

War and Constitutions PLSC 391

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Course Description: Humans have inflicted untold horrors on each other through wars of aggression and preemptive defense. Ironically, wars and the threat of war have also been responsible for some of the biggest franchise expansions in human history. Governments need manpower and money to fight, and depending on the capital- or labor-intensity of the prevailing war fighting technology, wartime mobilization can force governments to make democratizing concessions and/or to secure property rights for the rich. This course peruses the historical record, from Classical Athens and Republic Rome to the present, to gain an understanding of the evolutionary pressures on the nation state, and the impact of those pressures on political rights and freedoms.

Goals of the Course: The most important goal of this course is to provide students with the analytical and empirical tools for understanding the effects of war on constitutional structures across time and place. The modern “democratic republic”—which combines the somewhat contradictory elements of universal franchise and property rights—can be viewed as the result in some sense of bargaining in the face of external threats. But this constitutional structure is only a few centuries old, and many others were tried and failed. We will grapple with questions about what happened along the way, how stable our current systems of government are, and how they respond to pressures. Questions we will explore include the following:

- When do governments become more coercive during wartime, and when do they instead become more responsive?
- What kinds of states adapt poorly to military competition?
- Under what conditions does capital-intensive military technology give owners of capital a leg up in politics?
- Under what conditions does labor-intensive military technology give manpower a leg up in politics?
- How do terrain and topography affect politics?
- Is war still shaping politics today in discernible ways?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand the classic works on war and constitutions;
- Distinguish among types of constitutional design;
- Evaluate the effects of terrain and technology on politics throughout history;
- Understand territorial economies of scale and scope;
- Understand the importance of taxation, plunder, and loans in financing wars;
- Make informed judgments about political responses to military threats in contemporary settings;

- Evaluate social science theories critically, not only those about war and politics, but theories in general.

Course Assignments: Your grade will be based on regular class attendance and participation as well as on two short written assignments, a 10-minute in-class presentation on a 19th century revolution, and a final exam.

1. Short paper #1 (3-5 pages, 25%) due at the beginning of Week 3: Choose one from each of the following types of written assignments to play to your strengths as a thinker.
 - a. Choose a country and explain, in 3-5 pages, how military technology or territorial economies of scale affected that country's decision whether or not to fight in some period of its history;
OR
 - b. Choose a country and explain, in 3-5 pages, how a country's political situation affected a country's ability to fight at some point in its history;
OR
 - c. Create an ARC/GIS map of territorial changes in a country's size over a multi-year period. Did terrain shape the path of territorial change? Did changes in military technology alter the effects of terrain?
2. In-class presentation of a 19th century "revolution" (10%). Who wanted what? What did they get? Use numbers, tables, figures to present your argument.
3. Short paper #2, due at the end of the course (35%); this can be a new topic or deepen your first paper:
 - a. Choose a country and write a 5-8 page paper about how a war or military threat shaped the politics of that country at some point in its history. Who was most threatened by invaders? How did they respond? Who paid for the response? Were there any political repercussions? Were there any lasting effects?
 - b. You are a military commander of a country of your choice and at a time of your choosing. Write a 5-8 page memo to the government about why you favor going to war, and how you propose to win public support.
 - c. Create a multi-layered ARC/GIS map that shows terrain, political borders, and economic features such as population centers, income, trading routes or market integration. Which kinds of coalitions are more politically stable?
4. Final in-class test on the last day of class (30%): A combination of term identification, short answer, and brief essay questions to gauge your understanding of the course materials.

Readings: All readings for the course are available on Canvas.

Policies:

- Students are expected to attend every class session, do all of the reading before class, and come prepared to discuss it.
- Laptops and iPads are welcome in class ONLY for note-taking purposes and class room exercises, not for checking email, sending messages, shopping, etc.
- Cite all words, paraphrases, and ideas not your own.
- Late papers will be docked half a grade for every day past the due date.

Course Schedule:

Week 1a: Introduction

Questions: Why do nations fight? What kinds of regimes fight better than others? When does war generate political reform and when does war produce domestic repression? What accounts for the dramatically different political responses to the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries?

Week 1b: War and Politics in Democratic Athens and Republican Rome

Questions: At what junctures was the Athenian democracy most vulnerable? Did the nomothetai strengthen or weaken Athenian democracy?

Readings:

- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, "Pericles' Funeral Oration."
- John Hale, 2009, *Lords of the Sea*, pp. 77-109

Questions: How much influence did the lower orders have on politics? Why did Rome collapse? Consider counter-factuals: How successful would Rome have been militarily with alternative constitutional structures, for example the Athenian democracy or a more limited franchise?

Readings:

- Nathan Rosenstein, 1999, "Republican Rome," in Kurt Raaflaub and Nathan Rosenstein, eds., *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* Harvard University Press.

