

American Military History

| HIST 174 | Fall 2021 | Mon-Wed 1815-1930 | Georgen 108 |

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Required Coursework and Grading

- **Three scheduled quizzes** will be given as noted on the syllabus. Each quiz counts 10 points and is based on material in the class lectures, plus a general knowledge of American history (biography, geography and chronology). Each of the three quizzes covers the specific period noted. Missed quizzes may not be made up unless you informed me ahead of time that you would be missing class.
- **Five Papers** are required as described below and must be handed in or e-mailed by the end of class on the date due – be aware that late papers will lose points. Papers should be double-spaced with a 10 to 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Papers may be e-mailed in PDF format (preferred) or Word; or printed out and handed in at class – double-sided printing is preferred. You may use any citation style you are comfortable with and are encouraged to include maps, photographs, and other graphics that are relevant to the topic. The military has had enormous impacts on American society, culture, politics, technology, medicine, food, consumer goods, transportation, race relations, etc. In addition, wars and the military have left many lasting impacts ranging from veteran health care, education and pensions to environmental issues such as toxic wastes, cluster bombs, and land mines. All of these are good topics and there are many more.
 - **Paper 1 – *Guns, Germs & Steel* – Did Jared Diamond get it right? (10 points)** – Due 29 September – Write a 2 to 3-page paper giving your opinion about Diamond’s thesis that environmental determinism was the primary factor in the rise of European technological superiority. Provide specifics about what you think he got right or wrong. Several articles supportive and critical of Diamond will be posted on Blackboard and covered in class lectures. Diamond has admitted that he did not emphasize human agency in his book, but keep in mind that the decisions made by humans were constrained by the resources available to them at the time, including but not limited to the environment and available technology.
 - **Paper 2 – Veteran Interview (15 points)** – Due at the last class meeting on 8 December. Track down a relative, friend or anyone else who has served in the U.S. Military (ROTC service alone does not count) or another country’s military service (there are a few around town). It is not necessary that they served during wartime. Interview them about their military career and submit a 5-page (or longer) summary of their experience along with your reaction based on what you have read and learned in this course. The subject’s name or other specific details need not be identified if anonymity is requested. A narrative is preferred rather than a list of questions and answers. Provide some background on the subject’s unit and location at the time they served, including pictures, maps, and other information. If you can’t find a veteran let me know well before the due date and I’ll get you in touch with one. As an option, you can write about a veteran (such as a grandfather, etc.) who is no longer with us but left enough information for you to write a decent paper.
 - **Papers 3-5 – (15 points each):** Select three topics and write a 2 to 4-page paper for each one that are due on October 18, November 17, and December 18. For references you can use books, movies, battlefields or museums. E-mail me if you have any questions about your chosen topic(s) or sources.
 - **Book review** – Read one or more books about a military history-related individual or topic and write a review about what you learned and how well the author addressed the subject matter.
 - **Movie review** – Watch one or more movies about a military history-related topic and write a review about what you learned and how well and accurately it presented the subject matter.
 - **Visit a battlefield** and write a review describing the battle, who was involved, why it happened when and where it did, and what the current battlefield site offers tourists and historians. Nearby battlefields include Ganondagan in Victor; Lundy’s Lane in Niagara Falls; Newtown; Saratoga; Bennington; Oriskany; Ticonderoga; Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill in Massachusetts; Fort Necessity & Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, Antietam in Maryland, and the Erie Maritime Museum and USS *Niagara* at Erie, Pennsylvania.
 - **Visit a military museum** and write a review describing the museum, who runs it, what exhibits they have, and your impression of what it offers tourists and historians. Examples include the Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum in New York City; the USS *Constitution* Museum in Boston (which is very close to the Bunker Hill battlefield and monument); the National Warplane Museum in Geneseo; the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park in Buffalo; the New York State Military Museum in Latham; and the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum in Albany.
 - **Research paper** – As an alternative to the papers #3-5, you can research and write a 10 to 15-page quality research paper worth 45 points on any military topic that is of interest to you (not limited to American military history).
- **Grades** will be posted for each assignment on the course web page on Blackboard. Course grade will be determined on the total number of points earned in the course, with letter grades assigned based on the following scale:

94-100	A		83-84	B-		73-74	D+
91-93	A-		80-82	C+		70-72	D
88-90	B+		78-79	C		67-69	D-
85-87	B		75-77	C-		0-66	E

- **Movies/videos** – Documentary videos and movies related to the course will be shown.
- **Reading** – Literally thousands of books have been written American Military History. Some general histories available on-line are listed on Blackboard and others are on the course reference page.
- **Other resources** – Class powerpoint slides will be posted on Blackboard, along with links to relevant videos, articles and other material. Feel free to suggest additional materials that should be included.

