

HIST 404-102  
War, Technology and Power Politics

Spring 2025

Office hours:

Mon. & Wed.: Noon – 12:30 pm

Tues. – 4:30-5:00 pm or

By appointment

Instructor: Dr. K.W. Schweizer

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Tuesdays 6 pm to 9 pm

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Course Description:

This course will examine important themes in the inter-relationship between warfare, politics, technology, and society from the beginnings of modern warfare until World War I. Primary emphasis will be on the historical connections between violent conflict, the technical means by which this is carried out, the socio-political environment within which war takes place, and the diplomatic context and consequences of armed conflict as well as the evolution of tactical doctrine. It will demonstrate that societies determine the nature of warfare, and war likewise affects the evolution of society. Evidence will also show how powerful states have shaped world systems' dynamics by determining the structure, key processes and general parameters of global interactions.

Among the themes to be explored are the nature and role of technical change, the relationship between military and political developments (via strategy), ideological justifications of power and territorial expansion, the impact of power transitions as well as the rise of a world market economy sustained for long by maritime capability.

Course Goals: By the end of the course, students will be able to better:

- Understand the intricate connections between international relations and war, tested against historical evidence. This will enhance their understanding of world politics, systemic power distribution as well as economic patterns and trends.
- Understand the complex relationship between science, technology and tactical doctrines.
- Realize how military strategy has always and continues to translate armed force into intended political effects. This will enable students to better understand the core dynamics behind contemporary global security dilemmas.
- Time allowing, there will also be some discussion of selected, military theorists whose ideas have shaped the major currents of modern military thought and as such are still worthy of study today.

### Assignments and Marks:

Written Assignments:	40%
Midterm Quiz	20%
Final Quiz:	30%
Class Attendance and Participation:	10%

### Grading Scale for Assignments and Participation:

A = 85 – 100	B+ = 80 – 84.5	
B = 75 – 79.5	C+ = 69.5 – 74.5	
C = 65 – 69.5	D = 50 – 64.9	F = 49.9 - 0

### Course Requirements:

- There will be 4 in-class written assignments throughout the course and each will be 5 to 6 pages in length.
- These assignments will be based on class lectures, assigned readings, class handouts and occasional online links.
- No computers, phones, or other electronic devices as well as written or printed material will be permitted.
- Absence and makeup arrangements will only be permitted with an official notification from the Dean of Students.
- The assignments will equal 40% of the final class grade.
- Students taking the class acknowledge that they have carefully read and understand the entire syllabus (i.e. required reading, mark distribution, in-class writing assignments, etc.)

### Course Assignments:

1. Tuesday, February 11: First in-class written assignment.
2. Tuesday, February 25: Second in-class written assignment.
3. Tuesday, April 1: Third in-class written assignment.
4. Tuesday, April 15: Fourth in-class written assignment.

### Texts: (required readings)

William McNeill, The Pursuit of Power, Technology, Armed Force and Society Since AD 1000 (NY 2005).

James Nathan, Soldiers, Statecraft and History (West Point: 2002).

Michael Howard, War in European History (Oxford, 2009).

Jack Levy, War in the Great Power System 1495-1975 (Lexington, 2014).

## Semester Schedule:

**Tues. Jan. 21:** Introduction: Medieval Warfare: An Overview  
Readings: McNeill, ch. 2; Howard, ch. 1.

**Tues. Jan. 28 and Tues. Feb. 4:** The Advent of Modern War: Technology, Diplomacy and Emergent Great Power System  
Readings: Howard, ch. 2; McNeill, ch. 3; K.W. Schweizer, "Diplomacy," (to be supplied); Levy, ch. 2.

**Tues. Feb. 11: First In-Class Written Assignment**  
The Military Revolution: Evidence Pro and Con  
Readings: Howard, ch. 3; McNeill, ch. 4.

**Tues. Feb. 18:** Advances in the Art of War: Science, Technology, Political Consolidation  
Readings: Howard, ch. 4; Levy, chs. 3, 5.

**Tues. Feb. 25: Second In-Class Written Assignment**  
Diplomatic Organization, Military Transformations and the Balance of Power  
Readings: Nathan, ch. 3 (pp. 41-58); ch. 4 (pp. 60-67); K.W. Schweizer, "Diplomacy" (to be supplied); K.W. Schweizer, "British Foreign Policy 1689-1790: Origins, Aims and Dynamics," (to be supplied).

**Tues. Mar. 4:** Diplomatic Organization, Military Transformations and the Balance of Power  
Readings: Nathan, ch. 3 (pp. 41-58); ch. 4 (pp. 60-67); K.W. Schweizer, "Diplomacy" (to be supplied); K.W. Schweizer, "British Foreign Policy 1689-1790: Origins, Aims and Dynamics," (to be supplied).

**Tues. Mar. 11: Midterm Quiz**

**Week of March 16 – Spring Break**

**Tues. Mar. 25:** Warfare in the Age of Napoleon  
Readings: McNeill, ch. 6; Howard, ch. 5; K.W. Schweizer, "Clausewitz Revisited" (to be supplied).

**Tues. Apr. 1: Third In-Class Written Assignment**  
Wars of the Nations  
Readings: Howard, ch. 6; McNeill, ch. 7; Nathan, ch. 4.

**Tues. Apr. 8:** Wars of the Nations  
Readings: Howard, ch. 6; McNeill, ch. 7; Nathan, ch. 4.

**Tues. Apr. 15: Fourth In-Class Written Assignment**  
War, Society and the Industrial Revolution.  
Readings: McNeill, ch. 7; Levy, ch. 6; Howard, ch. 7.

**Tues. Apr. 22:** The Age of Total War  
Readings: McNeill, ch. 9; Nathan, ch. 7

**Tues. Apr. 29: Wrap Up Quiz**

Policies:

- This is an **intellectually demanding course** and all students will be expected to do all the readings listed in the syllabus.
- Attendance will be taken during each class. Absences will be excused only with documentation from the Dean of Students.
- Plagiarism in any written assignment will result in an automatic failure and will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- There will be no “make-up” quiz. If you miss the final quiz, documentation from the Dean of Students must be provided in order to make up the quiz.
- All submitted work must comply with the NJIT Honor Code. You can view NJIT Honor Code at: NJIT website, just Google: “academic integrity.”