Week 2a: War in Ancient China and Medieval Japan, and Western Feudalism

Questions: What explains which kingdoms conquered the others? What were the elements of economies of scale in China? What were some possible diseconomies of scale that were overcome? What was the role of gunpowder in Japan's territorial centralization? How did Oda Nobunaga raise a large enough army to overcome the pockets of resistance? How different would Japan look today if he had failed?

Readings:

- Victoria Hui, 2004, *Toward a Dynamic Theory of International Politics: Insights from Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*
- Ferejohn and Rosenbluth, 2010, *War and Statebuilding in Medieval Japan*, chapters 1, conclusion

Questions: Much has been made of the stirrup. Evaluate the arguments that the stirrup was and was not instrumental to the rise of feudalism in Europe. What was the relationship between cavalry-based warfare and feudalism? How was feudalism similar and different in other parts of the world?

Readings:

- Douglass North and Robert Thomas, 1971, "The Rise and Fall of the Manorial System: A Theoretical Model," *The Journal of Economic History* 31/4: 777-803.
- Bernard Bachrach, 1999, "Early Medieval Europe," *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, Harvard University Press.

Week 2b: Aristocracies

Questions: How did small territorial powers such as Italian city states survive in a world of competing empires? Why did they eventually fail?

Readings:

- Machiavelli, *Discourses* Book II, 1-5
- Ferejohn and Rosenbluth, 2008, "Warlike Democracies," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- Brian Downing, 1992, "Poland," in *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, Princeton

Week 3: Nation States and their Political Forms

Questions: How did the French and Spanish monarchies fund their armies? How long did they succeed? Why was the English parliament successful in demanding a voice in decisions about war? What explains Maurice of Nassau's decision to move the capital from Antwerp to Amsterdam? What happened to the "power of the people" after the Dutch Revolt? Why did Sweden have a 4th Estate? What happened to it and why? Why did the Hanseatic League fail? What was the Polish government reluctant to build a standing army?

Week 3a: First paper due; The Rise of the Territorial State

Readings:

- Richard Bean, 1973, "War and the Birth of the Nation State," *The Journal of Economic History* 33/1: 203-221.
- Jan Glete, 2002, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*, chapters on Holland, Sweden

Week 3b: The American and French Revolutions and the Failed Revolutions of the 19th Century

Readings:

- Alexander Keyssar, 2000, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*, chapter 3
- Condorcet, 1790, "On Giving Women the Right of Citizenship"
- Brendan Simms, 1998, *The Impact of the French Wars*, chapter 3.

Questions: Who were the various groups of reformers in the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848? What were they against and what were they for? What kinds of coalitions did they form? Why did so few succeed?

Readings:

- (Students will each choose a country to explore)

Week 4: Modern Warfare

Questions: What percentage of the male population was mobilized in various combatant countries in World War I and World War II? How did this affect attitudes towards decisions about the war and about political participation in general? Why did universal franchise “stick” given the concerns of the wealthy about redistribution? Women did not generally bear arms. Why were females granted the franchise and what, if anything, did it have to do with war? How was the Vietnam War connected to the Civil Rights movement?

Week 4a: The World Wars

Readings:

- Onorato, Scheve and Stasavage, 2012, "Technology and Mobilization for War" Stanford University Working Paper.
- Therborn, 1988, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy," *The New Left Review*
- Adam Tooze, 2006, *The Wages of Destruction* Chapter 10.

Week 4b: Wars of Insurgency in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf

Readings:

- Lyall and Wilson, 2009, "Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counter Insurgency Wars," *International Organization*.
- Jeremy Weinstein, 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.
- Herring, 1991, "America and Vietnam," *Foreign Policy*.
- Avant, 2006, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*
- Tago, 2009, "When Are Democratic Friends Unreliable? The Unilateral Withdrawal of Troops from the 'Coalition of the Willing'" *Journal of Peace Research*.

In class:

- <http://www.c-span.org/video/?294138-1/wartime-contracts-private-security-firms>
- <http://www.c-span.org/video/?301307-1/wartime-contracting-iraq-afghanistan-final-report>

Week 5: War and Politics Today

Questions: How should non-combatants and prisoners be treated? What triggers citizen vigilance on matters of war and peace? Are democratic publics alert to the costs of debt-funded, unscripted war?

Readings:

- Johan Steyn, 2004, "Guantanamo Bay: The Legal Black Hole," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*.
- Paul Starr, 2009, "War and Liberalism" *The New Republic*.
- Mark Graber, 2006, "Voting Rights and Other 'Anomalies': Protecting and Expanding Civil Liberties in Wartime," in Baker and Stack, eds., *At War with Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*.

Final paper due and final in-class exam on the last day of class.