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*History 1995 / GSAS 90625*

**Strategy and Crisis**

Spring 2015

Seminar

Room: CGIS S-020

Meeting time: W., 2-4

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**Course description**

The moment of crisis is the moment of discrimination: it forces decisions of obvious consequence, pitting rival theories and their proponents against one another. The crisis is *par excellence* the moment at which theory and practice meet.

This course offers two analytical perspectives based on the study of twelve diplomatic and military crises that are frequently seen as turning points in the modern era. To contextualize each crisis, we explore what the dominant strategic theories were at the time and how they were deployed in practice in the heat of the crisis. (Think of this a vertical, historically oriented axis of understanding.) Then we examine the linkages between crises. Are there modes of behavior or thought that are of general utility in such moments? Can strategic thought ever truly claim to be universally applicable? Did decision-makers learn and apply lessons from previous crises, and with what success? (Think of this as a horizontal, thematic axis of understanding.)

At its core, the course is an argument for bringing history back into the core of strategic thought. In short, it is an exercise in applied history.

The seminar will meet once a week, and each week will focus on a particular crisis. As far as possible, readings will be available on the course iSite.

Participation in discussion will account for 20% of the final grade. A mid-term essay will take the form of a written case study based on one of the assigned topics. It will account

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for 30% of the grade. As a final assignment, students will write a case study on a crisis *not* covered in the course. This will account for 50% of the final grade. Late submissions will be penalized.

Participation will be evaluated on the following basis:

A: No unexcused absences, thought leader and frequent participant, shows engagement with readings

A- to B+: No more than one unexcused absence, regular participant, shows some engagement with readings

B: No more than one unexcused absence, very limited participation and/or engagement with readings

B- and below: Unexcused absences or excessive lateness, limited participation

### Weekly Syllabus

#### Jan. 28 – **Introduction**

Niall Ferguson, “K of the Castle”, *Times Literary Supplement* (November 26, 2014)

President Obama, “State of the Union Address” [foreign policy sections] (January

*NB All students wishing to be considered for this course will be expected to write a short two-page response paper in answer to the question “Does American foreign policy have a strategy or is it in crisis?” This paper is due by 9 a.m. on January 29. Papers should be emailed to [nfergus@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nfergus@fas.harvard.edu).*

#### Feb. 4 – **The Revolutionary Wars and the Birth of Modern Warfare: The Battle of Jena and Carl von Clausewitz**

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (abridged) transl. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (1976), ed. Beatrice Hauser, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Book I, chs. 1 (pp. 13-31), 4-7 (pp. 61-73); Book VIII, chs. 1-6 (pp. 221-252). Please also read the two notes to future readers that Clausewitz wrote in the late 1820s, anticipating his own death: pp. 7-10.

Peter Paret, *The Cognitive Challenge of War, Prussia 1806* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), chs. 1 (pp. 1-32), 2 (pp. 79-103) and 3 (pp. 104-128). This book is available online on HOLLIS.

John Shy, “Jomini”, in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 143-185.

#### Feb. 11 – **Sea Power and the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1897-1912**

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Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1918), Introduction (pp. 1-8) and Part II, ch. 1, pp. 77-92

Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), chs. 3, 4 (focus on sections concerned with Anglo-German relations).

Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (New York: Dover Publications, 1987), Introduction and ch. 1, pp. 1-89.

### Feb. 18 – **The Outbreak of World War I, July-August 1914**

Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012), ch. 12 (pp. 488-554).

Eyre Crowe, “Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany” (January 1, 1907), in G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley (eds.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914* (London, 1926-1938), vol. III, pp. 402-06.

Ferguson, *Pity of War*, ch. 6.

### Feb. 25 – **Munich, 1938**

Winston S. Churchill, [Speech in the House of Commons](#), *Hansard*, October 5, 1938.

Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), chs. 9, 10 (pp. 312-382).

### March 4 – **The Korean War and Containment**

Dean Acheson, “[Remarks Before the National Press Club](#)” (January 12, 1950), pp. 1-2.

John L. Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin, 2011), Part III.

