophies of more or less organized violence, and try to fathom the experience of warfare for the common soldiers in each period examined. We will investigate and evaluate the social, psychological, and political ramifications on individuals, militaries, and state structures that war precipitates and see how the process of war evolved over time.

**Student Responsibility and Expectations**

Students are personally responsible for their own education. I am a harsh taskmaster and do not accept excuses that tend to be pervasive in today’s society. You are adults, and with age comes responsibility for your own actions or lack thereof. Active student participation in learning (which includes careful reading of ALL assignments, classroom engagement, attentive note taking and participation in discussions), the maintenance of a weekly study schedule, the completion of ALL assignments in a timely manner, adequate preparation for exams, and, when necessary, individual post-exam consultation with the instructor, is essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you turn in all assignments, pass your exams, and participate in discussions, you are not guaranteed a “good grade”. A is a designation for excellent work and product, and B for good work and product. If your enthusiasm, work ethic, written work, and test taking efforts are merely satisfactory, you will EARN a C. The bare minimum earns a D. Remember, I am here to help you, but I will not seek you out to do so. If you come to me, I will do my best to facilitate learning and sharpen your analytical and writing skills.

**Textbooks and Readings**

1) Geoffrey Parker (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 0521794315.

2) John Keegan*, The Face of Battle* (1976),9780670304325.

3) David Nicolle, *Armies of the Ottoman Turks, 1300-1774*, 9780850455113.

4) Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, 069102764. You can borrow one of my two or three copies during the semester.

Many of your readings will be articles on D2L.

Please order the books ASAP so you have them at the beginning of class.

Readings for the week MUST BE DONE by the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Summaries of EACH reading must be turned in at the beginning of the class period.

Recommended Text:

Morillo, Stephen with Michael F. Pavkovic. *What is Military History?* Polity Press, 2006. Use this book to become more comfortable with the basic assumptions, problems, and language of military history, including who does it and why as well as its broader epistemological issues. This book can also serve as a useful stepping stone for research into a variety of subjects.

**Academic Integrity, Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

**Notice:** Understand the following – it applies to all assignments. If you in any instance “cut and paste” from any internet source without citing that source (plagiarism) or use unapproved internet sources, you will fail the assignment in question. Depending on the severity of the offense, the professor reserves the right to employ any or all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its fullest extent.

**Requirements and evaluation**

Active class participation (including daily reading summaries) 15%

Two in-class presentations on topic of student choice 10%

First exam 10%

Second exam 10%

Final essay exam 10%

Final term paper 25%

Book Review 1 (student’s choice) 10%

Book Review 2 (Paret strategy book) 10%

| Final Grade | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| A | 90% plus |
| B | 80 – 89.9% |
| C | 70 – 79.9% |
| D | 60 – 69.9% |
| F | Less than 60% |

Exams: Three short answer and essay/research exams will be distributed during the semester. They will be of the take home variety and you will be given a week to complete them. They will focus on the readings and topics/discussions presented during class. The lengths of the essays and format requirements will be delineated on the assignment sheets. You will do 2-3 essays and identify 10 key terms/people/events as stipulated on the exams. **It is a violation of the honor code to discuss the exams or work on them as a group in any capacity**. If I discover that a student cheated or plagiarized, I will actively prosecute the offender to the fullest extent under MSU Texas guidelines. This also goes for the book review and final paper assignment (see below). The exams are meant to be analytical exercises that illustrate change over time. Regurgitating lecture and the textbooks will not be acceptable. I want to see the students engage in critical thinking about the subject and analyze changes in a temporal context. We will discuss expectations, essay length, etc. in class and requirements will be delineated on the exams themselves.

Research Paper: Each student will research, write drafts, and present a final paper on a research topic. The paper (4200 word minimum, but no longer than 6000, NOT including footnote or bibliography wordage) is to be on a topic of your choice (a meeting with me about it in the first two weeks of class would behoove you) that directly tackles an issue concerning warfare. You must have an approved topic by January 26 by the start of class. Start your research early, and as suggested, select a book to review that is directly relevant to your topic. The final paper is due during finals week. I strongly suggest that you start early. Since research and writing are skills that can only be acquired through doing, we will be dedicating some class time to preparation, research, writing, and rewriting the final paper. With this in mind, I have assigned deadlines for various parts of the paper to be turned in for evaluation throughout the semester. The student will produce a **working outline for the paper by the 6th week of class, a 1500- to 1800-word book review of a monograph related to your topic on February 26, a complete draft by April 13, and the final copy during exam week**. The student MUST do each of these steps and have them turned in ON TIME. Failure to do so will result in grade reductions for the paper.

