

# POL 237 – Online Course Syllabus

## Course Information

### **Pol 237 Online: Modern Weapons and International Relations**

CRN: XXXX

Instructional Modality: Online-asynchronous

Course credit hours: 3 credit hours

Course duration: 16 weeks, Spring 2023

- Course State date: January 9, 2023
- Course End date: May 5, 2023

## Instructor Contact Information

### **Dr. Keith Shimko**

Office: BRNG 2236

Email: [kshimko@purdue.edu](mailto:kshimko@purdue.edu)

#### **Student consultations:**

- Dates: TH 2:00-4:00 (+ by appointment)
- Location: BRNG 2236 OR email to arrange a zoom meeting

### **Teaching Assistant:**

Shy Kunkel

Office: BRNG 2299

Email: [kunkel3@purdue.edu](mailto:kunkel3@purdue.edu)

#### **Student consultations:**

- Dates
- Location (Link to zoom or office)

## Course Description

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. 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?

## Course Learning Outcomes:

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

## Required Texts

- 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 (see "Readings" module under course content)

## Assignments and Grading

There are three components of your final grade:

1. For each of the 15 sections there will be quiz consisting of 10 True/False questions. Each of these quizzes will count for 10 points for a total of 150 points.
2. There will an exam for each module consisting of 50 True/False questions. Each exam will count for 50 points for a total of 150 points.
3. There will two group activities, one in module 2 and the other module 3. Each will result in graded group essay that will count for 50 points for a 100 points.

150 points — 15 section quizzes

150 points — 3 module exams

100 points — 2 group activities

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400 points total

Final grades will be assigned according to this scale:

376-400 A

360-375 A-

348-359 B+

332-347 B

320-331 B-

308-319 C+

292-307 C

280-291 C-

268-279 D+

252-267 D

240-251 D-

0-239 F

## Attendance and Late Work Policy

This course is designed as a fully online-asynchronous course with no scheduled face-to-face or synchronous virtual meeting times. University policy states that students are expected to be “present” for every class in which they are enrolled. For the purposes of this course, being “present” means participating remotely and completing work assigned on a weekly basis. This work is required to help you meet the course learning outcomes.

If you are unable to complete an assignment within the allotted availability for reasons excused by University regulations: grief/bereavement, military service, jury duty, parenting leave or certain medically excused absences (go to the [Office of the Dean of Students \(ODOS\) website](#) for details on how to submit those requests).

# Academic Guidance in the Event a Student is Quarantined/Isolated

For COVID-19 concerns, please see the [Fall 2022: What you need to know](#) guidance published July 27. If you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your adviser and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation.

## Course Content Overview

### MODULE 1: THE ROAD TO TOTAL WAR

#### *Module 1 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

#### **Section/Week 1 (week of Jan 9)**

##### *Topic 1: The Nature of Military Revolutions; Technology, Doctrine and Organization*

Video 1.1.1

Video 1.1.2

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

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

Boot, *War Made New*, Introduction (pp. 7-16)

##### *Topic 2: Gunpowder and the Emergence of the Modern State*

Video 1.2.1

Video 1.2.2

Shimko, *International Relations*, 2-6

Boot, pp. 19-24, 74-76

#### **Section/Week 2 (week of Jan 16)**

##### *Topic 1: The French/Napoleonic Revolution*

Video 2.1.1

Video 2.1.2

Video 2.1.3

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 Revolution and after, in Know and Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 57-66.

