

HIST 460: American Military History – Fall 2021

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203 East Hall -- 677-5569/103 Slagle Hall – 677-6497

Course Time and Place:

This course meets in Old Main 106 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:00-11:50 a.m.

Office Hours:

Thursdays from 3-4 pm in East Hall 203. Given the complexities of my schedule, this time won't always be available, and it will probably be easiest to schedule individual meeting times as needed. Please check with me directly or contact my assistant at Lisa.Ketcham@usd.edu to get on my calendar.

Required Readings:

- Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (2012)
- Lee, Preston, Silbey, and Carlson, *The Other Face of Battle: America's Forgotten Wars and the Experience of Combat* (2021)
- Heller & Stofft, *America's First Battles, 1776-1965* (1986)

Catalog Description:

Examines the origins and developments of military institutions, traditions, tactics, and practices in the United States from 1775 to the present, including the relation between the armed forces and other government agencies.

Course Objectives:

This course is a survey of American military history from colonial times to the modern day. Because it is a survey course, we will not have the opportunity to give as much attention as you may desire to every important, interesting, and controversial topic. However, we will discuss a wide range of issues about which you will be expected to think and form your own opinions. Military history is about more than generals and battles (what some historians like to call "Guns and Drums History"). We will spend much of our time discussing things like technology, professionalism, administration, and military policy -- the less glamorous but equally important components of a balanced overview of military history. Rote memorization will do you little good in this class; be prepared to think for yourselves, especially when it comes to the papers you will write about the outside readings. You are strongly encouraged to make use of the instructor's office hours throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

The instructor expects each student to keep up with the schedule of readings that appears on this syllabus. You will have a much better idea of what's going on if you have done the reading. These assignments, along with information from the lectures and discussions, will provide the material for the exams. There are 460 possible points to be earned in this class. You will start the semester by generating a summary of themes from your reading, worth 10 points. There will be two (2) essay exams, one at midterm and one during finals week. Your midterm exam will be worth 100 points and your final exam will be worth 150 points. Bring a big bluebook and pen(s) to both exams. You will also write four short papers worth 50 points each, which are explained in more detail below. Your course grade is determined by your average and is based on a standard 10-point scale.

Summary of Themes Assignment

In your Critical Essay assignments (see below), you will be reading and evaluating how historians have written about and analyzed the experience of combat in American history, and you will be doing so using two essay collections that are written 35 years apart. During our August 30th class meeting, we will spend time talking about the different approaches that historians have used to talk about combat. When we have that discussion on August 30th, you will come to class with a short paper that lists each of the analytical themes used in both *America's First Battles* and *The Other Face of Battle*. For each theme, you will provide a 3-5 sentence summary of that theme. Your summaries will form the basis of our discussion that day, and you will turn in your paper at the end of class.

Critical Essay Assignments

The American military's experience with combat, which happens in a variety of contexts and has been interpreted in different ways by historians over time, is a recurring theme in this course. This semester, your readings explore the American combat experience in both conventional and unconventional settings as interpreted by a variety of historians. Now, you will have a chance to read historical accounts and evaluate just how effective their authors were in making their points as you compare and contrast historical accounts of combat in these two settings.

You will write four comparative essays, with each essay comparing two chapters from *America's First Battles* and *The Other Face of Battle*. Each essay will be analytical, and while you should discuss details from the chapters, this is NOT a book report. In your essay, you must specifically consider the following questions:

- Identify each author's thesis (the main argument they are making in their chapter) and assess their effectiveness in proving that thesis.
- What relevant factors (social, political, military, professional, or other) that affected the level of preparation (or not) of the fighting forces described in each chapter are addressed by each of the authors?
- What relevant factors (social, political, military, professional, or other) that affected the level of preparation (or not) of the fighting forces described in each chapter are not addressed by each of the authors, and why do you think the authors did not consider those factors?
- What value do each of the chapters you read have in adding to your understanding of American military history beyond what you are learning in class and knew before you took this class?

