

University of Warsaw

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Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action
**Transformation of war
- characteristics of
contemporary armed
conflicts**

Semester 2



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Credits awarded: 4 ECTS

Period: Second semester, block 1.

Venue & hours: Room 312, CI III, Tuesday, 9.45-11.15

1. Introduction

The aim of this course is to offer the students possibility to learn and understand the specificity and main characteristics of contemporary armed conflicts. During the course main theories concerning the sources for military conflicts, their geographical distribution and factors decisive for conflicts' characteristics will be discussed. The students will familiarize themselves also with the main evolutionary trends in contemporary armed conflicts, like the Revolution in Military affairs and its implications, privatisation of violence (incl. growth in private security/military services), the role and impact of the media on conflicts' conduct and forms. They will also have an opportunity to discuss the (near) future trends in warfare, particularly those related to technological progress (advancement in robotics, cybernetics and biotechnologies)

2. Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the student:

Knowledge:

- Has highly specialised knowledge and a critical understanding of theoretical concepts and theories concerning contemporary armed conflict.
- Has a critical understanding of personal security risks in humanitarian fieldwork, as well as opportunities and threats of current trends within organised violence.
- Has highly specialised knowledge of the diversity of actors and stakeholders, their interaction and competition in contemporary armed conflicts.
- Has a thorough knowledge of the operational processes and changes in the political and military structures in the international dimension and a critical understanding of the social, legal and security environment in conflict situations

Skills

- Has specialised skills to conceptualise, interpret and critically analyse contemporary armed conflicts, including humanitarian interventions.
- Has the ability to interpret and critically analyse data, information and experience concerning a certain armed conflict or military intervention in order to develop a contextual understanding of the geographical workfield, the community, perspectives, policies, issues and possible solutions.
- Has the ability to formulate independent views, support them with elaborate arguments, using a broad range of approaches and theoretical perspectives, formulate coherent conclusions and make a synthetic summary of these conclusions, using a specialized language of conflict and conflict resolution studies, on topics related to contemporary armed conflicts and their humanitarian aspects.

Competences:

- Has demonstrated the ability to position one's own research findings in the broader context of conflict studies. Has developed an open attitude towards acquiring new

knowledge and understanding about professional and academic developments in conflict studies.

- Learns from past experiences, identifies opportunities to overcome humanitarian dilemmas and proposes new work methods for increased efficiency, effectiveness and stakeholder accountability in complex and unpredictable humanitarian environments during armed conflicts.

3. Course material

Recommended readings:

1. M. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars. Organised Violence in the Global Era*, Polity:Cambridge-Malden 1998, 2006, 2012
2. R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, Grove Press: New York 2003
3. M. Shaw, *The New Western way of War*, Polity: Cambridge-Malden 2005
4. R. Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern War*, Vintage: New York 2008
5. P. Singer, *Wired for war. The Robotics revolution and Conflict in the 21 st Century*, Penguin: New York 2009
6. P. Singer, *Corporate Warriors. The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*, Cornell UP: New York 2003, 2008
7. P. Singer, A. Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar. What Everyone Needs to Know*, OUP: Oxford, 2014
8. M. van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, Free Press: New York 1991.
9. J. Baylis (et.al), *Strategy in the contemporary world* OUP: Oxford, 2007
10. J. Arquilla, D. Ronfeldt (eds.), *Network and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*, RAND: Santa Monica 2001.
11. M. Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today*, Gotham Books: New York 2006
12. S. Barela (ed.), *Legitimacy and Drones. Investigating the Legality, Morality and Efficacy of Ucavs*, Ashgate: Farnham-Burlington 2015
13. M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, Routledge:2010,
14. SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbooks* (various editions),
15. HIIK, *Conflict barometer* (various editions),

4. Teaching and learning methodology

Lecture in classroom, discussion, powerpoint presentations. Optionally (if case of students' interest and request) students' public presentations as well as written short analyses on selected topics

5. Programme and training activities

Week 1

Armed conflicts - main definitions, typologies and classifications (incl. factors constituting armed conflict, question of "level of intensity of violence", inter- vs. intra vs. intra-national internationalised conflicts, issue of one-sided violence, conflicts and interventions).

Week 2

Traditional (Clausewitzian) vision of armed conflicts. XX century wars – “the Old wars” - geopolitics, totality of wars, Cold War and its implications

Suggested readings:

- M. Caldor, *New and Old wars. Organised violence in a global era* (third edition, Stanford: 2012), ch. 2 (Old Wars)
- M. van Creveld, *The transformation of War*, Free Press: 1991,[ch I, pp. 1-33,], 33-49
- M. Boot, *war Made New. Weapons, warriors and the making of modern world*, Gotham books: 2006, pp. [109-116, 196-205],205-212, 295-307

Week 3

Contemporary armed conflicts - statistical overview, geographical distribution, intensity

- SIPRI Yearbook (newest edition available) – chapter on Armed conflicts, including annexes
- Conflict Barometer (CB - newest edition available) – Parts: methodology, global conflict panorama, global conflict developments (CB 2014, pp. 7-20)

Week 4

Theories on evolution of conflicts in macro scale (methods and means used, strategies adopted): A. and H. Toffler' "war generations" and derivative concepts (i.e. fourth generation wars, etc.), M. van Creveld concept of "transformation of war"