*Topic 2: The Early Industrial Revolution: Firearms, Railroads and Mass Production*

Video 2.2.1

### **Section/Week 3 (week of Jan 23)**

*Topic 1: The Industrial Revolution: Firepower Railroads and the Shape of things to Come*

Video 3.2.1 (mistakenly numbered...should be 3.1.1)

No Reading

*Topic 2: The Industrial Revolution: Rapid Fire Weapons*

Video 3.2.1

Philip Van Doren Stern, "Doctor Gatling and His Gun," *American Heritage* (October 1957)

Adrienne LaFrance, "People Thought Machine Guns Might Prevent Wars: They Were Wrong," *The Atlantic* (January 26, 2016)

Malcolm Browne, "100 Years of Maxim's Killing Machine," *New York Times* (November 26, 1985)

### **Section/Week 4 (week of Jan 30)**

*Topic 1: Technology and Imperialism*

Video 4.1.1

Boot, pp. 146-69

*Topic 2: The Great War: The Road to War*

Video 4.2.1

Video 4.2.2

No Reading

## **Section/Week 5 (week of Feb 6)**

*Topic 1: The Great War: The Tyranny of Technology*

Video 5.1.1

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

*Topic 2: The Great War as Total War*

Video 5.2.1

No Reading

## **Section/Week 6 (week of Feb 13)**

Topic 1: Airpower in Theory

Video 6.1.1

Video 6.1.2

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 (pp. 70-65 and 245-284 in ebook posted on bright space)

*Topic 2: Airpower in Reality*

Video 6.2.1

Video 6.2.2

Video 6.2.3

Video 6.2.4

Watch: *The Road to Total War* (YouTube)

## **MODULE 2: THE NUCLEAR REVOLUTION**

### ***Module 2 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.

## **Section/Week 7 (week of Feb 20)**

*Topic 1: The Superpowers and Nuclear Deterrence I*

Video 7.1.1

Joseph Siracusa, *Nuclear Weapons: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 10-26 (Ch 2)

Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, pp. 47-56; 60-61; 63-79

*Topic 1: The Superpowers and Nuclear Deterrence I*

Video 7.2.1

Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, pp. 81-94

Watch: *Nuclear Strategy for Beginners* (YouTube)

## **Section/Week 8 (week of Feb 27)**

*Topic 1: Was There a Nuclear Revolution? YES*

Video 8.1.1

John Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic*  
(November 1990), pp. 35-50

*Topic 2: Was There a Nuclear Revolution? NO*

Video 8.2.1

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

## **Section/Week 9 (week of March 6)**

*Topic 1: The History of Nuclear Proliferation*

Video 9.1.1

Shimko, *International Relations*, pp. 270-75

*Topic 2: Why Not More Nuclear Powers?*

Video 9.2.1

Video 9.2.1

No Reading

## **Section/Week 10 (week of March 20)**

*Topic 1: How Dangerous is Nuclear Proliferation?*

Video 10.1.1

Video 10.1.2

Video 10.1.3

Shimko, *International Relations*, pp. 275-284

*Topic 2: Iran and Nuclear Weapons*

Video 10.2.1

Video 10.2.2

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), pp. 13-19

Graham Allison, "The Nightmare this Time," *Boston Globe* (March 12, 2006).

## **Module 3: A NEW MILITARY REVOLUTION**

### ***Module 3 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.

## **Section/Week 11 (week of March 27)**

*Topic: A New Military Revolution?*

Video 11.1

Video 11.2



### Video 11.3

Shimko, Chs 1-2. Skip pp. 15-20 ("RMA Skepticism" and "Thinking About and new RMA")

Boot, *War Made New*, pp 318-322

Reading prompts:

In section 11 (and chapter 2) we identified a suite of technologies that form what is sometimes referred to as a "reconnaissance-strike complex." This was originally conceptualized as a way to offset Soviet advantages in numbers in the event of war in Europe. In the remainder of the sections/chapters of module 3 we discuss a series of military conflicts involving the United States from 1991 until 2010. The key question throughout is: in terms of the elements and technologies composing this "reconnaissance-strike complex,"

1. what do these conflicts indicate about their usefulness, effectiveness and potential to change/revolutionize warfare?
2. In what sorts of conflicts and settings are/were they more or less useful/effective and potentially revolutionary and why?
3. What do these conflicts reveal about both the promise and limitations of these technologies?