Each critical essay (worth 50 points each) will be 5 pages long. It must be double spaced, typed in a standard 12-point font with appropriate margins, and have page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of the page. You will submit your essay via D2L. Your due dates are:

- Critical Essay 1:
David Preston, "The Battle of the Monongahela: Braddock's Defeat, July 9, 1755," in *The Other Face of Battle*, and Ira Gruber, "America's First Battle: Long Island, 27 August 1776," in *America's First Battles*, due September 8th.
- Critical Essay 2:
David Silbey, "The Battle of Manila, February 4-5, 1899," in *The Other Face of Battle*, and Graham Cosmas, "San Juan Hill and El Caney, 1-2 July 1898," in *America's First Battles*, due October 4th. It is also in your best interest to read "Interlude I: An American Army of Expansion" in *The Other Face of Battle* for essential context.
- Critical Essay 3:
Allan R. Millett, "Cantigny, 28-31 May 1918," and Jay Luvaas, "Buna, 19 November 1942-2 January 1943: A 'Leavenworth Nightmare'," in *America's First Battles*, due November 1st.

- Critical Essay 4:
Anthony Carlson, "Makuan/Operation Dragon Strike, September 15-17, 2010," in *The Other Face of Battle*, and George C. Herring, "The 1st Cavalry and the Ia Drang Valley, 18 October-24 November 1965," in *America's First Battles*, due November 22nd. It is also in your best interest to read "Interlude II: Fighting 'Small' Wars" in *The Other Face of Battle* for essential context.

You will also write an essay on your final exam that asks you to consider issues and questions raised by a comparative analysis of conventional and unconventional warfare in American history.

Makeups

Makeups must be taken within two weeks of a missed exam and will only be given if the student has a university-approved absence. **It is your responsibility to arrange the makeup.** Unless there are extenuating circumstances, makeups not completed within two weeks will have a score of zero entered on the grade sheet. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to take a makeup.

Writing Essay Exam Questions

When writing essays, it is important that you build your answer around some kind of thesis statement. Be blunt and put your thesis in the opening paragraph. The remaining paragraphs should strengthen your thesis while answering the question. I often write essay questions that ask you to explain different aspects of a basic question. You may find it easiest to make each of these aspects the subject of its own paragraph. Be sure to support your essay throughout with details from lectures and your readings. Make it **crystal clear** to me that you understand the material. Finally, include a strong conclusion where you tell me what you just told me in the rest of the essay.

Semester Schedule

Topics and dates are subject to change.

- 23 Aug: Introduction to the Course
- 25 Aug: Topic: The American Military Tradition & Our European Heritage
- 27 Aug: Topic: The Colonial Wars
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 1-2.
- 30 Aug: Class Discussion: The Experience of Battle in American History
Assigned Readings:
- John Shy, "First Battles in Retrospect," in *America's First Battles 1776-1965*, pp. 327-352.
 - "Introduction: Enemies of Another Sort," in *The Other Face of Battle: America's Forgotten Wars and the Experience of Combat*, pp. 1-17.
 - "The Other Face of Battle: Preparing for the Wrong War," in *The Other Face of Battle: America's Forgotten Wars and the Experience of Combat*, pp. 193-205.
- Assignment:** Come to class with your Summary of Themes paper.
- 01 Sept: Topic: The Revolutionary War: The Continental Army
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 3.
- 03 Sept: Topic: The Revolutionary War: Citizen Soldiers & The Course of the War
- 06 Sept: NO CLASS: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
- 08 Sept: Topic: US Army from 1783-1812
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 4.
Assignment: Critical Essay 1 must be submitted via D2L by the start of the class period.
- 10 Sept: Topic: The War of 1812

