COURSE CONCEPT AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES
This course is an introduction to strategic studies from an historical perspective. Military strategy focuses on the preparation and use of military power to serve political ends. The course will examine the evolution of strategic thought with an emphasis on the thinking of Carl von Clausewitz. It will also survey the critical military developments of the last century and highlight several topics of interest to military historians, strategists, and policy practitioners.

The organization of the course is broadly chronological, but will focus on a specific topic or theme for each historical period. The course will emphasize land war strategy but will also consider naval and air strategy. To the extent possible, the course attempts to employ a comparative approach. Although a plurality of the case studies are drawn from American experience, there will also be opportunities to examine strategic thought and military developments in Europe and China.

The course is taught primarily through a moderated, student-led discussion of the readings for each session. Students should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading for each class in some depth.

The course has three learning objectives. By the end of the course, students should:

• understand the historical evolution of strategic thought and apply that knowledge to the analysis of historical case studies and modern policy issues, which includes the ability to define strategy, identify the key tenets of Clausewitz’s thought and assess its strengths and weaknesses, compare and contrast the Clausewitzian approach to strategy to important alternatives, apply those approaches to historical case studies or policy issues, and analyze the results;

• understand some of the critical issues and perspectives in both strategic studies and military history, which includes the ability to identify the key authors for each issue, summarize and critique their arguments, evaluate their work, and integrate that knowledge into their future studies;

• think, speak, and write more clearly and effectively.

REQUIREMENTS
Students will be expected to:
- Participate actively in class discussion (10% of final grade)
- Write three 500-700 word book reviews (15% of final grade each)
- Write a 1000 word paper analyzing a strategic problem from the point of view of a specific strategist (20% of final grade)
- Write a 2000 word command decision briefing on an important strategic decision made by a leader or leaders in the past. (25% of final grade)
**Book Reviews**
The book reviews should provide some biographical information highlighting the author’s qualifications and potential biases, describe the purpose of the book, identify the author’s thesis, and then explain whether the thesis is convincing by examining how well the author supports it. Note that the purpose and thesis of the book are separate and distinct (at least theoretically). Overly long reviews will receive lower grades. One of the goals of assigning the reviews is to improve your ability to write clearly and concisely.

Everyone will review Clausewitz’s *On War* in week 3. Two additional reviews will be due from week 7 to week 15. Books to be reviewed in those weeks will be selected from the lists of books for each week on the course schedule. Reviews are due on the day the book is discussed in class. You will be asked to provide a brief oral overview of the book for the benefit of your classmates.

**Strategic Analysis Paper**
The strategic analysis paper should analyze a current strategic problem from the point of view of a specific historical strategist discussed in class – Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Jomini, Mahan, or Douhet – and recommend a course of action. Your analysis should incorporate key ideas from the strategist’s writings and emulate the strategist’s approach. The length of the paper should not exceed 1000 words. The paper will be due on 18 February 2015.

**Command Decision Briefing**
The command decision briefing should examine an important strategic decision made by a leader or leaders in the past. The briefing should be written from the perspective of an aide to the decision-maker. It should present the issue clearly and succinctly, identify possible courses of action, describe the advantages and disadvantages of each, and make a recommendation supported by argument. You should rely only on information available to the decision-maker at the time. Try not to let the outcome color your presentation of the issues or your recommendation. The briefing should also have a one-page executive summary of your argument. The executive summary does not count toward the word limit. A list of sources is sufficient for documentation.

The command decision briefings are due on 29 April 2015. Please submit them via email.

You should begin preparing for your briefing early in the semester. Feel free to consult with me as often as necessary during your research and preparation.

**Class Attendance and Late Papers**
You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussions. I do not usually take attendance but repeated absences will be noticed. If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to attend class, please notify me.

The reviews and briefings are due in class on the day assigned. Late papers will be penalized on a geometric scale. One grade increment, say from A- to B+, will be deducted for papers up to one day late. A second grade increment, say from B+ to B, will be deducted for papers from one to three days late. A third grade increment, say from B to B-, will be deducted for
papers from three to seven days late. The deductions will continue for periods of 15 and 31 until the end of the semester.

With sufficient advance notice, we can work around scheduling conflicts and other issues that might interfere with your ability to attend class or complete the assigned work on time. Please, however, do not miss class repeatedly without an explanation and then ask for an extension.

CONTACTING ME
I will be available for discussion and consultation immediately before class from 6 pm to 7 pm. My office is Room 303C in the Elliott School. Since I work nearby, I can also meet you around lunch time. Contact me in advance to set up a time and place.

My daytime phone number is 703-469-3349. My e-mail is rangevin@gwu.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the University’s Code of Academic Integrity, and you are expected to adhere to it. 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. All violations of the Code of Academic Integrity will be dealt with severely. Please see me if you have any questions about the violations described in the Code or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

DSS STATEMENT
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 or in person in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. Students are encouraged to meet with me early in the semester to discuss the academic implications of the disability.

READING
Because this is a graduate course, it requires a substantial amount of reading, varying from 50 to 200 pages per week for weeks 3-13. The reading load for Weeks 1 and 2 is light in order to allow you time to obtain the books for the rest of the course. The load for Week 14 is also light in order to allow you time to prepare your command decision briefing.

For weeks 1-6, you should read the items listed under assigned reading for each class. For weeks 7-15, you should choose two weeks in which to read and review one of the books listed in the syllabus for that week. For the other weeks, you should read the required reading. You are welcome to read the assigned reading for the class when you are reviewing a book, but it is not required.
Books Required for Purchase:

Schedule

**Week 1 – Jan. 14 – Introduction**

*Required Reading:*
None

**Week 2 – Jan. 21 – Strategy and the Causes of War**

*Required Reading (67 pages):*

*Suggested Reading:*

**Week 3 – Jan. 28 – Clausewitz – Clausewitz Reviews Due**

*Required Reading (216 pages):*
Book I, all
Book II, all
Book III, Chs. 1-10, 16
Book IV, Chs. 1-3
Book VI, Chs. 1, 26
Book VII, Chs. 2-5
Book VIII, all

**Week 4 – Feb. 4 – Alternatives to Clausewitz**

*Required Reading (132 pages):*


**Week 5 – Feb. 11 – Naval and Air Strategy**

*Required Reading (61 pages):*


**Week 6 – Feb. 18 – The Laws of War – STRATEGIC ANALYSIS PAPERS DUE**

*Required Reading (67 pages):*


**Week 7 – Feb. 25 – Strategic Culture and National Ways of War**

*Required Reading (52 pages):*


Books to Review:

Week 8 – Mar. 4 – Military Innovation and Experimentation
Required Reading (30 pages):

Books to Review:

**Week 9 – Mar. 11 – Spring Break – NO CLASS**

**Week 10 – Mar. 18 – Intelligence and Deception**

*Required Reading (41 pages):*


*Books to Review:*


**Week 11 – Mar. 25 – High Command and Coalition Warfare**

*Required Reading (54 pages):*


*Books to Review:*


**Week 12 – Apr. 1 – Nuclear Weapons and Strategy**

*Required Reading (44 pages):*

**Books to Review:**


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**Week 13 – Apr. 8 – Irregular Warfare**

**Required Reading (63 pages):**


**Books to Review:**


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**Week 14 – Apr. 15 – Instructor Absence – NO CLASS**

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**Week 15 – Apr. 22 - Revolutions in Military Affairs**

**Required Reading (82 pages):**


**Books to Review:**


**Apr. 29 - COMMAND DECISION BRIEFINGS DUE**