
Political Science 279/479 (W)

WAR AND THE NATION-STATE Fall 2025

Hein Goemans

Harkness 337

Hours: Wed: 12:30–1:30

henk.goemans@rochester.edu

Course Information:

Tues/Thursday 14:00–15:15

Sections: Friday TBD

Harkness Hall 329

4 Credit Hours

Contact Information and Preferences

Feel free to address me with my first name, I go by **Hein**. The best way to communicate with me outside of class is by email. Please include the course number and your section in the subject line of the email (PSC 279/479). It can take me 1-2 business days to respond to email.

Office Hours Office Hours are on Wednesday 12:30 to 1:30. In exceptional cases we can schedule an office meeting outside these hours. Harkness Hall 337. Office hours are an opportunity for you to ask questions and seek clarification on course material. Please complete the readings on a topic you would like to discuss.

If you need to communicate something of a personal or sensitive nature, please contact me directly via email at henk.goemans@rochester.edu to set up an appointment. I will be happy to meet with you.

This **lecture** course examines the development of warfare and growth of the state. In particular, we examine the phenomenon of war in its broader socio-economic context between the emergence of the modern nation-state and the end of World War II. Students are required to do all the reading, which may add up to hundreds of pages per week, and are required to make a (potentially joint) presentation in class on the readings for one class (25% of the grade). Students have the choice between a research paper and a final exam that covers the whole course (75%).

For this class I feel it is necessary to warn that some of the readings will directly confront you with the horrors of war. And they are truly horrors. There is just no way around this, if we want to even begin to understand war. There will be some books with pictures that you may want to skip, I fully understand that.

Prerequisite Courses

PSC/INTR 106 or another introductory course is a pre-requisite for this course. When a student has adequate preparation, I can waive this requirement..

Credit Hours Credits allocated: 4 credits. This course will include 150 minutes per week of lecture time (two lectures at 75 minutes each), 50 minutes per week of time (one time per week) for discussion among the students, and 400 minutes per week of out-of-class student work (e.g., reading assignments, writing, research, problem sets, study time, and other unsupervised work).

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Provide an overview of how broad technological and sociological changes affected the causes, conduct and consequences of war.
2. Explain how these changes interacted.
3. Offer a synopsis of how war was fought in the Napoleonic era to the First and Second World War.
4. Convey why war is such a terrible thing with depth and breadth.
5. Explain some of the most important factors in modern war fighting.

See Teaching Center website for more information about writing course learning outcomes.

Course Details

War and the Nation State Schedule				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:00 – 3:15	2:00 – 3:15 Harkness 329		2:00 – 3:15	TBD
Complete: Reading		Complete: Reading		Harkness 329 Discussion

Academic Integrity

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (<http://www.rochester.edu/living/urhere/handbook/discipline2.html#XII>). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

The World Wide Web

A number of websites will prove useful:

1. General History of the 20th Century
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/>
 - <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/20centry.htm>
 - <http://www.fsmitha.com/>

2. On the Franco-Prussian War

- <http://uk.geocities.com/fpw1870/contents.html>

3. On World War I

- <http://www.duke.edu/~hgoemans/WWI.htm>
- <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/index.shtml> and from there:
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/launch_ani_western_front.shtml

4. On World War II

- http://dobias.webz.cz/m_dohoda_de.htm (München Agreements 1938)
- <http://www.duke.edu/~hgoemans/WWII.htm>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwtwo/index.shtml> and from there
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwtwo/launch_ani_campaign_maps.shtml
- <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/>

Texts

I may make some minor tweaks in the syllabus during the semester, but the course largely builds on the following books which should be available at Amazon.com. Since this is a long list, I list in bold books that you definitely should get.

