

PSC 8489.10
MILITARY POWER AND EFFECTIVENESS
Department of Political Science
The George Washington University

Fall 2013

Time: Thurs., 6.10 – 8.00PM

Room: Phillips 217 (801 22nd St. NW)

Office Hours: Tues., 3.30 – 5.30PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

In international relations theory, military power is often argued to be the primary determinant of international outcomes. But what is military power? Traditional realist theory treats it as an amalgam of several indicators of states' aggregate power, such as population size, industrial might, and number of troops and weapons. Newer realist theories add factors such as the offense-defense balance, determined by variables like military technology and geography. Yet there are many cases where the materially stronger or better armed side did not prevail. The reversal in the outcomes of insurgency wars over time – from the stronger side prevailing about 90 percent of the time in the mid-nineteenth century, to the stronger side failing to win 75 percent of the time since 1975 – should be enough to convince even the skeptic that victory (to paraphrase Napoleon) does *not* always go to the big battalions.

This course explores what makes the militaries of some states highly proficient fighting machines, whereas others seemingly cannot execute the simplest tasks. Although the effectiveness of navies and air forces could also be examined, the focus of this class (following the bulk of the literature) is on ground forces. We begin by looking at the various ways military effectiveness has been defined in the existing literature, and the different levels of analysis that are used to examine effectiveness. The goal in this section of the course is to understand and criticize how scholars of military effectiveness measure the concept. Section II of the course assesses the theoretical literature, starting with realist theories of preponderance and technology, but proceeding quickly to non-material factors such as strategy/force employment, regime type, civil-military relations, military culture, unit and societal cohesion, and identity. The goals of this section of the course are to classify how various works define military effectiveness, specify what levels of analysis they address, and evaluate how well they explain effectiveness in general and in specific cases. In the third section of the course, we examine three case studies in depth: World War I; the German victory in the Battle of France in May/June 1940; and Iraq's military performance in the Iran-Iraq War and the two Persian Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003). The goals of Section III are first to understand several important historical cases, but more importantly to apply the theories from Section II to explain variation in the effectiveness of the belligerents. Finally, section IV briefly considers effectiveness in unconventional conflicts. The goals of this section are to understand the differences between conventional and unconventional war, the strategies that states and non-state actors have in unconventional wars and their relative effectiveness, and factors that affect the will and cohesion of belligerents in these wars.

Two words of clarification about the course are in order. First, this course is not primarily about military technology, technology assessment, weapons systems, the interaction of particular weapons systems on the battlefield, or military modeling. In fact, many of the variables we examine – such as regime type, institutional configurations, and organizational culture – are not particularly “military.” The approach in this class is to canvass the theoretical literature for explanations for relatively broad military outcomes and patterns. We will ask more questions like “what explains variation in Iraqi military performance during the Iran-Iraq War?” than “what were the relative rates of fire or hit probabilities of Iraqi versus Iranian tanks?” This is not to say we will ignore military technology, merely to state that it is not the central focus of the course. Students who are more interested in the nitty-gritty details of military net assessment are encouraged to take one of Prof. Biddle's courses in the Elliott School, such as Methods for Defense Analysis or Military Technology Assessment.

Second, the course is reading-intensive and some of the reading uses statistical methods. The instructor will provide guidance regarding any articles or chapters to which students should pay special attention. Students do not need background in statistics to take the course; the main findings of statistical analyses are always summarized in prose so that students can understand the results if not the method by which they were obtained. That said, students are encouraged to ask questions about anything they don't understand from the reading.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to critically evaluate social science theories, not only those about military effectiveness, but theories in general.
- Students will understand how the literature defines and measures military power and effectiveness.
- Students will understand the different levels of analysis at which effectiveness is assessed, and how effectiveness at different levels of analysis interacts.
- Students will possess a thorough grasp of theories of military effectiveness, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.
- Students will know the details of several important historical cases commonly used as evidence for and against different theories.
- Students will be able to use theories to make informed conjectures about the outcomes of battles, campaigns, and wars.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students may elect either of two assignment tracks, one based on three analytical papers and the other based on a research paper. Grades will be based on the following criteria.

All Students

- **Class Attendance and Participation (25%):** Students are expected to attend every class session, do all of the required reading before class, and come prepared to discuss it. Missing more than one class session without an excuse will adversely affect the participation grade. Participation in discussion will be judged not only by the quantity of a student's remarks, but also by their quality.

