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NS 4038
WAR IN ASIA FROM THE INDIAN MUTINY
THROUGH THE VIETNAM WAR

Spring 2002



COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course studies the history of war and international relations in South Asia and the Asia-Pacific region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It emphasizes the relationship between military action and political developments within the region, and also seeks to explore the impact of regional developments on the larger world system. Students will write an independent research paper in this class. **PREREQUISITE:** Permission of the instructor.

REQUIRED READING: The following books may be purchased at the exchange:

Edward L. Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949*. Longmans 1995 ISBN 0-582-05123-1
William Stueck, *The Korean War. An International History*. Princeton, 1995. ISBN 0-619-03767-1
George C. Herring, *America's Longest War. The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975*. McGraw-Hill, 1996. ISBN 0-07-02-916001-4

Additional readings are in the Course Reader which is on reserve in the Dudley Knox Library. Assignments should be done as far as possible in advance of the class in which they will be discussed.

Course Structure and Requirements: This course has no prerequisites, but some familiarity with the history of Asia, and of international relations generally, is assumed. It is conducted as a traditional graduate seminar, which means that excellent class preparation and active participation are expected of everyone. Students will be expected to write an independent research paper of 5-6,000 words (20-25 pages) on a topic that will also be briefed to the class. The subject of the research paper will be decided on in consultation with the professor. It need not be historical. But it should address some aspect of war or security issues in South, Southeast, or the Asia-Pacific region. Course grading will adhere to the following criteria: the research paper will account for 60% of your grade; a briefing given during the course of the quarter will account for 20%; the final 20% will be based on an active and informed class participation. All written work will be typed or printed by computer, double-spaced, with 12 point fonts, numbered pages, and at least a 1" margin all around. Work will be graded according to the following standards:

A good briefing or research paper will demonstrate five elements: it answers the question asked; it has a thesis; it marshals evidence to support the thesis; it considers, explicitly or implicitly, counter arguments to or weaknesses in the thesis and supporting evidence; and it does the above in a clear and well-organized fashion. You should always keep several things in mind when composing your briefing or examination paper:

1. The briefing or research paper should be your own analysis of the question.
2. Do not repeat history or tell a story. Give only as much general background you need to support your arguments. If you have any doubts about what the question asks, see the professor.
3. Make your points concisely and keep your arguments short.
4. Formulate a **thesis** and state it in your opening paragraph(s). The thesis is the answer to your question, shortened to one or, at the most two, paragraphs. This will guide the organization of your material. It should be complete and able to stand-alone. It should state your main arguments. You should take the counter-arguments on because, if you do not, others certainly will.
5. The conclusion of your paper or briefing should mirror your thesis. If, on completing your paper, you see that your conclusion and thesis do not agree, then perhaps you should adjust your thesis.
6. A poorly organized or sloppily presented briefing detracts from the quality of your argument. Pay attention to spelling and grammar; errors might confuse and distract the audience from the points you wish to make.

Papers and briefings will be graded according to the following standards:

A+ (98): Offers genuinely new understanding of the topic. Indicates brilliance.

A (95): Work of superior quality that is, at least in part, original.

A- (90): Above the average expected of graduate work. An insightful performance.

B+ (88): A sound, well executed paper which meets all five standards of an essay listed above.

B (85): Average graduate performance. A solid essay that is on the whole a successful consideration of the topic.

B- (80): An essay that addresses the question, has a thesis clearly stated but not fully supported, and that either does not consider the topic thoroughly or has structural flaws.

C+ (78): Sufficiently analytical to distinguish it from a C, but still lacks the support, structure, or clarity to merit graduate credit.

C (75): indicates that the work is barely adequate and fails to meet the standards of graduate work. Expresses a responsible opinion but makes inadequate use of evidence, has little coherent structure, is critically unclear, or lacks the quality of insight deemed sufficient to explore the issue at hand adequately.

C- (72): Attempts to address the question, approaches a responsible opinion, but is conspicuously below average in one or more of the elements listed above.

F (65): Indicates that the essay has failed to address the question or has resulted from plagiarism.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is against School regulations and may result in expulsion. You are required to give credit when using someone else's **words** or **ideas**. Direct quotations must be surrounded by quotation marks. Footnotes or endnotes should be used to indicate the source. Facts or dates need not be annotated.