### Section/Week 12 (week of April 3)

*Topic: The First Iraq War, A Revolution Dawns?*

Shimko Ch 3

Boot, pp. 318-322

Watch: *Desert Storm - The Air War, Day 1 - Animated* (on YouTube)

Link:

Reading questions/prompts:

1. What were the key elements of the 1993 Iraq war plan? What were the elements and objectives of the air campaign in particular? To what extent were these objectives achieved?
2. What aspects of the 1991 Iraq war might support the argument that it marked a "revolution" or turning point in the history of warfare?

### Section/Week 13 (week of April 10)

*Topic: The Iraqi Interregnum: Somalia, Technology and Kosovo*

Shimko, Ch 4. Skip pp. 104-111 (“Military Operations Other Than War,” “The RMA and Net-Centric Warfare,” and “The System of Systems”)

Reading questions/prompts:

1. How might you explain the lack of military success in Somalia compared to Desert Storm despite facing a militarily less formidable opponent?
2. What is the JDAM? How does it work? Why was it considered an improvement over previous guided munitions?
3. What was the U.S./NATO war plan against Serbia in 1999. What was so unique about it? To what extent did it succeed in achieving its objectives?

#### **Section/Week 14 (week of April 17)**

*Topic: Afghanistan (2001) and the Second Iraq War (2003): Revolution Confirmed?*

Shimko, Ch 5

Reading questions/prompts:

1. What were the main elements of the so-called “Afghan model” in 1991?
2. What was the war plan for the 2003 invasion of Iraq? What were the main points of contention in devising the war plan? How and why was it similar to and different from the 1991 war plan?

#### **Section/Week 15 (week of April 24)**

*Topic: The Third Iraq War, 2003: A Revolution Denied?*

Shimko Ch 6 and pp. 213-222

Reading questions/prompts:

1. How did U.S. efforts to deal with the insurgency in Iraq evolve over time? What were the alternative strategies?
2. In what ways do insurgencies (and, thus, counterinsurgencies) differ from the sort of conflicts/wars for which the reconnaissance-strike complex was intended/designed?

## **Assignment & Assessment Schedule**

Start date — first day you can submit

Due date — recommend that you submit

End date — submissions closed, will not accept submission after this date

#### Module 1 quizzes

- start date – start of module 1 (Monday, 1/9)
- due dates – weekly (Fridays, 11:59 PM)
- end dates – first week of module 2 (Friday, 2/24)

#### Module 1 exam

- start date – last week of module 1 (Monday, 2/13)
- due & end date – first week of module 2 (Friday, 2/24)

#### Module 2 quizzes

- start date – start of module 2 (Monday, 2/20)
- due dates — weekly (Fridays 11:59)
- end date – first week of module 3 (Friday, 3/31)

#### Module 2 Project

- start date – start of module 2 (Monday, 2/20)
- part 1 discussion post due & end date – Wednesday, March 8 (week 9)
- part 2 discussion post due & end date – Wednesday, March 15 (week 10)
- submit project confirmation quiz due & end date – Wednesday, March 15 (week 10)
- part 3 group essay submission due & end date – Wednesday, March 22 (week 11)

#### Module 2 exam

- start date – last week of module 2 (Monday, 3/27)
- due & end date – first week of module 3 (Friday, 3/31)

#### Module 3 quizzes

- start date – start of module 3 (Monday, 3/27)
- due dates – weekly (Fridays, 11:59 PM)
- end date — final week (Friday, 5/5)

#### Module 3 Project

- start date – start of module 2 (Monday, 2/20)
- part 1 discussion post due & end date – Wednesday, April 12 (week 13)
- submit project confirmation quiz due & end date – Wednesday, April 12 (week 13) part 2
- part 2 group essay submission due & end date – Wednesday, April 19 (week 14)

#### Module 3 exam

- start date – last week of module 3 (Monday, 4/24)
- Due and end date — final week (Friday 5/5)