Track I

- **Three Analytical Papers (25% each):** 8 double-spaced pages maximum, due in HARD COPY at the *beginning* of class on Week 6 (October 3), Week 10 (October 31), and Week 15 (December 5). Questions will be distributed in class (and on Blackboard) the week before the due date. You may be asked to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a theory discussed in class or in the readings, compare the explanatory power of two or more theories, apply theories to a case, or use theories to analyze a current policy problem and make policy recommendations based on your analysis. Outside reading is not required (but it is not discouraged either!).

Track II

- **Research Paper (75%):** 20-30 double-spaced pages on some aspect of military power or military effectiveness to be chosen in consultation with the instructor; HARD COPY due on Friday, December 13. Students electing this track should meet with the instructor at their earliest convenience to discuss their interests and potential topics.

BOOKS

These books are required reading for the course. They are available at the GWU Bookstore and many online outlets.

Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Risa A. Brooks, *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley, eds., *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Allen R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

E.D. Swinton, *The Defense of Duffer's Drift* (Boulder, Colo.: Paladin Press, 2008).

ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

All of the journal articles listed in the required reading below are available online in databases accessible through the George Washington University Library. From the library website (<http://library.gwu.edu/>), click on the "Journals" tab, search for the desired journal title, and navigate to the correct volume and issue. If you are accessing the library website from off campus, you will need to enter your last name and your GWID to obtain access. For several class sessions I have assigned book chapters in addition to journal articles. These readings (denoted by **BB** in parentheses) have been placed online on the Blackboard site that has been established for the class. Click on "Blackboard" from the "My GW" page (<http://my.gwu.edu/>), log in, go to the page for this class, and click on "Files" (*not* Electronic Reserves).

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Class Policies.** Students are expected to attend every class session, do all the reading before class, and come prepared to discuss it. Exceptions will of course be made for religious holidays. Students who know they will miss class owing to observance of a religious holiday need to notify the instructor during the first week of the semester. All papers turned in for this class must be double-spaced, have one inch margins on all sides, be printed in 12-point font, and stapled. Late papers will be accepted up to 24 hours after the deadline, but one letter grade will be deducted. Papers that are more than 24 hours late will not be accepted. Exceptions will be made only in cases of illness or personal/family emergency; if you find yourself in such a situation, please consult the instructor as soon as is feasible to make arrangements for an extension. Laptops are allowed in class for note-taking purposes, not for checking e-mail, Facebook, or surfing the web. The only cell phones allowed in class are those that have been turned off.
- Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Integrity.** According to the university's Code of Academic Integrity, "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the rest of the code, see <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>. In general, I expect that you will not lie, cheat, steal, or otherwise conduct yourselves dishonorably, and will do something if you observe others engaging in such conduct. *All work you submit for this course must be your own.* In particular, do not collaborate on the analytical papers or research paper. I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. If you are found to have cheated on any assignment, the likely minimum punishment is a failing grade for that assignment. The case may also be referred to the Academic Integrity Council at the instructor's discretion, depending on the severity of the offense. If you have questions about what constitutes proper use of published or unpublished sources, please ask the instructor.
- Disabilities.** GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Additional information is available at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>.
- Counseling.** The University Counseling Center (UCC, 202.994.5300) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include crisis and emergency mental health consultations, confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals (see <http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/about>).
- Security.** If we experience an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave the classroom, we will meet in Kogan Plaza (adjacent to Gelman Library) in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

COURSE CALENDAR**Part I. Introduction and Definitions**

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|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. August 29 | Course Introduction |
| 2. September 5 | Defining Military Effectiveness |
| 3. September 12 | Material Capability and Technology |

Part II. Theories of Conventional Military Effectiveness

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|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4. September 19 | Strategy and Force Employment | |
| 5. September 26 | Regime Type | Paper topic #1 handed out |
| 6. October 3 | Civil-Military Relations I | Paper #1 due |
| 7. October 10 | Civil-Military Relations II | |
| 8. October 17 | Military Culture and Identity | |
| 9. October 24 | Cohesion | Paper topic #2 handed out |

Part III. Case Studies

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|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 10. October 31 | World War I | Paper #2 due |
| 11. November 7 | World War II (Battle of France) | |
| 12. November 14 | Iraq | |