Section I - Conquest, Settlement, and Independence - 1607-1820

1	25 August Introduction and Historical Background	Discussion of course objectives and grading. What is military history, and why is it important? Sources of military history. How did White people get all the cargo?
2	30 August Background	Agricultural Surpluses and the Rise of Ancient Empires Video Guns, Germs & Steel – Part 1, Out of Eden
3	1 September Background	The Crusades Video Guns, Germs & Steel – Part 2, Conquest
	6 September	Labor Day – No class
4	8 September Background	Wars of Religion – “Kill them all. God will know His own” Arnaud-Arnaury, the Abbot of Citeaux, 1209. Video Guns, Germs & Steel – Part 3, Into the Tropics
5	13 September European exploration and settlement of America	"The discovery of America was due to the failure of the crusade against the Turks," <i>The Catholic Encyclopedia</i>
6	15 September Colonial Wars	"Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all." George Washington, 1759
7	20 September Colonial Wars	How George Washington started the French and Indian War. Video - When the Forest Ran Red.
8	22 September The Revolutionary War	"Don't one of you fire until you see the whites of their eyes." Prescott at Bunker Hill
9	27 September The Revolutionary War and the War of 1812	<i>Status quo ante bellum</i> , Treaty of Ghent, December 24, 1814 Quiz 1 - Covers 1607-1820

Section II - Building a New Nation - 1821-1930

10	29 September Indian Removal, Manifest Destiny, and War with Mexico	"I know [the battle] is lost, but the volunteers don't know it. Let them alone, we'll see what they do." Taylor at Buena Vista. Paper #1 - Guns, Germs & Steel Due – Did Jared Diamond Get It Right?
11	4 October King Cotton and Civil War	"If you like your slaves, you can keep them."
12	6 October The Civil War 1861-1862	"Those not skinning can hold a leg." Lincoln "The Emancipation Proclamation was uttered in the first gun fired at Sumter," Seward
	11 October	Fall Break – no class
13	13 October The Civil War 1862-1863	"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." Lincoln
14	18 October The Civil War and Reconstruction 1863-1877	"The government of the United States has in North Alabama any and all rights which they choose to enforce in war, to take their lives, their houses, their land, their everything, because they cannot deny that war exists there, and war is simply power unconstrained by constitution or compact." Sherman Paper #3 due
15	20 October Steam, Oil and Steel	"The supreme ships of the Navy, on which our life depended, were fed by oil and could only be fed by oil. The decision to drive the smaller craft followed naturally upon this. The camel once swallowed, the gnats went down easily enough." Churchill, 1923.
16	25 October The Frontier and the Empire	"Naval power can reach no further ashore. For tenure of the land you must have a man with a rifle." Admiral George Dewey, 1898.
17	27 October The Great War and the Bad Peace	"Good lord! You're not going to send soldiers over there, are you?" U.S. Senator Thomas S. Martin, April 6, 1917. Quiz #2 covers 1821 - 1930

Section III - America as a World Power - 1930-?

18	1 November The Road to World War II	"The war isn't over. The hate and evil is greater now than ever. Very soon war will break out again and overwhelm you ... the Germans will soon rise again." D. H. Lawrence, November 11, 1918
19	3 November World War II – Poland, France, and American Rearmament	"I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again; your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." FDR campaign address in Boston, October 30, 1940
20	8 November World War II – Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal and North Africa	"As for the Japanese, they will be ground to powder," Churchill, December 7, 1941
21	10 November World War II - Sicily, Normandy, Pacific Island Hopping, and Submarines	"You will enter the continent of Europe and, in conjunction with the other United Nations, undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces." Directive to Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, February 12, 1944.
22	15 November The War in Europe – D-Day to Berlin	"Nuts!" General Anthony McAuliffe's response to German surrender demand at Bastogne, December 22, 1944.
23	17 November The War in the Pacific	"Thank God for the Atomic Bomb," Lt. Paul Fussell Paper #4 due
24	22 November The Cold War: Korea, Cuba, Berlin, and Mutual Assured Destruction	"I am beginning to think that what we need is a type of staff officers with at least three heads—one political, one economic, and one military," Gen. George Arthur Lincoln, 1945. "An iron curtain has descended across the Continent," Winston Churchill, March 5, 1946
	24 November	Thanksgiving – no class
25	29 November Vietnam and the Race to the Moon	"We shan't have to leave our fortress, now, when we want to blow up civilization," Mark Twain Quiz #3 - 1930 - 1975
26	1 December The Cold War Won (wasn't it?)	"It is beneath our dignity to retaliate against the terrorists who blew up the Marine barracks," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. John W. Vessey, 1983 "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Reagan, June 12, 1987
27	6 December Iraq, Afghanistan, and The Limits of Military Power	"We Will, In Fact, Be Greeted as Liberators," Dick Cheney, 2003 "The American people are weary of war without victory," Donald Trump, 2017
28	8 December Getting ready to fight the next war.	"I have seen much war in my lifetime and I hate it profoundly. But there are worse things than war; and all of them come with defeat." Ernest Hemingway Paper #2 Veteran Interview Due
	18 December (Saturday)	Paper #5 due at 10 AM

The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 2 periods of 75 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 174 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for their papers.

Students with disabilities: The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the [Office of Disability Resources](mailto:disability@rochester.edu) at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Academic honesty: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>. For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "[Defining Plagiarism](#)"