1. **William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power, Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982**
2. Michael Howard. *War in European History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Paperback, 1976
3. Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1983
4. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Ashfield Press, 1986.
5. Paul Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, London: Fontana Press, Paperback, 1989
6. Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*. Cambridge University Press; 2 edition (March 15, 2004)
7. Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera, eds., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War, Revised and Expanded Edition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991
8. Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2010.
9. Sean McMeeking, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.
10. Christopher Clark. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. HarperPerennial, 2014.
11. **Alistair Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*, New York: Penguin Books, 1964**
12. Liddell Hart, *The Real War 1914–1918*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964
13. Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941–45*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985
14. **R. J. Overy, *Russia's War*, Penguin Books, New edition, 1998.**
15. **Christopher Browning. *Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998.**

16. Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and The Pacific*, New York: Longman, 1987
17. David Kennedy, *Over Here*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980
18. Ronald Schaffer, *Wings of Judgment*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985
19. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, Basic Books; 1st Edition edition, 2012
20. Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Tim Duggan Books; 1st edition, 2017
21. Kalevi Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989* (Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Series Number 14), Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Course Outline

Tuesday August 26

1. Introduction and Global Historical Background

- <https://secretaryofdefenserock.substack.com/p/the-war-studies-problem?r=376i7r>.
- William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*, Chapters 3–5, pp.63 – 184
- Michael Howard, *War in European History*, chapters 4–5, pp.54–93

Optional:

- Elizabeth R. A. Brown. “The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe.” in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (October), 1974: 1063 – 1088.

Thursday August 28

2. Introduction and Global Historical Background

- Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, chapters 2–4, pp.8–59
- William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A history of the human community*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963. Chapters XI, XII, pp. 565 – 726

Optional:

- Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change, Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992, Chapters 3–5, pp.56 – 139

General Themes

Tuesday September 2

3. Nationalism and War

- Clausewitz, *On War*, Books 1, 2 and 8.

Thursday September 4

4. Nationalism and War

- R. R. Palmer, “Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bulow: From Dynastic to National War,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Edward Meade Earle (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1943), pp.49 – 74
- Barry Posen, “Nationalism, the Mass Army and Military Power,” *International Security*, Vol.18, No.2 (Fall 1993), pp.80 – 124
- Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, “Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Autumn) 1996, pp.5 – 40.

Tuesday September 9

5. Industrialization and War

- Karl Lautenschlager, “Technology and the Evolution of Naval Warfare,” *International Security*, Vol.8, No.2. (Fall 1983), pp.3–51
- Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, introduction and Chapter 7, pp.xiii – xxx, 177 – 204
- Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 3, pp.87 – 108
- Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, Chapter 8, pp.108 – 129

Optional:

- Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2010.
- Geoffrey L. Herrera, “Inventing the Railroad and Rifle Revolution: Information, Military Innovation and the Rise of Germany.” in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*. Vol. 27, No. 2, (June) 2004: 243–271.
- Philip Knightley. *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Thursday September 11

6. Democratization and War

- Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs: Part 1,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12 (Summer 1983), 205–35
- Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs: Part 2,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12 (Fall 1983), 323–53

- Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, “Democracy, War Initiation, and Victory,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (June) 1998: 377 – 389.
- Aili Mari Tripp, “War, Revolution, and the Expansion of Women’s Political Representation,” *Politics & Gender*. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-gender/article/war-revolution-and-the-expansion-of-womens-political-representation/0B6D93DC7900178B8B66F502078D3FFD>

Tuesday September 16

7. Bureaucratization and War

- Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*. Cambridge University Press; 2nd edition (March 15, 2004)

Optional:

- Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Chapters 1 – 3.
- Eugene O. Porter, “The Evolution of the General Staff,” in *The Historian*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn 1945), pp.26–45.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24436018.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:f7883debfdcf3efb8276b1e04c77e7cc>
- Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1880 – 1914*, Chapter 5.

Causes of the World Wars

Thursday September 18

8. Causes of World War I

Military Strategy

- Michael Howard, “Men Against Fire: Expectations of War in 1914,” in Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, 2 – 19
- Jack Snyder, “Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984,” in Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, 20 – 58
- Stephen Van Evera, “The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War,” in Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, 59 – 108
- Scott D. Sagan, “1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense, and Instability,” in Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, 109 – 133
- Marc Trachtenberg, “The Meaning of Mobilization in 1914,” in, Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, pp.195 – 225

- Terence Zuber, “The Schlieffen Plan Reconsidered.” *War in History*, 1999 6(3): 262 – 305

Tuesday September 23

9. Causes of World War I

Domestic Politics

- Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Optional:

- Immanuel Geiss, “The Outbreak of the First World War and German War Aims,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.1, No.3 (July 1966), pp.75–91
- Eckart Kehr, “Anglophobia and Weltpolitik,” in his *Economic Interest, Militarism and Foreign Policy*, pp.22–49

Thursday September 25

10. Causes of World War I

Systemic Explanations

- Dale C. Copeland. *The Origins of Major War*, Chapters 1 – 4, pp.1–117.

