

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

**POL 237: MODERN WEAPONS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Spring 2023**

Class Meeting: TTH 12:00-1:15

Instructor

Keith Shimko
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+ by appointment
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Objectives: Whether it was the “smart” weapons used by the United States or the weapons of mass destruction it was looking for, the Iraq wars confirmed again the central importance of weapons technology and capabilities in international relations. During the past century the pace of change in military technology has accelerated greatly. It is easy to forget that a mere one hundred years ago many of the weapons that we take for granted today did not even exist. There were, for example, no tanks, bombers, or missiles, not to mention nuclear weapons or laser-guided munitions. In the centuries before the industrial revolution military technology changed slowly whereas today it seems that revolutionary new weapons appear every few years. Though the impact of changing military technology is most obvious in terms of the conduct of warfare, the effects do not stop there. Somewhat less obvious but by no means less important are the profound social and political consequences that often accompany changing military technology. In this course we will examine evolving military technology, both in terms of the immediate impact on the conduct and nature of war as well as the broader social and political implications of military change.

Many observers believe that we are at a critical turning point with new technologies fundamentally changing the way nations (especially the United States) prepare for and fight wars. These changes could, in turn, have a tremendous impact on American society, its military, and its relations with the rest of the world. We will examine this so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) from a historical and contemporary perspective.

tive. We will compare the current RMA to past military revolutions, such as the gunpowder revolution of the 1400s and 1500s as well as the changes in warfare wrought by the industrial revolution. The bulk of the course, however, will focus on the debates and challenges of the current revolution. Among the questions we will explore: Can air power win wars in places like the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, and Afghanistan without the use of ground forces or extensive American and local civilian casualties? Can and should the proliferation of nuclear weapons be prevented? And, most importantly, what does the American experience in Iraq since 2003 indicate about the role of technology in changing the character of warfare?

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and explain the impact/importance of the critical technologies in the emergence of modern total warfare
2. Explain the elements and requirements of nuclear deterrence (and debates about the requirements)
3. Discuss how contemporary information technologies have (and have not) changed the conduct of warfare

Readings: There are two texts for this class:

Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare and the Course of History* (Gotham, 2006)

Keith Shimko, *The Iraq Wars and America's Military Revolution* (Cambridge, 2010)

All other readings will be available on Brightspace

Grading:

There will be three *non-cumulative* exams in this class. To address concerns that a poor grade on one of these “high stakes” elements might be difficult to recover from, your lowest exam will be discounted to 20% of your grade while the others will be 40% each (in the past I have weighted the exams equally). Exams will consist of T/F questions and an essay.

The Grading scale is as follows (a 79.5 would rounded to an 80/B-):

A:	94 and higher
A-:	90-93
B+:	87-89

B:	83-86
B-:	80-82
C+:	77-79
C:	73-76
C-:	70-72
D+:	67-69
D:	63-66
D-:	60-62
F:	59 and lower

Make-Up Policy: If you are unable to take an exam on the scheduled date, notify me *before* the exam at the email address indicated above (unless, of course, there is a good reason you are unable to). For those who cannot take the exam for a legitimate reason (illness being the most likely), I will work with you to arrange a make up.

Classroom Etiquette: This class meets for 75 minutes twice a week (though rarely will class consume the full 75 minutes...partly because lecturing with a mask on is not the most pleasant of experiences). If you come to class, I expect you to remain until it is over. If there is some reason you need to leave early, tell me at the start and sit near a door so you can make an unobtrusive exit. If you feel there is some reason you may not be able to sit through a 75 minute class on a given day, please do not attend. If you think there will be many such days, please drop the class and take another.

Purdue policy this semester is that students (and instructors) must wear masks in class at all times. The university has made it very clear to instructors how we should proceed in the event a student does not:

*First, ask the student to put a mask on.
Second, if they do not have a mask, provide one.
Third, if they refuse to put it on, ask them to leave.
Fourth, if they do not leave, end the class.*

This is the university's policy and I have no latitude to alter or amend it.

Cellphones are to be turned off and put away at the start of class. They are not to be left on your desk or checked at any point during class.

Computers are not to be used in class. Research and my own experience demonstrates that students learn more and do better when they take written notes (which I suggest you do on printouts of the lecture PowerPoints that will always be posted well in advance of class in brightspace).