- 13 Sept: Topic: American Military Policy, 1815-1845
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 5.
- 15 Sept: Topic: The Mexican War
- 17 Sept: Topic: The American Way of War, 1848-1861
- 20 Sept: Topic: The Civil War's First Battle – First Bull Run/Manassas
- 22 Sept: Topic: Civil War Strategy
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 6-7.
- 24 Sept: Topic: Lincoln and Davis as War Presidents
- 27 Sept: Topic: Army Organization from 1865-1898
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 8.
- 29 Sept: Topic: Army Missions from 1865-1898
- 01 Oct: Topic: The Spanish-American War
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 9.
- 04 Oct: Topic: The Philippine Insurrection and Guerrilla War
Assignment: Critical Essay 2 must be submitted via D2L by the start of the class period.
- 06 Oct: NO CLASS: BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING
- 08 Oct: Topic: Army Reform, 1900-1917
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 10.
- 11 Oct: NO CLASS: NATIVE AMERICAN DAY
- 13 Oct: Topic: The Changing Face of War, 1865-1914
- 15 Oct: **MIDTERM EXAM**
- 18 Oct: Topic: America Prepares for the Great War
- 20 Oct: Topic: The AEF in the Great War
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 11.
- 22 Oct: Topic: WWI Airpower & the Origins of Strategic Air Doctrine
- 25 Oct: Topic: Strategic Bombing Doctrine
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 12.
- 27 Oct: Topic: Interwar Land Defense Policy, 1919-1941
- 29 Oct: Topic: Amphibious Doctrine
- 01 Nov: Topic: WWII: American Grand Strategy
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 13-14.
Assignment: Critical Essay 3 must be submitted via D2L by the start of the class period.
- 03 Nov: Topic: WWII: Manpower & Doctrine
- 05 Nov: Topic: WWII: The Air War
- 08 Nov: Topic: Post-War Military Policy & Containment
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 15.
- 10 Nov: Topic: The Korean War: Background & Status of American Forces
- 12 Nov: Topic: The Korean War: The Course of the War
- 15 Nov: Topic: The New Look, 1953-1960
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 16.
- 17 Nov: Topic: The Kennedy Years

- 19 Nov: Topic: The Vietnam War, 1954-1968
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 17-18.
- 22 Nov: Topic: The Vietnam War, 1968-1975
Assignment: Critical Essay 4 must be submitted via D2L by the start of the class period.

THANKSGIVING RECESS

- 29 Nov: Topic: The Air War in Vietnam
- 01 Dec: Topic: The Post-Vietnam Army, 1976-1989
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 19.
- 03 Dec: Topic: The Post-Cold War Army, 1990-2002
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 20.
- 06 Dec: Topic: Iraq War 2003 and Civil/Military Tension
Assigned Reading: *For the Common Defense*, ch. 21.
- 10 Dec: **FINAL EXAM** – 10-noon, in our regular classroom (Old Main 106)

Zoom Usage and Classroom Attendance:

Classroom participation and in-person interaction are integral components of the education process for face-to-face and hybrid courses, and the university expects students enrolled in those courses to be physically present for scheduled in-person class sessions. The use of video delivery technology (Zoom) to supplement classroom instruction is at the discretion of the instructor, but students should not assume that it is universally available. Students should also not assume that participation via Zoom meets attendance requirements. For this course, Zoom access and attendance will be handled as follows:

- At the instructor's discretion, Zoom may be made available to students with extenuating circumstances. Students must notify the instructor in advance, and if approved, attendance via Zoom will meet course attendance requirements. When Zoom access is offered, pre-approved students will be admitted via a waiting room.
- At the instructor's discretion, Zoom will be made available during inclement weather when travel is not advised, and attendance via Zoom will meet course attendance requirements.

Students with a disability who wish to request an accommodation related to the classroom attendance requirement(s) must contact Disability Services to engage in the accommodation process.

Freedom in Learning:

Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

Accessibility Statement

The University of South Dakota strives to ensure that physical resources, as well as information and communication technologies, are accessible to users in order to provide equal access to all. If you encounter any accessibility issues, you are encouraged to immediately contact the instructor of the course and the Office of Disability Services, which will work to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class or as soon as possible after the diagnosis of a disability. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Please note: if your home institution is not the University of South Dakota but one of the other South Dakota Board of Regents institutions (e.g., SDSU, SDSMT, BHSU, NSU, DSU), you should work with the disability services coordinator at your home institution.

Disability Services, The Commons – Room 116
(605) 658-3745

Web Site: www.usd.edu/ds
E-mail: disabilityservices@usd.edu

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence:

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected. To learn more about USD's diversity and inclusiveness initiatives, please visit the website for the Office of Diversity.

College of Arts & Sciences Academic Integrity Policy:

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook.

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

- Given a zero for that assignment.
- Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- Dropped from the course.
- Failed in the course.