Book Reviews: The book review may be a new exercise to some in the class. This is **NOT** a book report. Reviews are critiques of books in which the reviewer briefly describes the main thesis and the points the author uses to prove the argument. Once this is done, the reviewer critiques the book (is the argument believable, well researched, persuasive, well written). Does the author fulfill his or her stated or implied purpose? Is the argument subtle or ham-fisted? I will provide a “how to” sheet with a barebones description of how to do a short academic review. I suggest you use review essays from an academic journal (such as the *American Historical Review*) to get a feel for the academic purpose of the assignment. Now you might be asking yourself, “why do I have do this? I don’t intend to be a professional historian [or] I won’t ever take another course in this department.” Every academic field requires such critical exercises; furthermore, you may take a position after college in which the boss wants you to critique something in writing. This review will give you practice doing a formal critique.

The book you select for one review **CANNOT** be a novel or any other work of fiction. It must be an academic book or a substantial memoir with historical significance. It must be approved by the instructor **NO LATER THAN January 26 along with your paper topic**. For every day you are late in requesting approval, the final grade for the review will be lowered by 5%. I suggest you choose and read the book carefully in the first half of the semester to avoid the end of term flood of assignments. Early work is encouraged. It will be due, without exception, on **February 26 no later than 5pm**. The **second** book review is on the Paret book. It is more theoretical and may help you frame some or part of your final paper for the course. It has the same length requirement and is **due on March 30**. No late work will be accepted. The same goes for the exams.

Two in-class presentations: You must do two in-class presentations of 20-30 minutes each on some aspect of military history that fits the selected topic for the week it is given. Each student should meet with me to discuss the topics of interest for the presentations and have them approved by week 3 at the **latest**. They may be as broad or as specific as you like as long as you can present and keep the audience’s interest for 20-30 minutes. We can discuss how you would like to present these topics as well. It would behoove you to do at least one presentation on a subject related to your final paper project. This way you are killing two birds with one stone.

Participation: Active participation means not only attending class, but contributing to discussion, asking questions, and being engaged. Just showing up **IS NOT ADEQUATE**. If you can’t commit, there’s no reason to take the course. The summaries are a part of your participation grade (100 words for **EACH** reading assigned on that day, due in the first five minutes of class) and serve three purposes. First, it shows me that you are reading and understand the theses and main points of each assignment. Second, if done with a vision of your final paper and essay exams in mind, some may be used to help you craft the verbiage in your other written assignments. Third, and most importantly, you will have some of the take home essays done by putting in an effort with the summaries. In essence, you are writing parts of your assignments throughout the semester. Be sure to include all bibliographical information at the top of each summary so you have the necessary information immediately at hand.

**Extra Credit**

I do NOT offer extra credit.

**Make Up Work/Tests**

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse for missing a deadline. I have sole discretion in determining whether or not a reason is acceptable. University functions approved by the administration counts as excused. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof).

**Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

I use MSU’s D2L platform to post documents and make announcements. Each student must be familiar with it as it provides a source of communication between student and professor. In the first week, I will post the syllabus and readings. You can log into [D2L](https://d2l.mwsu.edu/) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. However, we will NOT use D2L email or chat in this course. If you need to contact me, use my regular email and please provide me with your preferred email at the beginning of the semester.

Online Computer Requirements

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer. ***Assignments are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!**

**Instructor Class Policies**

**Conduct**:  All students are expected to act as responsible adults. Any disruptions or distractions will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Below you will find general guidelines covering certain unacceptable actions and/or behaviors. As a general rule any behavior that disrupts class will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from class time, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request that the offending student leave the classroom. Furthermore, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student’s semester total or remove the student from the course. **Arriving late is considered a distraction**. If arriving more than ten (10) minutes late – **DO NOT** enter the classroom.

