

**LC6: Understanding War
(POLI 102 Contemporary Political Issues)**

Spring 2017

Maybank Hall 316
TR 9:25-10:40am

Professor Christopher Day
Office: 114 Wentworth St. Room 105
Office Hours: TR 1-3pm or by appointment
Email: dayc@cofc.edu
Phone: 843-953-6617

Synthesis Seminar: Tuesdays 3:05-3:55pm in Bell 316
Peer Facilitator: Courtney Eker ekercr@g.cofc.edu
Peer Facilitator: Trevin McKoy mckoytd@g.cofc.edu

Course Syllabus

What is war? In some cases it seems senseless. Yet in others it appears as a rational way of advancing goals or settling disputes. Around the world warfare has simultaneously produced great benefits and caused irreparable damages. In studying this phenomenon, we ask questions such as: What is the nature of war? Why do individuals, communities, or countries choose warfare as a strategy to pursue their goals?

This Learning Community will examine the role of war in the contemporary world. Students will consider a range of casual factors for warfare as well as broader contexts in which particular wars occur. These include historical legacies (borders, power, institutions), social and political identities (ethnicity, nationality, religion), and economic agendas (greed, loot, resources). The course will also consider the dynamics of violence and processes of armed conflict, and will examine consider different types of contemporary warfare. The course will also examine a range of warfare's outcomes including its humanitarian dimensions, the impetus for international intervention, and the challenges of post-conflict political order. The Learning Community will encourage students to view warfare through both political science and psychology, designed to socialize students into the social sciences as part of their overall liberal arts education.

POLI 102 has three goals. The first is to introduce students to the comparative study of warfare by looking at the wider world through international, domestic, and individual/group levels of analysis. The second goal is to show how Political Science engages this wider world not just by gaining empirical knowledge, but also with concepts, theories, and methods. The third goal is to provide freshmen with building blocks for how to be a successful college student: how to organize the mind and develop good routines; how read and write for college; how to start thinking about independent research; and how to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills.

Course Objectives and Methodology

General Education Student Learning Outcome:

- Students are able to apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. This outcome is assessed in the final assignment.

First Year Experience Student Learning Outcomes:

- FYE Learning Goal One - Introduction to Campus Resources
 - Outcome: Students enrolled in the Synthesis Seminar (FYSS 101) will demonstrate an understanding of the campus services that support their academic and personal growth/development.
 - Measure 1: End of course cumulative assessment
 - Measure 2: End of the semester use survey
- FYE Learning Goal Two - Information Literacy
 - Outcome: Students who participate in the FYE Library Session will be able to develop a search strategy and use search databases for appropriate sources of information.
 - Measure 1: An ideas and keyword concept map activity will be administered to students who complete the FYE library session to assess their ability to generate keywords for a database search.
 - Measure 2: A source identification activity will be administered to students who complete the FYE library session to assess their ability to identify and summarize appropriate sources.

Political Science Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will become familiar with a number of contemporary political issues and better understand their makeup and importance
- Students will understand how different political issues are assessed by different philosophical and ideological traditions
- Students will be able to effectively write and develop arguments
- Students will be able to better comprehend others' views and formulate, defend their own positions

The course will be taught through the following:

- Readings
- Lectures
- Discussions
- Group Work
- Campus Engagement
- Synthesis Seminar

Course Requirements

Evaluation will be based on the following exercises:

Take Home Essays (40%) Students will write four 1,000-word essays that will engage a specific prompt provided by the professor. Successful essays will critically analyze and unify the central arguments of the book for that particular part of the course as well as a companion article provided by the professor. Essays are due on the following dates:

- **2/9:** Essay #1
- **3/2:** Essay #2
- **3/30:** Essay #3
- **4/20:** Essay #4

SURF Research Grant Application (40%) This is an opportunity for students to pursue an individual research and writing project. In this grant application, students will identify a significant problem in warfare, explain why it matters, justify the need for additional research, and explain how the student will go about doing it. I will provide further guidance for this project throughout the semester in a series of in-class workshops. Below are the important due dates for each step of the project:

- **2/2:** Research Topic Proposal (5%)
- **3/23:** Research Question and Hypothesis (5%)
- **4/13:** Rough Draft (10%)
- **5/4:** FINAL DRAFT (20%)

Class Participation (10%) The quality of this course depends on the quality of discussion therefore students are expected to participate in class. This also means showing up and engaging with the many exercises we will be doing in class to help students with their bigger research project.