Optional:

- Ludwig Dehio, *Germany and World Politics in the 20th Century*, Chapters 1-3
- A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics*, Chapter 13
- Robert Powell, “Stability and the Distribution of Power,” in *World Politics*, Vol. 48 #2 (January 1996), pp.239–67
- R. Harrison Wagner, “Peace, War and the Balance of Power,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88(3) (September 1994), pp.593–607

Tuesday September 30

11. Causes of World War I

Systemic Explanations

- Jack Levy and William Mulligan, “Why 1914 and Not Before? A Comparative Study of the July Crisis and Its Precursors.” Unpublished ms. APSA 2019.
- Sean McMeeking, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.

Optional:

- Christopher Clark. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. HarperPerennial, 2014.

Thursday October 2

CLASS CANCELLED

Tuesday October 7

12. Causes of World War II

Versailles and its consequences

- Holger Herwig, “Clio Deceived, Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War,” in Miller, ed., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, pp.262 – 301
- John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, introduction, Chapter 6

Thursday October 9

13. Causes of World War II

Deterring the Third Reich

- Hein Goemans, “Appeasement reconsidered: Did the British Cabinet believe Hitler had unlimited aims?”, unpublished ms.
- John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Chapters 3–4
- Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, Chapter 10
- Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 1

Optional:

- David Reynolds, “Churchill and the British ‘Decision’ to Fight on in 1940: Right Policy, Wrong Reasons,” in Richard Langhorne, ed., *Diplomacy and Intelligence During the Second World War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp.147 – 167

Tuesday October 14

Fall Break

Thursday October 16

14. Causes of World War II

Deterring the Empire of the Rising Sun

- Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and The Pacific*, entire book

Conduct of the World Wars

Tuesday October 21

15. Conduct of World War I

Attrition Warfare

- John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, Chapter 4
- Alistair Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*, entire book

Optional:

- B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Real War 1914–1918*, entire book

Thursday October 23

16. Conduct of World War I

The Homefront

- David Kennedy, *Over Here*, prologue, Chapters 1, 2 and 6
- Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men At War, 1914-1918, National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, Oxford: Berg, 1992.

Tuesday October 28

17. Conduct of World War II

The Ground War on the Eastern Front

- R. J. Overy, *Russia's War*, Penguin Books, New edition, 1998.

Or, alternatively:

- Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian–German Conflict*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985.

Thursday October 30

18. Conduct of World War II

The Killing Machine and the Eastern Front

- Christian Streit, “Wehrmacht, Einsatzgruppen, Soviet POWs and anti-Bolshevism in the emergence of the Final Solution,” in *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, pp.103 – 118
- Christopher Browning. *Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998. Entire book.
- “Hunger Plan,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunger_Plan
- “Generalplan Ost,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generalplan_Ost
- Be sure to check out this animation of Western Allies Bombing Campaigns in Europe September 1939 - May 1945:
https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/anflpp/oc_western_allies_air_missions_through_world_war/

Optional

- Omer Bartov, “Soldiers, Nazis, and the War in the Third Reich,” *Journal of Modern History*, March 1991 pp.44 – 60
- Christopher Browning, “The Decision Concerning the Final Solution,” in Francois Furet, *Unanswered Questions*, pp.96 – 118
- Richard Breitman, “Himmler, the architect of Genocide,” in David Cesarani, *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 73 – 84
- Jürgen Förster, “The relation between Operation Barbarossa as an ideological war of extermination and the Final Solution,” in *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, pp.85 – 102
- Christian Streit, “Wehrmacht, Einsatzgruppen, Soviet POWs and anti-Bolshevism in the emergence of the Final Solution,” in *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, pp.103 – 118
- Omer Bartov, “Operation Barbarossa and the origins of the Final Solution,” in *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, pp.119 – 136
- Jonathan Steinberg, “Types of Genocide? Croats, Serbs and Jews, 1941–45,” in *The Final Solution; Origins and Implementation*, pp.175 – 193