- A. Toffler, H. Toffler, War and Anti-War (various editions), ch. 5, 6, 9.
- M. van Creveld, The transformation of War, Free Press: 1991, [ch I, pp.], 49-62

Week 5

Theories on sources and reasons for armed conflicts (based on structural factors - R. Cooper; cultural factors - S. Huntington)

- R. Cooper, Breaking of Nations. Order and chaos in the Twenty-First Century, Grove Press: 2003, pp. [16-55], 55-81
- S. Huntington, The Clash of Civilisations?, "Foreign Affairs", Summer 1993

Week 6

Economic and ecological factors - P. Collier, T. Homer-Dixon – relevance and limitations of these theories

- P. Collier, Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy, Oxford University, April 2006 (users.ox.ac.uk/~econpco/research/pdfs/EconomicCausesofCivilConflict-ImplicationsforPolicy.pdf)
- P. Collier, Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity, "The Journal of Conflict Resolution", Vol. 44, No. 6, Economic Analysis of Conflict, (Dec., 2000), pp. 839-853
- T. Homer-Dixon, Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases, "International Security, Vol. 19, No. I (Summer 1994)

Week 7

Theoretical reflection on the conduct and forms of contemporary armed conflicts - "new war" theories (M. Kaldor, H. Muenkler) – sources of conflicts, main characteristics, limitations and strengths of the concept

- M. Kaldor, New and Old wars. Organised violence in a global era, (third edition, Stanford: 2012), pp. 71-119, [151-185]
- M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies, Routledge:2010, pp. 190-200 (H. Münkler, Old and new wars)

Week 8

Theoretical reflection on the conduct and forms of risk-transfer war (M. Shaw), "war amongst the people" (R. Smith)

- M. Shaw, The New Western Way of War: Risk-Transfer War and its Crisis in Iraq, Polity: 2005, ch. 4, [5]
- R. Smith, The Utility of force. The art of war in the Modern World, Vintage: 2008, pp. 269-308

Week 9

Technology and war – RMA and its implications (impact on strategies and methods of conflict) - the idea of RMA, the sources of its current forms

- M. Boot, War Made New. Weapons, warriors and the making of modern world, Gotham books: 2006, pp. 307-318, 419-436
- E. Cohen, Technology and Warfare [in:] J. Baylis (et.al), Strategy in the contemporary world OUP: 2007, pp. 141-161

Week 10

Problem of asymmetry in contemporary conflicts. Issue of hybrid warfare

- M. Madej, Transatlantic Perspectives on Asymmetric Threats – Their Essence, Nature and Strategic Importance [in:] S. Dębski (ed.), Transatlantic Perspectives on Security Imperatives, Transatlantic Public Policy Series", Volume 3, LIT Verlag: 2007, pp. 49-69
- S. Metz, D. V. Johnson II, Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts, Army War College SSI, January 2001

- F Hoffman, Hybrid warfare and Challenges, "Joint Forces Quarterly", Issue 52, 1st quarter 2009

Week 11

Privatisation of violence (participation of PMC in conflicts)

- M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer, The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies, Routledge:2010, pp. 200-211 (A. Leander, The privatization of international security)
- P.W. Singer, Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security, "International Security", International Security, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter, 2001-2002), pp. 186-220

Week 12

New means of destruction and warfare – cyberwarfare.

- P.W. Singer, A. Friedman Cybersecurity and Cyberwar. What Everyone Needs to Know, OUP, 2014, pp. [67-120], 120-166
- M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer (eds.) , The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies, Routledge:2010, pp. 180-190 (M. Dunn-Cavelty, Cyber-threats)
- J. Arquilla, D. Ronfeldt (eds) Networks and Netwars. The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy, RAND: 2001, pp. 239-288 (ch. 8, D. Denning, Activism, Hacktivism, and Cyberterrorism: the Internet As a Tool for Influencing Foreign Policy)

Week 13

New means of destruction and warfare - robots (UAVs etc.), biotechnologies

- P. Singer, Wired for War. The robotics revolution and conflict in the 21st Century, Penguin Books: 2009, pp. 382-413
- M. Boot, War Made New. Weapons, warriors and the making of modern world, Gotham books: 2006, pp. 439-473
- M. D. Cavelty, V. Mauer (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies, Routledge:2010, pp. 232-243 (B. Kellman, Emerging dangers of biological weapons)
- S. J. Barela (ed.), Legitimacy and drones. Investigating legality, morality and efficacy of UCAVs, Ashgate:2015, ch. 10, 11 (M. Madej, Tactical efficacy: 'notorious' UCAVs and lawfare, S. Barela, Strategic efficacy: the opinion of security and a dearth of data)

Week 14

Mass media and conflicts (evolution of their role, CNN effect, parachute journalism and other innovations within media practices; media and conflict resolution)

Week 15

Future of war and warfare – a discussion

6. Workload

30h of seminars (15x1,5H)

On average 3,5 h per week of reading – c/a 55 h. of readings

15 h – revision for the exam and other forms of preparations to the lectures

Total: 100 h.

7. Assessment methods

Written exam (mixed form: multiple answers-type question, semi-open question – one-sentence answers; open question – one of the three to be chosen by student) 80%.

Activeness during classes 20%.

8. Assessment criteria

85% of points - grade 5

75% of points - grade 4,5

65% of points – grade 4

55% of points – grade 3,5

Over 45% of points – grade 3

9. Appendices