

PSCI 3603 (A)
International Security and Strategic Thought
MW 6:05-8:55 p.m.
Online

I General information

Instructor: Alex McDougall
Email: alexmcdougall@cunet.carleton.ca
Office hours: By appointment (Zoom)

II Course description

How has war evolved from trenches and battleships to drones, hypersonic missiles, and algorithm-driven kill chains? Will tomorrow's conflicts be waged by swarms of autonomous systems steered by private military firms? This course plunges into key debates and concepts in strategic thought and international security to explore the logic behind the development and deployment of lethal force for political purposes on land, at sea, in the air, as well as in the nuclear and irregular arenas. The course covers core strategic ideas - deterrence, balancing, counterinsurgency, as well as irregular strategies—against real cases from World War II to Ukraine, exposing how technology, asymmetric war, and the rise of marketized force are reshaping the global security landscape. In doing so, the course aims to:

- Introduce students to the conversation of grand strategy—from Clausewitz's battlefields to the age of killer drones.
- Explore questions of theory and practice tracking how big ideas shaped Stalingrad, Hanoi, Kosovo, Kabul, and beyond.
- Equip students with a sharp analytic toolkit for looking at strategy and geopolitics.

III Course Format

Online synchronous. In other words: Log in, cameras on (optional unless otherwise instructed), engage. We meet live on Zoom every Monday and Wednesday. There is the occasional asynchronous lecture - flagged in the schedule. Bring a stable connection, working mic, and willingness to speak up and engage.

IV Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the logic and limits of the principal instruments of force (land, sea, air, nuclear, irregular).
2. Critically assess strategic choices using different frameworks.
3. Synthesize scholarly arguments into concise analytical briefs.
4. Present and defend a position on a strategic problem in real time.
5. Examine evidence-based policy recommendations that address future security challenges.

6. Communicate ideas about strategy and security verbally and in writing.

V Texts

All readings are available through the library's electronic reserve system.

VI. Evaluation – At a Glance

Component	Weight	Key Dates
Participation (live Zoom discussion)	20 %	Ongoing
Midterm Exam (e-proctored, open book)	30 %	May 26
Final Exam (e-proctored, open-book)	50 %	Scheduled during formal exam period

VII. Evaluation – The Fine Print

Participation – 20 %

When a question goes up or a debate sparks, raise your digital hand and jump in. Contributions count when they move the conversation forward. Interrupting my lectures with sharp questions, counterarguments/counter-examples, or killer analogies is also welcomed. Cameras on, mic ready, good-faith engagement mandatory.

Midterm Exam – 30 %

An exam covering material from the first half of the course, online, e-proctored.

Final Exam – 50 %

A comprehensive, open-book take-home delivered through Brightspace and locked down with webcam and browser security. Expect compare and contrast, scenario analyses, concept application, and short essays that force you to connect the dots across lectures and readings. Outside notes are allowed. Outside help—human or silicon—is not.

Late Policy & AI Reminder

- 3 % reduction per day, max seven days, then zero.
- Participation and final exam have no make-ups absent documented emergency.
- Generative AI is off-limits.

VIII Course schedule

May 5 – Introduction to the Course

- Posen, Barry. *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984, chap. 1.
- Biddle, Stephen. "Strategy in War." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 3 (2007): 461–66.

- Sloan, Elinor C. *Modern military strategy: an introduction*. Routledge, 2012. Pp: 1-5.

May 7 – The Nature of Strategy

- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. London: Penguin, 2003, read: Book I “What Is War?”
- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Updated ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003, pp: 1–50.

May 12 – Land and Sea Power

- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Updated ed. (2003), chap. 4.
- Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2012, chap. 1.
- Sloan, Elinor C. *Modern military strategy: an introduction*. Routledge, 2012. Pp. 5-33.

May 14 – Air Power

- Pape, Robert A. “The Limits of Precision-Guided Air Power.” *Security Studies* 7, no. 2 (1997): 93–114.
- O’Brien, Phillips Payson. *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, introduction, chap. 1, conclusion.
- Sloan, Elinor C. *Modern military strategy: an introduction*. Routledge, 2012. Pp: 33-49

May 19 – Victoria Day – no lecture

May 21 – Strategic Case Studies

- Byman, Daniel L., and Matthew C. Waxman. “Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate.” *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000): 5–38.
- Mueller, Karl P. *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015, 1–40.
- Pollack, Kenneth M. “Air Power in the Six-Day War.” In *Warfare in the Middle East since 1945*, 53–85.

May 26 – Deterrence & Proliferation I

- Waltz, Kenneth N. “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better.” In *Conflict after the Cold War*, 475–86. 4th ed. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Sagan, Scott D. “More Will Be Worse.” In *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, 46–88. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.
- Mearsheimer, John J. “The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent.” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 50–66.

May 28 – Deterrence & Proliferation II

- Lieber, Keir A., and Daryl G. Press. “The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence.” *International Security* 41, no. 4 (2017): 9–49.

- Horowitz, Michael C. “When Speed Kills: Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, Deterrence, and Stability.” In *Emerging Technologies and International Stability*, 144–68. Abingdon: Routledge, 2021.
- Brose, Christian. “The New Revolution in Military Affairs: War’s Sci-Fi Future.” *Foreign Affairs* 98 (2019): 122–32.

June 2 – Irregular and Asymmetric Warfare

- Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, introduction and chapter 1
- Shiffman, Gary. *The Economics of Violence: How Behavioral Science Can Transform Our View of Crime, Insurgency, and Terrorism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, chapter 4, 6.
- Sloan, Elinor C. *Modern military strategy: an introduction*. Routledge, 2012. Pp: 65-85

June 4 – Decapitation & Counterterrorism

- Price, Bryan C. “Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism.” *International Security* 36, no. 4 (2012): 9–46.
- Johnston, Patrick B. “Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns.” *International Security* 36, no. 4 (2012): 47–79.
- Pape, Robert A. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 343–61.

June 9 – Counterinsurgency I: Vietnam

- Wawro, Geoffrey. *The Vietnam War: A Military History*. New York: Basic Books, 2024,: (read: Introduction, 1, 2, conclusion).

June 11 – Counterinsurgency II: Afghanistan (asynchronous)

- Malkasian, Carter. *The American War in Afghanistan: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021, Chapter 1, 10, 14, 22).

June 16 – Private military companies and mercenaries

- Østensen, Åse Gilje, and Tor Bukkvoll. “Private Military Companies—Russian Great Power Politics on the Cheap?” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 33, nos. 1-2 (2022): 130–51.
- Akcinaroglu, Seden, and Elizabeth Radziszewski. “Private Military Companies, Opportunities, and Termination of Civil Wars in Africa.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (2013): 795–821.

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):
<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):
<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991,
<http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,
<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating

circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC)

at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within **three working days** to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last day to withdraw from full fall term and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment is **September 30th, 2024**. The last day for a fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or the winter portion of two-term courses is **January 31, 2025**. The last day for academic withdrawal from full fall and late fall courses is **November 15, 2024**. The last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses is **March 15, 2025**.

WDN: For students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term the term WDN will be a permanent notation that appears on their official transcript.

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Fall courses: **December 9-21, 2024**. Winter and Fall/Winter courses: **April 11-26, 2025** (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton 2024-2025 Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as *"presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own."* This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in *"substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."*

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)	B640 Loeb
Registrar's Office (3500)	300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822)	4 th floor Library
Academic Advising Centre (7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608)	501 Nideyinàn
Career Services (6611)	401 Tory