Campus Engagement (10%) Engaging in the intellectual life of the campus is also part of this course's grade and students will receive credit for attending the following events and writing a short 2-page response paper on each:

- **3/31:** Moore Conference
- **TBA:** Political Science Spring Convocation

Course Policies

Grading Scale

A	93-100	A-	90-92	B+	88-89	B	83-87	B-	80-82
C+	78-79	C	73-77	C-	70-72	D+	68-69	D	63-67
D-	60-62	F:	Below 60						

Attendance Policy. Attendance is **REQUIRED**. Tardiness is not cool. Something to keep in mind when considering the value of your education: If you are out of state it costs you around \$132 per missed class for a Tuesday/Thursday schedule. In state it costs you about \$51 per class.

Submission of Work. Students are expected to submit their work on the day it is due in hard copy form. In the event that students cannot submit work on time because of Life Circumstances, they must inform the professor **at least 24 hours beforehand**, and provide a concrete date for submission. After this date, work will not be accepted. Also, please note that **“My computer crashed” = “My dog ate my homework”**.

Honor Code. All students are expected be familiar with the College of Charleston Honor Code, and to abide by it. Violations will not be tolerated and will be dealt with appropriately. More is found here: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>

Learning Disabled. If you have a documented learning disability, please let me know as soon as possible so special arrangements can be made for certain class requirements.

Other Special Circumstances. I normally will do business with anyone who lets me know in advance of any special circumstances. But please note that the expression “it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission” was not invented by a College Professor.

Center for Student Learning. The Center for Student Learning’s (CSL) academic support services give assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and they are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843) 953-5635.

Required Readings

Ledio Cakaj *When the Walking Defeats You: One Man’s Journey as Joseph Kony’s Bodyguard* (Zed Books 2016)

Anand Gopal *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War Through Afghan Eyes* (Picador 2015)

Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger *ISIS: The State of Terror* (Ecco 2016)

Ben Rawlence *City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World’s Largest Refugee Camp* (Picador 2017)

All other readings will be available on OAKS.

“Like” the Department of Political Science on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CofCPoliticalScienceClub?ref=hl>

“Like” the African Studies Program on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CollegeOfCharlestonAfricanStudiesProgram>

Course Outline and Readings

Part I: Setting the Scene

1. January 12: Introduction to the Course

2. January 17-19: Political Science and the Study of War

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, “10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016,” *Foreign Policy*, January 3, 2016
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/03/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2016/>

Council on Foreign Relations, Global Conflict Tracker: <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!>

International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>

Part II: Key Concepts

3. January 24-26: Causes of War

Cakaj Chapters 1-5, pp. 1-146

4. January 31-February 2: Dynamics of Violence

Cakaj Chapters 6-10, pp. 147-248

SURF Workshop #1: Building a Research Topic 1/31

Research Topic Proposal Due 2/2

5. February 7-9: Conflict Processes

Cakaj Chapters 11-15, pp. 249-386

Essay #1 Due 2/9

Film: War in the Central African Republic

Part III: Inside Afghanistan

6. February 14-16: Warlords and Insurgency

Gopal Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-100

7. February 21

****No Class Thursday, February 23rd for Model AU****

Gopal Chapters 5-10, pp. 101-198

SURF Workshop #2: Finding the Puzzle and Why It Matters

8. February 28-March 2: Invasion and Counterinsurgency

Gopal Chapters 12-14, pp. 199-276

Essay #2 Due 3/2

Film: Obama at War

9. * No Class March 7-9 for Spring Break*****

Part IV: Inside ISIS

10. March 14-16: Regional Warfare

Stern & Berger Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-74

11. March 21-23: Global Terrorism

Stern & Berger Chapters 5-8, pp. 75-176

SURF Workshop #3: Dependent and Independent Variables 3/21

Research Question and Hypothesis Due 3/23

12. March 28-30: Genocide

Stern & Berger Chapters 9-11, pp. 177-256

Essay #3 Due 3/30

Film: Inside Assad's Syria

Part V: Outcomes of War

13. April 4-6: Humanitarian Crises

Rawlence Part I, pp. 1-124

14. April 11-13: Peacekeeping and Intervention

Rawlence Part II, pp. 125-224

SURF Workshop #4: Putting it All Together 4/11

Rough Draft Due 4/13

15. April 18-20: Postwar Transitions

Rawlence Part III, pp. 225-358

Essay #4 Due 4/20

Film: The Land Between

16. April 25: FINAL CLASS!

*****SURF Grant due May 4th at 8am at 114 Wentworth Street, Room 105*****

NOTE: Additional readings may be assigned and the course outline may be adjusted to serve the needs of the class.