Part IV. Effectiveness in Unconventional Warfare

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|-----------------|--|---------------------------|
| 13. November 21 | Effectiveness in Unconventional War I | Paper topic #3 handed out |
| 14. November 28 | No Class: Thanksgiving | |
| 15. December 5 | Effectiveness in Unconventional War II | Paper #3 due |
| 16. December 13 | | Research paper due |

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I. Introduction and Definitions

1. Course Introduction August 29
 - Jacob Weisberg, “Gulfballs: How the Experts Blew It, Big-Time,” *New Republic* 204, no. 12 (March 25, 1991), pp. 17, 19 (**BB**).
2. Defining Military Effectiveness September 5
 - Allen R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 1.
 - Risa A. Brooks, “Introduction,” in Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley, eds., *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1-26.
 - Caitlin Talmadge, “Explaining Military Effectiveness: Threat Perceptions, Organizational Practices, and Battlefield Performance” (Unpublished book manuscript, George Washington University, 2012), Chapter 1, 1-14 (**BB**).
 - E.D. Swinton, *The Defense of Duffer’s Drift* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1991).

Part II. Theories of Conventional Military Effectiveness

3. Material Capability and Technology September 12
 - John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), Chapter 3 (**BB**).
 - John J. Mearsheimer, “Assessing the Conventional Balance: The 3:1 Rule and Its Critics,” *International Security* 13, no. 4 (Spring 1989): 54-89; **read 54-65 only**.
 - Barry R. Posen, “Measuring the European Conventional Balance: Coping with Complexity in Threat Assessment,” *International Security* 9, no. 3 (Winter 1984/85): 47-88.
 - John W.R. Lepingwell, “The Laws of Combat? Lanchester Reexamined,” *International Security* 12, no. 1 (Summer 1987): 89-134.
 - Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, “What Is the Offense-Defense Balance and How Can We Measure It?” *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 44-82.
 - Keir Lieber, “Grasping the Technological Peace: The Offense-Defense Balance and International Security,” *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 71-104.
4. Strategy and Force Employment September 19
 - John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), Chapters 1-2.
 - Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).
 - Ryan Grauer and Michael C. Horowitz, “What Determines Military Victory? Testing the Modern System,” *Security Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 2012): 83-112.

5. Regime Type September 26
Paper Topic #1 handed out
- Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Read any **3** of the following critiques (there are more; consult the instructor if you wish to delve deeper):
- Risa A. Brooks, "Making Military Might: Why Do States Fail and Succeed: A Review Essay," *International Security* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 149-191.
 - Stephen Biddle and Stephen Long, "Democracy and Military Effectiveness: A Deeper Look," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 4 (August 2004): 525-546.
 - Michael C. Desch, *Power and Military Effectiveness: The Fallacy of Democratic Triumphalism* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 70-94 (**BB**).
 - Alexander B. Downes, "How Smart and Tough Are Democracies? Reassessing Theories of Democratic Victory," *International Security* 33, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 7-51.
 - John M. Schuessler, "The Deception Dividend: FDR's Undeclared War," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 133-165.
 - Michael Beckley, "Economic Development and Military Effectiveness," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 1 (February 2010): 43-79.
6. Civil-Military Relations I October 3
Paper #1 Due
- Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), Chapters 1-2 (**BB**; 2 parts).
 - Risa Brooks, *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).
7. Civil-Military Relations II October 10
- Stephen Biddle and Robert Zirkle, "Technology, Civil-Military Relations, and Warfare in the Developing World," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 19, no. 2 (June 1996): 171-212 (**BB**).
 - James T. Quinnlivan, "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 131-165.
 - Jessica L. Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve," *International Organization* 62, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 35-64.
 - Ulrich Pilster and Tobias Böhmelt, "Do Democracies Engage in Less Coup-Proofing? On the Relationship between Regime Type and Civil-Military Relations," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 4 (October 2012): 355-371.
 - Talmadge, "Explaining Military Effectiveness," Chapter 1, 14-30 (**BB**).
8. Military Culture and Identity October 17
- Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 27-32, 70-88 (**BB**).
 - Austin Long, "First War Syndrome: Military Culture, Professionalization, and Counterinsurgency Doctrine" (Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT, 2010), Chapters 1, 2, and 6 (**BB**).
 - Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 3-7, 194-214 (**BB**).
 - Theo Farrell, "Global Norms and Military Effectiveness: The Army in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland," in Brooks and Stanley, eds., *Creating Military Power*, 136-157.
 - Jason Lyall, "Paths of Ruin: How Identity Shapes Military Effectiveness in Modern War" (Unpublished manuscript, Yale University, 2012; **BB**).