Tuesday November 4

19. Conduct of World War II

The Killing Machines on the Eastern Front

- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, Basic Books; 1st Edition edition, 2012

Thursday November 6

20. Conduct of World War II

War with Japan

“Death of the Ball Turret Gunner”
Randall Jarrell

From my mother’s sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

- Schaeffer, *Wings of Judgment*, Chapters 2, 6 – 8
- Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, Chapter 7

Tuesday November 11

21. Conduct of World War II

War with Japan

- John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy; Race and Power in the Pacific War*, New York: Pantheon Books. 1987.

For racial attitudes check out:

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/>. You’ll be surprised by the author.

Thursday November 13

22. Conduct of World War II

War with Japan

- Iris Chang. *The Rape of Nanking*. New York: Penguin Books, c1997.
- Of interested might be this “Nanking-denier”: Masaaki, Tanaka. *What Really Happened in Nanking: The Refutation of a Common Myth*. Tokyo: Sekai Shuppan, 2000.
- Hal Gold, *Unit 731 Testimony; Japan's Wartime Human Experimentation Program*. Tokyo: Yenbooks. 1996.

The Termination and Consequences of War

Tuesday November 18

23. The Termination of War

- H. E. Goemans, *War and Punishment; the causes of war termination and the First World War*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Robert Pape, “Why Japan Surrendered,” in *International Security*, Vol.18, No.2 (Fall 1993), pp.154 – 201.

Optional:

- Dan Reiter, *How Wars End*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Thursday November 20

CLASS CANCELLED

Tuesday November 25

War from 1648 to 1945

- Hein Goemans and David Carter, “Re-Imagi(ni)ng Territorial Disputes.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. Vol. 28:133-149 (Volume publication date June 2025) <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-024152>

Optional

- Kalevi Holsti. *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989* (Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Series Number 14), Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Tuesday December 2

The Consequences of War

- Gary Bass, “*Jus Post Bellum*” in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 32(4) (Fall 2004), pp.384 – 412.
- G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001. Chapters 5 & 6, pp.117 – 214.

Thursday December 4

The Consequences of War

Read two of the following novels, or substitute another of your choice, after consultation:

- Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*.
- Robert Graves, *Good-Bye to All That*.
- Ernest Hemingway, *Farewell to Arms*.
- Sebastien Japrisot, *A Very Long Engagement*.

Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research

1. *What is the central question?*

- Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?
- What is being explained (what is the dependent variable and how does it vary)?
- How does this phenomenon present a puzzle?

2. *What is the central answer?*

- What is doing the explaining (what are the independent variables and how do they vary)?
- What are the hypotheses, i.e., what is the relationship between independent and dependent variables, what kind of change in the independent variable causes what kind of change in the dependent variable?
- What are the causal mechanisms, i.e., why are the independent and dependent variables so related?
- How do the independent variables relate to each other?
- What assumptions does your theory make?
- Is the theory falsifiable in concept?
- What does this explanation add to our understanding of the question?

3. *What are the possible alternative explanations?*

- What assumptions are you making about the direction of causality?
- What other explanations might there be for the phenomenon of study, and to what degree do they conflict with the central answer?
- Could the hypothesized relationships have occurred by chance?

4. *Why are the possible alternative explanations wrong?*

- What is the logical structure of the alternative explanations (compare 2)?
- What is the empirical evidence?

5. *What is the relationship between the theory and the evidence?*

- What does the research design allow to vary, i.e., in this design are the explanations variables or constants?
- What does your research design hold constant, i.e., does it help to rule out the alternative competing explanations?
- How are the theoretical constructs represented empirically, i.e., how do you know it when you see it (measurement)?

6. *How do the empirical conclusions relate to the theory?*

- How confident are you about the theory in light of the evidence?
- How widely do the conclusions generalize, i.e., what might be the limitations of the study?
- What does the provisionally accepted or revised theory say about questions of broader importance?