**Electronic Devices, Texting, and Phones:** The use of tape recorders, iPods, mp3s, or any other recording device in class is **prohibited**.  It is imperative that you turn off phones, all other communication devices, and electronic equipment before entering the classroom. The use of a telephone or texting device for any reason is prohibited. *On the first offense the student will be penalized 20 points on her or his participation score for the week. The second offense will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. The professor reserves the right to expel and administratively withdraw a student from the class upon the third offense.*

**Laptops, Tablets, etc.:** You must obtain permission from the professor to use laptops, tablets, and phones (or any other device capable of accessing the internet) in the classroom. Recent scholarship suggests that laptops and tablets are **major distractions** to fellow students and generally do not enhance learning or the classroom experience. Furthermore, there will be no surfing, texting, emailing, etc. in the classroom, unless I specifically ask the students to do so.

**E-mail**: Note that e-mail correspondence is the most effective and convenient way in which to communicate with me outside the classroom. The professor/student relationship is professional by nature and, accordingly, your e-mail correspondence should be constructed professionally. DO NOT use the D2L email function. Please provide me your preferred email at the beginning of the course, and check it daily. My email address is: [john.ashbrook@msutexas.edu](mailto:john.ashbrook@msutexas.edu). Again, DO NOT use the email function on D2L. I will NOT get your message if you do.

**Attendance and your grade**: I structured this course so that it is to the student’s advantage to attend class regularly.  From past experience, students who choose not to attend on a regular basis are not successful.  I allow one, and only one unexcused absence. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty to your participation grade. If you have a total of 3 unexcused absences, you will not be able to pass the course.

**Withdrawals (Course Drop):** The professor is NOT responsible for student withdrawals. The student is responsible for meeting all academic deadlines including withdrawal deadlines.

**Services for Students with Disabilities**: In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Student Disability Office](http://www.mwsu.edu/student-life/disability).

**Grade Appeal Process**: Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Graduate Catalog](http://catalog.mwsu.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=655#Appeal_of_Course_Grade)

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the professor.

**Course Schedule**

**Week I. The Study of War: Assumptions and Goals**

January 12: Keegan, 13-35

Wayne Lee, “The Origins of War and of the State,” in *Waging War: Conflict, Culture, and Innovation in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 9-45 [heretofore referred to as Lee in the syllabus]

Obama’s Nobel acceptable speech [link on D2L]

Pacifism philosophy page [link on D2L]

Wikipedia page “On War” from von Clausewitz [link on D2L]

**Week II. The Greek and Macedonian Ways of War**

January 19: Parker, 12-49

Keegan, 45-52

Barry Jacobsen, "Phalanx vs. Legion: Closing the Debate," <https://historyandsoon.wordpress.com/2015/10/30/phalanx-vs-legion-closing-the-debate/>

**Week III. The Roman Way of War**

January 26: Parker, 50-70

J. E. Lendon, “Caesar’s Centurions and the Legion of Cohorts,” in Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 212-232. [D2L]

Lendon, “The Romans: Conclusion,” 310-315. [D2L]

**You must have book review AND paper topic approval by beginning of class.**

**Week IV. The Steppe Warriors and Medieval European Heavy Cavalry**

February 2: Lee, “The Horsemen of Europe and the Steppe, 400-1450,” 151-177 [D2L]

DeVries and Smith, “The Stirrup, Mounted Shock Combat, Chivalry, and Feudalism,” 99-113 [D2L]

Andrew Ayton, “Arms, Armour, and Horses,” in in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 186-208 [D2L]

**FIRST EXAM DISTRIBUTED TO CLASS**

**Week V. Medieval Warfare in Europe**

February 9: Parker, 70-105

Keegan, 78-116

Timothy Reuter, “Carolingian and Ottonian Warfare,” in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13-35 [D2L]

R. L. C. Jones, “Fortifications and Sieges in Western Europe, 800-1450,” in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 163-185 [D2L]

**FIRST EXAM DUE BY 4PM February 11 VIA EMAIL**

**Week VI. Ottoman Warfare**

February 16: David Nicolle, *Armies of the Ottoman Turks, 1300-1774*, entire book

Mesut Uyar and Edward Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans* (Santa

Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2009), 81-174 [D2L]

**Working outline of paper project DUE**

**Week VII. Gunpowder the “Military Revolution”**

February 23: Parker, 106-117

Michael Roberts, “The Military Revolution,” in Clifford Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate* 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 1995), 13-29 [D2L]

Geoffrey Parker, “The ‘Military Revolution, 1560-1660’—A Myth?” in Clifford Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate* 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 1995), 37-49 [D2L]

Maurice Keen, “The Changing Scene: Guns, Gunpowder, and Permanent Armies,” in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 273-291 [D2L]

**BOOK REVIEW DUE BY FRIDAY February 26 5PM**

**Week VIII. The 30 Years’ War**

March 2: Parker, 146-176

For background: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty\_Years%27\_War

Jeremy Black, “The Thirty Years’ War,” *Teaching History* (63) (April 1991), 44-46 [D2L]

John A. Mears, “The Thirty Years' War, the ‘General Crisis,’ and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy,” *Central European History* 21 (2) (1988), 122-141 [D2L]

Jason Farr, “Point: The Westphalia Legacy and the Modern Nation-State,” *International Social Science Review* 80 (3/4) (2005), 156-159. [D2L]

**Week IX. Frederick the Great**

March 9: Parker, 176-192

Jay Luvaas, “Frederick and the Art of War,” *Frederick the Great on the Art of War* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 1-28 [D2L]

Luvaas, “The Anatomy of Battle,” 139-166 [D2L]

Luvaas, “The New War of Positions,” 263-305 [D2L]

**SECOND EXAM DISTRIBUTED TO CLASS**

**Week X. The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon**

March 16: Parker, 192-213

Keegan, 117-206

**SECOND EXAM DUE BY 4PM MARCH 18 VIA EMAIL**

**Week XI. The Crimean War**

March 23: Parker, 216-220

For background: <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/crimean-war>

Yakup Bektas, “The Crimean War as a Technological Enterprise,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 71 (3) (2017), 233-262 [D2L]

Willis Brooks, “Reform in the Russian Army, 1856-1861,” *Slavic Review* 43 (1) (1984), 63-82. [D2L]

**Week XII. The Russo-Japanese War**

March 30: Parker, 242-256

David Jones, “Military Observers, Eurocentricism, and World War Zero,” in David Wolff, et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, Volume 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 135-177 [D2L]

Tohmatsu Haruo, “Approaching Total War: Ivan Bloch’s Disturbing Vision,” in David Wolff, et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, Volume 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 179-202 [D2L]  
 **Paret Book review due**

**Week XIII. World War I and Industrialized Killing**

April 6: Parker, 233-241, 256-296

Keegan, 207-284

**Week XIV. World War II, More than Total War and Blitzkrieg!**

April 13: Parker, 298-339

United States Strategic Bombing Survey (Summary Report), 1945.

http://www.anesi.com/ussbs02.htm

Kenneth Werrell, “The Strategic Bombing of Germany in World War II: Costs

and Accomplishments,” *Journal of American History* 73 (3) (1986), 702-713 [D2L]

**COMPLETE** **DRAFT of Paper due**

**Week XV. Post-WWII Warfare**

April 20: Parker, 340-373

Keegan, 290-343

[Stanley Tambiah](http://www.jstor.org/action/doAdvancedSearch?si=1&Query=au%3A%22Stanley+J.+Tambiah%22&resultsServiceName=doBackToBasicResults&group=none&f4=all&c4=AND&acc=on&f3=all&c6=AND&f2=all&f1=all&f5=all&f6=all&c2=AND&c3=AND&c1=AND&q0=+Croatia%27s+bitter+harvest&c5=AND&f0=all), “Obliterating the ‘Other’ in Former Yugoslavia,” Paideuma 44 (1998), 77-95 [D2L]

Vladimir Rauta, “Proxy agents, auxiliary forces, and sovereign defection:

Assessing the outcomes of using non-state actors in civil conflicts,”*Journal of Southeast European & Black Sea Studies* 16 (1) (2016), 91-111 [D2L]

**FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED TO CLASS**

**BOTH THE FINAL EXAM AND TERM PAPER ARE DUE DURING EXAM WEEK!**