9. Cohesion: Small Units and Society October 24
Paper Topic #2 handed out

Small Unit Cohesion:

- Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1948): 280-315.
- Elizabeth Kier, “Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness,” *International Security* 23, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 5-39.
- Read **one** of the following responses to Shils and Janowitz:
 - Omer Bartov, *Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 29-58 (**BB**); **or**
 - Stephen G. Fritz, “‘We are trying . . . to change the face of the world’—Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front: The View from Below,” *Journal of Military History* 60, no. 4 (October 1996): 683-710.

Societal Cohesion:

- Barry R. Posen, “Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power,” *International Security* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1993): 80-124.
- Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 21-27, 56-70 (**BB**).
- Dan Reiter, “Nationalism and Military Effectiveness: Post-Meiji Japan,” in Brooks and Stanley, eds., *Creating Military Power*, 27-54.
- Jasen Castillo, “The Will to Fight: The Societal Ties that Explain Military Cohesion” (Unpublished book manuscript, Texas A&M University, 2012), Chapter 2 (**BB**).

Recommended reading on combat motivation:

- Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing, and Dying* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).
- Catherine Merridale, *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (New York: Picador, 2006).
- Guy Sajer, *The Forgotten Soldier* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2000).
- Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995).
- S.L.A. Marshall, *Men against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (New York: Morrow, 1947). This book is highly controversial; for critiques, consult the instructor.

Part III. Case Studies

10. Case Study: World War I October 31
Paper #2 Due

- Millett and Murray, *Military Effectiveness*, Chapters 2-6, 8-9.
- Edward J. Erickson, “Strength against Weakness: Ottoman Military Effectiveness at Gallipoli, 1915,” *Journal of Military History* 65, no. 4 (October 2001): 981-1011.
- Review Biddle, *Military Power*, Chapter 5.

11. Case Study: The Battle of France November 7

- Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Chapters 3-4.
- Don W. Alexander, “Repercussions of the Breda Variant,” *French Historical Studies* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1974): 459-488.
- Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2001), 63-90 (**BB**).
- Review Kier, *Imagining War*, 56-88 (assigned for class sessions 8 and 9; **BB**).
- Castillo, “The Will to Fight,” Chapter 3 (**BB**).

12. Case Study: Iraq

November 14

- Talmadge, "Explaining Military Effectiveness," Chapters 4-5 (**BB**).
- Review Biddle, *Military Power*, Chapter 7.
- Timothy D. Hoyt, "Social Structure, Ethnicity, and Military Effectiveness: Iraq, 1980-2004," in Brooks and Stanley, eds., *Creating Military Power*, 55-79.

Part IV. Effectiveness in Unconventional Warfare13. Effectiveness in Unconventional Warfare, Part I

November 21

Paper Topic #3 handed out

Population-Centric COIN:

- David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 107-135 (**BB**).
- *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, December 2006), Chapter 1, available online at <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf> (a.k.a., *The U.S. Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Field Manual*).
- Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *Journal of Political Economy* 119, no. 4 (August 2011): 766-819.
- Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson, III, "Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization* 63, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 67-106.

The Theory of Selective Violence:

- Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars," *Rationality and Society* 11, no. 3 (August 1999): 243-285.

The Folly of Indiscriminate Violence:

- Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (March 2011): 201-218.

14. No Class: Thanksgiving

November 28

15. Effectiveness in Unconventional Warfare, Part II

December 5

Paper #3 Due

- Paul Staniland, "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 142-177.
- Patrick Johnston, "The Geography of Insurgent Organization and its Consequences for Civil War: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone," *Security Studies* 17, no. 1 (March 2008): 107-137.
- Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *International Security* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 7-40.
- Jeffrey A. Friedman, "Manpower and Counterinsurgency: Empirical Foundations for Theory and Doctrine," *Security Studies* 20, no. 4 (2011): 556-591.
- Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2009): 719-755.
- Bryan C. Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *International Security* 36, no. 4 (Spring 2012): 9-46.

16. Research Paper Due

December 13

- 1957 E St. NW, #605B, by 5PM in hard copy