John L. Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), pp. 1-48.

Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: WW Norton, 2013), pp. 55-73.

George Kennan, “[The Long Telegram](#)” (February 22, 1946).

National Security Council, “[NSC-68](#)” (April 12, 1950), pp. 1-68.

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**March 11 – The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962**

Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2008), pp. 3-83.

Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1997), pp. 149-215.

Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: WW Norton, 1969), pp. 1-44.

Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), ch. 1.

March 18: SPRING BREAK: MID-TERM ESSAY DUE MARCH 25

**March 25 – The West and Indonesia in the Days of Living Dangerously, 1958-1966**

Emile Simpson, *War From the Ground Up* (Hurst: London, 2012), ch. 7 (pp. 157-178).

Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–65* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Introduction, chs. 9-10 (pp. 233-268) and Conclusion.

John Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno* (London: Macmillan, 2000), Introduction, ch. 5 (pp. 94-115) and Conclusion

General Sir Walter Walker, “How Borneo Was Won”, *The Round Table* (January 1969).

UK Cabinet Document, “Policy towards Indonesia”, January 6, 1964, PRO: CP(64)5 CAB/129/116.

Robert Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). Introduction, chs. 4-5 (pp. 61-123), chs. 9-10 (pp. 194-287) and Conclusion.

Christopher Tuck, “Borneo, Counter-Insurgency and War Termination”, *Defence Studies*, 10, 1-2 (March-June 2010), pp. 106-25.

**April 1 – Escalation in Vietnam, 1965**

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, vol. III: Vietnam, June-December

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1965

- 78. [Notes of Meeting](#), Washington, July 22, 1965, 3-4:20 p.m.
- 85. [Notes of Meeting](#), Camp David, Maryland, July 25, 1965, 5 p.m.
- 87. [Notes of Meeting](#), Washington, July 26, 1965, 12:30-3:15 p.m.
- 90. [Notes of Meeting](#), Washington, July 26, 1965, 6:10-6:55 p.m.
- 93. Summary [Notes of the 553d Meeting](#) of the National Security Council, Washington, July 27, 1965, 5:40 p.m.-6:20 p.m.

Francis M. Bator, “No Good Choices: LBJ and the Vietnam/Great Society Connection”, An Expanded Version of a Presidents’ Week Lecture given at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Feb. 28, 2006 (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, MA, 2007).

L. Berman, *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (W.W. Norton and Co.: New York and London, 1984), pp. 79-129.

George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), chs. 2 and 3 (pp. 25-88).

Frederik Logevall, “Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 34, 1, (March 2004), 100-112.

D. Milne, “‘Our Equivalent of Guerrilla Warfare’: Walt Rostow and the Bombing of North Vietnam, 1961-1968”, *Journal of Military History*, 71 (2007), 169-203.

Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, ch. 5.

VanDeMark, Brian, *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), chs. 8, 9 (pp. 153-214).

#### April 8 – **New World Disorder: The Bosnian War and Peace**

Blair, Tony, “The Doctrine of International Community,” 1-10.

Chollet, Derek, *The Road to Dayton* (U.S. State Department Internal History) 5-30.

Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Introduction.

Holbrooke, Richard, *To End A War*, 60-75, 153-215, 288-312.

Huntington, Samuel, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1993), 22-49.

Khalilizad, Zalmay, “DOD Defense Planning Guidance FY 1994-1999,” 1-11, 18-22, 25-29.

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Powell, Colin, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1992/93), 1-10.

**April 15 – Double or Quits: Iraq and the 2007 Surge**

Department of the Army, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, May 13, 2014, pp. tk.

Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task* (New York: Penguin, 2013), chs. 11-15.

Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), chs. 15-18.

Margaret Macmillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (New York, Modern Library, 2009), ch. 8.

**April 22 – The Longest War: Afghanistan**

Kaplan, *The Insurgents*, chs. 20-22.

McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, 275-361.

Carter Malkesian, *War Comes to War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 1, 5.

Emile Simpson, *War From the Ground Up* (Hurst: London, 2012), ch. 2.

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 8