SCHEDULE**I. Organizational Meeting****II. Britain in India****III. The "Opening of China"****IV. The Transformation of Japan****V. The Russo-Japanese War**

J.N. Westwood, *Russia against Japan, 1904-1905: A New Look at the Russo-Japanese War*.

Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun*, 53-93

William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, pp. 362-407

Study Questions:

1. What is this war about? What were the diplomatic issues separating the two countries? Why was Russia in the Far East? What was at stake for Japan? Why should anyone care about Korea? About Manchuria? Which nation had the greatest strategic interests there? What does each country want out of the war?
2. Why does Japan believe it can defeat a power superior in resources and manpower? Which countries will support Japan? Which will support Russia?
3. In your view, which of the two belligerents can look for the most support for the goals of this war from its population? From its military? From its political leaders?
4. The Russo-Japanese War is an example of "limited" war. Where do the limits come from? How are they expressed on the strategic level? Which side had a better grasp on "nature of the war?" Whose side was time on?
5. Clausewitz argues that a weaker power should remain on the defensive. On the other hand, Westwood says that Japan needed a short war? How do you get a short war by remaining on the defensive? Would you characterize Japanese conduct in this war as defensive? Is Japanese strategy compatible with Japanese goals? How do the Japanese get a "decisive" victory in a theater that seems vacant of "decisive" objectives?

6. Conversely, did Russia have an interest in prolonging the conflict? How did she attempt to make time work for her? How did this express itself operationally? What were the risks/rewards for St. Petersburg of this strategy?
7. Assess the value of naval power for each side: Do you think that Japan used her navy well? Was the surprise attack a good idea badly executed, or a bad idea? What might Russia have done differently -- use the Port Arthur squadron more aggressively; send the Baltic Fleet sooner/later/not at all? Which side better integrated their naval assets into an operational and strategic vision of the war? Do you believe that naval power was the “decisive” element of this war?
8. Which side better employed its land assets? Given the fact that Japan sought a short war, did the Japanese employ land forces in the best way to get a rapid outcome? How far should the Japanese army go on the ground to get a result? The Yalu? Mukden? Harbin? Vladivostock? Were Japanese commanders wise to expend so many men to take Port Arthur? Were the Japanese wise to surrender Port Arthur before all powers of resistance were exhausted? Should Russia have continued to war even after Mukden and Tsushima
9. Is there a way that Russia could have won this war? How?
10. Assess Japan's war termination strategy. How well did Japan employ "fighting while negotiating?" How did Japan use its military leverage? What were the risks?
11. If you were a Japanese naval officer/army officer/political leader, what “lessons” would you draw from this war?
12. What is the balance of power in the Far East after Portsmouth? Should Japan feel more or less “secure”? What of the other players in the region?

VI. Rise of the Kuomintang

Dreyer, *China at War 1901-1949*, pp. 1-172

Study Questions:

1. How do you explain China's military weakness in the late nineteenth century? What did the "self-strengthening" movement fail? What changes from 1900?
2. What was the character of Chinese military reform in the first quarter of the twentieth century? In Europe, military reform was an essential pre-requisite to the formation of strong states. Can the same be said for China? Might the cause of Chinese political stability have been better served by the creation of a strong navy? Why did the Chinese military not defend the Manchus in 1911?
3. What was the impact of World War I for China?
4. How do you explain the rise of the "warlords"? Why could the Republic not establish its authority?
5. What was the basis of the KMT's military power? What were its strengths/weaknesses? Account for Chiang's "victory" in the "Northern Expedition"?
6. What was the nature of the Communist/KMT relations in the 1920s? In the context of Chinese military history, what elements of CCP military strategy were traditional, and which were, in your view, unique?
7. What were the consequences of the "Nanking decade" (1927-1937) for Chinese military efficiency? How would you rate the ability of the Chinese military to deal with the twin threats of Communist subversion and Japanese aggression?