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

1/10: Organizational/Thinking About Weapons and Warfare

Scenes from *The Last Samurai*

PART I: MILITARY REVOLUTIONS IN HISTORY

Part I Learning Objectives

1. Identify the key elements of a “military revolution”
2. Explain how early gunpowder weapons contributed to the rise of modern state system in Europe
3. Trace the evolution of firearms/firepower in the 19th century
4. Explain how nationalism and industrialism contributed to the rise of modern total war
5. Differentiate and evaluate the different versions of strategic AirPower theory

1/12: What is a “Military Revolution”?

Boot, Introduction (pp. 7-16)

Shimko, *The Iraq Wars and American Military Revolution*, pp. 3-9

Krepenevich, “From Cavalry to Computer, *The National Interest*, Fall 1994, intro section

1/17: Gunpowder Revolution: The Military Roots of a Social/Political Revolution

Boot, pp. 19-24, 74-76

Geoffrey Parker, “The Gunpowder Revolution, 1300-1500,” in Geoffrey Parker, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 106-117.

1/19 and 24: The Napoleonic Revolution: The Social/Political Roots of a Military Revolution

Boot, 83-92.

John Weltman, *World Politics and the Evolution of Warfare* (Johns Hopkins, 1995), pp. 35-40.

MacGregor Knox, “Mass politics and nationalism as military revolution: The French Revolution and after, in Know and Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 57-66.

1/26 and 1/31: The Industrial-Military Revolution: Technology and Early Manifestations

Boot, 116-146, 196-201

2/2: The Industrial-Military Revolution: European Global Dominance

Boot, 77-83, 146-169

2/7 and 9: Total War on the Ground: World War I and the Triumph of Weapons – The Rise and Demise of the Continuous Front

Robert O’Connell, *Of Arms and Men* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 241-246, 251-256, 265-269.

2/14: Air Power in Theory

Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas About Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton, 2002), pp. 76-81, 289-293.

2/16: Air Power in Reality: Strategic Bombing and Blitzkreig

Boot, 268-304

Watch Video: *The Road To Total War*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPnppCelvk0&t=1061s>

*******2/21: EXAM #1*******

PART II: A NUCLEAR REVOLUTION?

Part II Learning Objectives

1. Explain the reasons for the emergence and demise of “massive retaliation”
2. Explain the elements and logic of “mutual assured destruction”
3. Explain the strategic dilemmas that emerged with the development of ICBMs and how the nuclear TRIAD could resolve these dilemmas
4. Identify the key elements of, and requirements for, nuclear deterrence

5. Explain why we have so few nuclear weapons states.

2/23 and 2/28: Nuclear Strategy in the Cold War: The Emergence of M.A.D.

No Readings

Watch: *Nuclear Strategy for Beginners*

www.youtube.com/results?search_query=nuclear+strategy+for+beginners

3/2: Was There Really a “Nuclear Revolution”?

John Mearsheimer, “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War,” *The Atlantic* (November 1990).

John Mueller, “The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons,” from *Retreat from Doomsday*, pp. 110-116.

3/7: Nuclear Proliferation: Why So Many Nuclear Powers? Why so Few?

Shimko, *International Relations*, Ch.11.

***** NO CLASS 3/9 *****

3/21: Nuclear Proliferation – Don’t Worry (or at least not so much)

3/23: Nuclear Proliferation – Worry (maybe a lot)

3/28: Nuclear Proliferation: Why Did/Do we Worry about Iran?

Robert Hunter, “The Iran Case: Why Countries Want Nuclear Weapons,” *Arms Control Today* (December 2004), pp. 22-25

Paul Pillar, “We Can Live with A Nuclear Iran,” *Washington Monthly* (March/April 2012).

Graham Allison, “The Nightmare this Time,” *Boston Globe*, March 12, 2006.

NOTE: I am not going to have time to lecture about chemical and biological weapons, but I will assign a few readings for you to do on your own (the other readings for this section, after all, are a little light), including (more will likely be added as we approach this section):

Mark Perry, "Why the World Banned Chemical Weapons," *Politico* (April 3, 2017).

***** 3/30: Exam #2*****

PART III: A NEW REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS?