## Full Schedule

Module	Section/ Weeks	Item	Available (start date)	Due Date	Submissions Closed (End Date)
1	1	Section 1 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 1/13	Friday, 2/24
1	2	Section 2 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 1/20	Friday, 2/24
1	3	Section 3 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 1/27	Friday, 2/24
1	4	Section 4 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 2/3	Friday, 2/24
1	5	Section 5 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 2/10	Friday, 2/24
1	6	Section 6 Quiz	Monday, 1/9	Friday, 2/17	Friday, 2/24
1	7	Module 1 Exam	Monday, 2/20	Friday, 2/24	Friday, 2/24
2	7	Section 7 Quiz	Monday, 2/20	Friday, 2/24	Friday, 3/31
2	8	Section 8 Quiz	Monday, 2/20	Friday, 3/3	Friday, 3/31
2	9	Module 2 Project - Pt. 1	Monday, 2/20	Wednesday, 3/8	Wednesday, 3/8
2	9	Section 9 Quiz	Monday, 2/20	Friday, 3/10	Friday, 3/31
2	10	Module 2 Project - Pt. 2	Monday, 2/20	Wednesday, 3/15	Wednesday, 3/15
2	10	Module 2 Project - Confirmation Quiz	Released upon submission of discussion post for Pt. 1 & 2 of Module 2 Project	Wednesday, 3/15	Wednesday, 3/15
2	10	Section 10 Quiz	Monday, 2/20	Friday, 3/24	Friday, 3/31
2	11	Module 2 Project - Pt. 3	Monday, 2/20	Wednesday, 3/22	Wednesday, 3/23
2	11	Module 2 Exam	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 3/31	Friday, 3/31
3	11	Section 11 Quiz	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 3/31	Friday, 5/5
3	12	Section 12 Quiz	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 4/7	Friday, 5/5
3	13	Module 3 Project - Pt. 1	Monday, 3/27	Wednesday, 4/12	Wednesday, 4/12

Module	Section/ Weeks	Item	Available (start date)	Due Date	Submissions Closed (End Date)
3	13	Module 2 Project - Confirmation Quiz	Released upon submission of discussion post for Pt. 1 of Module 3 Project	Wednesday, 4/12	Wednesday, 4/19
3	13	Section 13 Quiz	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 4/14	Friday, 5/5
3	14	Module 3 Project - Pt. 2	Monday, 3/27	Wednesday, 4/19	Wednesday, 4/19
3	14	Section 14 Quiz	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 4/21	Friday, 5/5
3	15	Section 15 Quiz	Monday, 3/27	Friday, 4/28	Friday, 5/5
3	16	Module 3 Exam	Monday, 4/24	Friday, 5/5	Friday, 5/5

## Classroom Guidance Regarding Protect Purdue

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person is threatening the safety of others by not complying with Protect Purdue protocols is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss the 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](#) and the Violent Behavior Policy under University Resources in Brightspace.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing [integrity@purdue.edu](mailto:integrity@purdue.edu) or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace under University Policies.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that 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 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. A hyperlink to Purdue's full Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is included in our course Brightspace under University Policies.

## Accessibility

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences accessible to all participants. 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](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone at 765-494-1247.

## Mental Health/Wellness Statement

**If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [WellTrack](#).** Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.

**If you need support and information about options and resources,** please contact or see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#). Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 am- 5 pm.

**If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc.,** sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions with a [Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell](#). Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is free and can be done on BoilerConnect.

**If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students.** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours. The [CAPS website](#) also offers resources specific to situations such as COVID-19.

## Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. There is no appointment needed and Student Support Services is available to serve students 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Considering the significant disruptions caused by the current global crisis as it relates to COVID-19, students may submit requests for emergency assistance from the [Critical Need Fund](#)

## Emergency Preparation

In the event of a major campus emergency, 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.