VII. Japan 1905-1941

Ikuhiko Hata, "Continental Expansion, 1905-1941" in Peter Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, *The Twentieth Century*, pp. 271-314

Study Questions:

1. Why was Japan not a "satisfied" power after 1905? What did it see as sources of insecurity? How did Tokyo try to cope with them?
2. What was the impact of World War I on Japan's geopolitical position in the Pacific?
3. How did the KMT's "Northern Expedition" threaten Japanese interests in China?
4. How do you account for the growing influence of the military in Japan? How did this manifest itself? Why could the Japanese government not gain control of its military?
5. Why was Manchuria considered important for Japan? How do you explain Japan's violent intrusion into China from 1931? Why were the reactions of Chiang and of the world community to Japanese aggression so muted?
6. Evaluate U.S. policy toward Japan in the inter-war years?

VII. The Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945

Dreyer, *China at War*, pp. 173-311

Study Questions:

1. Evaluate Chiang's policy toward the Japanese following the Mukden incident of 1931 and the proclamation of Manchukuo the following year. What was his dilemma? Do you think the Sian kidnapping a decisive event for the future of China, or did it change little in the long run?
2. Why did the incident at the Marco Polo Bridge in July 1937 ignite a general war between China and Japan? What were Japan's goals in attacking China?
3. Evaluate Japanese strengths/weaknesses. Given Japanese military superiority, why could they not win in China?
4. What was Chiang's strategy for victory over Japan? In your view, was Chiang's decision to commit so many troops into Shanghai a rational one? Should Chiang have pursued advantages gained by his "southern" generals? Why could not the Chinese take better advantage of their numerical superiority over the Japanese?
5. What was the role of the CCP in the war against Japan? Given that some, possibly much, of Mao's theories of guerrilla warfare were based on the CCP war against the Japanese, how effective, in fact, was the Communists war against the Japanese?
6. Why did the U.S. believe that China could become the decisive theater against Japan? Do you think that the U.S. China policy might have been more fruitful had someone other than Stilwell directed it? What problems did Stilwell face in trying to organize Chiang's war effort? In your view, did the China front have any bearing on the outcome of the war?

VIII. The US-Japanese War in the Pacific

Alvin D. Coox, "The Pacific War," in Duus (ed) *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6 *The Twentieth Century*, pp. 315-382

D. Clayton James, "American and Japanese Strategies in the Pacific War," *The Makers of Modern Strategy*, 703-732

Nobutaka Ike, *Japan's Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences*, xiii-xxx; 3-13, 129-163; 184-215; 244-249; 260-283. (Supplemental Reading)

Ikuhiko Hata, "Admiral Yamamoto's Surprise Attack and the Japanese Navy's War Strategy." In Saki Dockrill (ed), *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1941-1945*. pp. 55-72. (Supplemental Reading)

1. Ikuhiko Hata argues that the Pacific War need not have been the logical consequence of the China War, but the Japanese leadership made it so (309). How?
2. In 1941, the Japanese strategy debate split over a "northern advance" or an occupation of Indochina. Why did Japan opt for the latter?
3. What were U.S. interests in the Pacific? Were they worth a major war? Do you think the U.S. prudent to follow a policy of sanctions while militarily so weak? Might it not have been better to appease Japan?
4. What were the consequences of the decision to move south? Might there been a way for Japan to gain its strategic objectives without provoking a war with the U.S.?
5. What did the Japanese expect to gain by making common cause with Hitler? What did they, in fact, gain?
6. James argues that, "By the time Japan went to war against the West, its military strategy dominated but contradicted its national strategy (708)." What does he mean?
7. What was the Japanese strategy for victory in the Pacific War? Given Japan's decision to go to war with the U.S., was Pearl Harbor a logical opening gambit?
8. What were the major inadequacies of the Japanese forces? Might they have been used more effectively against U.S. forces?

9. Given overwhelming American strength, was there, in fact, a way for Japan to win the Pacific war?
10. Why, in your view, did Japan surrender in August 1945?