Part III Learning Objectives

1. Explain the strategic context and logic of the "off-set strategy" and how the technologies it involved would allow the United States/NATO to defeat the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact.
2. Identify the elements of a "reconnaissance-strike complex"
3. Describe the different types of guided munitions and identify their strengths and limitations
4. Explain the logic of "parallel warfare" or "AirLand Battle."
5. Explain how the U.S. experience in Iraq illustrated the promise and limitations of key military technologies.

4/4: The Origins and Elements of a Contemporary Revolution in Military Affairs

Shimko, Chs. 1 and 2

4/6: The First War Against Iraq (1991): The Promise of the RMA?

Shimko, Ch. 3

4/11: Video: *The Gulf War*, part 2

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x76hx2z>

Though not required, it is a good idea to watch the first hour as well
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x76hx2y>

4/13: The RMA in the 1990s

Shimko, Ch. 4

4/18: The Afghan Prelude

Shimko, Ch. 5

4/20: The Second War Against Iraq (2003): The Promise of the RMA?

Shimko, Ch.5

4/25: Third Iraq War (2003 - ?): The Limits of the RMA?

Shimko, Ch. 6 and pp,

4/27: An RMA (?) and Its Future

Shimko, Conclusion

*******Exam #3: TBA*******

NOTE: Do NOT make plans to leave campus before you know the date of your final exams. That you (or your parents) bought a ticket or made plans before you knew the date of the exam **will not** be considered a reasonable basis for an accommodation.

Attendance:

Consistent with Purdue's policy, class attendance is not optional. That said, I do not take attendance and you do not earn/lose any credit based on attendance. I can assure you, however, that coming to class is the best way to do well in this class. Note also that while lecture PowerPoints will be posted on brightspace, the lectures **will not** be recorded and posted. The only way to access the lectures is to attend them.

Attendance: If You Feel Sick

Students should stay home and contact the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if they feel ill, have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or suspect they have been exposed to the virus. In the current context of COVID-19, in-person attendance will not be a factor in the final grades, but the student still needs to inform the instructor of any conflict that can be anticipated and will affect the submission of an assignment or the ability to take an exam. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency conflict, when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by email. When the student is unable to make direct contact

with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and 2 in cases of bereavement, quarantine, or isolation, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students via email or phone at 765-494-1747. If you become quarantined or isolated at any point in time during the semester, in addition to support from the Protect Purdue Health Center, you will also have access to an Academic Case Manager who can provide you academic support during this time. Your Academic Case Manager can be reached at acmq@purdue.edu and will provide you with general guidelines/resources around communicating with your instructors, be available for academic support, and offer suggestions for how to be successful when learning remotely. Importantly, if you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your academic case manager and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation. The Office of the Dean of Students (odos@purdue.edu) is also available to support you should this situation occur.

Classroom Guidance from Protect Purdue

The [Protect Purdue Plan](#), which includes the [Protect Purdue Pledge](#), is campus policy and as such all members of the Purdue community must comply with the required health and safety guidelines. Required behaviors in this class include: staying home and contacting the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if you feel ill or know you have been exposed to the virus, wearing a mask [in classrooms and campus building](#), at all times (e.g., no eating/drinking in the classroom), disinfecting desk/workspace prior to and after use, maintaining proper social distancing with peers and instructors (including when entering/exiting classrooms), refraining from moving furniture, avoiding shared use of personal items, maintaining robust hygiene (e.g., handwashing, disposal of tissues) prior to, during and after class, and following all safety directions from the instructor.

Students who are not engaging in these behaviors (e.g., wearing a mask) will be offered the opportunity to comply. If non-compliance continues, possible results include instructors asking the student to leave class and instructors dismissing the whole class. Students who do not comply with the required health behaviors are violating the University Code of Conduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office with sanctions ranging from educational requirements to dismissal from the university.

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person in a campus room (e.g., classroom) is threatening the safety of others by not complying (e.g., not wearing a mask) may leave the room without consequence. The student is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#).

Nondiscrimination Statement

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. More details are available on our course Brightspace table of contents, under University Policies.

Accessibility

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247. More details are available on our course Brightspace under Accessibility Information.

Emergency

In the event of a major campus emergency or Covid-19 related change in the mode of instruction, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.