VIII. Chinese Civil War

Dreyer, *China at War*, 173-206 (review), 312-370

Study Questions:

1. How do you account for the eventual success of Chiang's "Encirclement and Annihilation" campaigns (1931-1934) against the Communists? Did the CCP's land policies help or hurt them in gaining popular support?
2. Why did Chiang not finish off the Communists in 1936-1937 when they appeared to be on the ropes?
3. Who ended World War II in a stronger position, Mao or Chiang? Why was Manchuria considered such a key province for both sides? Chiang's decision to seize the major cities in Manchuria was based on the traditional belief that cities were centers of power and influence over the countryside. Why might this be a flawed notion in the conditions of post-World War II Manchuria? What were Chiang's alternatives?
4. Mao's 1949 victory over the Kuomintang is usually attributed to the strategy of "People's War", the victory of the countryside over the cities. Is this accurate? Or do other contingent factors explain the war's outcome?
5. Having lost the north, why was Chiang unable to hold out south of the Yangtze?
6. Chiang blamed external factors for his defeat, notably Soviet support for Mao and lack of U.S. support for the Kuomintang. In the 1950s, Republicans blamed Democrats for having "lost China". In your view, do external factors explain Chiang's defeat? What responsibility, if any, does the U.S. bear for the Nationalist scuttle to Taiwan in 1949? Could the U.S. have "saved" Chiang?

IX. Korea

William Stueck, *The Korean War*

Study Questions:

1. Why did war break out in Korea? Why did Kim Il Sung think he could win a quick victory? Why did Russia/China support him? What were the risks for the Communists?
2. Was Truman's decision to intervene in the war logical, given U.S. political purposes and strategic priorities? What was at stake for the U.S. in Korea? How far did domestic politics in the U.S. influence Truman's conduct? What should U.S. war aims have been? How did they change?
3. How did the belligerents signal that they desired to fight only a "limited" war. Why did the Korean War not escalate into World War III?
4. Inchon was a brilliant operational success. However, like Pearl Harbor, MacArthur failed to convert military success into political results. Why? Was going to the Yalu smart? Why did no one stop him? What were the alternatives?
5. Stueck writes that if the communists were responsible for starting the war, the United States was responsible for escalating it "to the brink of Armageddon." (125) What factors caused this?
6. Evaluate MacArthur as a commander in Korea. Do you think Truman was correct to fire him? Why or why not?
7. PLA generals opposed going to war with the United States, but Mao prevailed. What was his rationale? How did he think that China could "win" in Korea?
8. Mao's offensive in late 1950 offered the mirror-image of MacArthur's success after Inchon in that each allowed battlefield success to drive his goals. What factors influenced Mao?
9. "He wasn't interested so much in real estate or getting a hill here and a hill there, as he was in killing a lot of the enemy." (USMC General Craig of Ridgway). Was a "homicidal" rather than a "geographical" strategy wise, given that the PLA had virtually an inexhaustible manpower supply? Should Ridgway have pushed beyond the Kansas-Wyoming Line?
10. In a war which lasted 37 months, 21 of them were spend negotiating with the enemy. Why was it so difficult to end the war? Do you agree with Turner Joy that the armistice negotiations were "premature" in July 1951? Whose side was time on? What were the key ways in which each side tried to leverage the peace talks? Might the U.S. have used air power more effectively?
11. Was Truman's insistence on "voluntary repatriation" of POWs a mistake as Adm. Turner Joy believed? Why? What were the risks of forcing POWs to return north?

12. Why did the war come to an end? What were its consequences for the U.S.? For the Communist powers?
13. Who won the Korean War? Evaluate the gains/losses for the participants?

XI. Vietnam

George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*

Study Questions:

1. What was at stake for the U.S. in Vietnam? What was the U.S. theory of victory in Vietnam? How did U.S. strategy change between Kennedy and Johnson?
2. What was at stake for the North Vietnamese? For the South Vietnamese? What was the "value of the objective" for each?
3. Why did the U.S. think we would have better success than the French in Vietnam? Why did the U.S. Army have such difficulty adapting to the nature of the fighting in Vietnam?
4. How well did the U.S. use air power in Vietnam? What should the experience of World War II and Korea have taught us about the limits of air power?
5. Was Têt the turning point of the war? Why? What did the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong expect to achieve? What, in fact, did they achieve? Did the enemy make mistakes which the U.S. might have exploited?
6. What alternative strategies might the U.S. might have employed to win the war?
7. Evaluate the Nixon/Kissinger strategy of Vietnamization and negotiation. What did they do? Why did it not work?

XII. Brief Theses