

Military Power

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Class description

Military power is an underlying and critical factor in the conduit of international affairs: it is required for conducting basic strategies of compellence and deterrence, it shapes states' perceptions of each other, and defense budgets attract considerable shares of the national wealth in most countries. Yet, military power is elusive: the strongest militaries on paper do not always win their wars, and globalization as well as emerging technologies seem to question the relative importance of military power in foreign policies. Moreover, military power has an impact on most countries' political dynamics (through the shaping of civil-military relations) and, because of its destructive nature, drastically alters the life of millions. This class will thus discuss the importance and evolution of military power in the 21st century, tackling the subject through different angles: strategies, military effectiveness and socio-political consequences.

Class objectives

At the end of this class, students should be able to:

- Understand the role of military power in grand strategies
- Critically discuss the ways to observe and measure military power
- Understand the multi-faceted nature of military effectiveness
- Assess the socio-political importance of military power's destructive nature
- Understand the challenges to military power in the near future.

There is no prerequisite for this class, but previous knowledge of International Relations theories and/or strategic studies is desirable.

To quickly catch up on these issues, see:

- John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin S: Gray (eds.), *Strategy in the Contemporary World* (6th ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Charles-Philippe David et Olivier Schmitt, *La Guerre et la Paix. Approches Contemporaines de la Sécurité et de la Stratégie* (4e éd.), Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2020.

Assessment

The assessment is composed of three inter-related activities:

- A 4-pages memo summarizing and problematizing the mandatory readings for a given week, which will be distributed to all students the day before class (30%)
- A 12-minutes oral presentation on a predetermined topic (30%)
- A 15-pages research paper on a topic to be determined with the instructor (40%) by class 4.

1. What is military power?

Class 1

The contours of military power (27 January)

Can we define military power? How? Is power a relation or an attribute?

Mandatory readings

David Baldwin, *Power and International Relations. A Conceptual Approach*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016. Read chapter 4: "Power Analysis and International Relations", pp. 91-122.

Peter Paret, "Military Power", *The Journal of Military History*, 53/3, 1989, pp. 239-256

Additional readings

Michael Howard, "Military Power and International Order", *International Affairs*, 40/3, 1964, pp. 397-408.

Jan Angstrom and Peter Haldén, "The Poverty of Power in Military Power: How Collective Power could Benefit Strategic Studies", *Defense and Security Analysis*, 35/2, 2019, pp. 170-189.

Class 2

Military power and grand strategy (3 February)

What is the place of military power in states' strategies and foreign policies? How does it interact with other tools of power?

Robert J. Art, "To What Ends Military Power?", *International Security*, 4/4, 1980, pp. 3-35.

William C. Martel, *Victory in War. Foundations of Modern Strategy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Read chapter 13, "Military Power and Victory", pp. 341-370.

Additional readings

Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World*, London, Penguin, 2019. Read the introduction, pp. 1-28.

Lawrence Freedman, "Coping with Disorder. The Use and Limits of Military Force", *World Politics Review*, 27 October 2015.

Available at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/17053/coping-with-disorder-the-use-and-limits-of-military-force>

Sarah Kreps, *Taxing Wars. The American Way of War Finances and the Decline of Democracy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018.

Read the introduction, pp. 1-14.

Bettina Renz, "Why Russia is Reviving its Conventional Military Power", *Parameters*, 46/2, 2016, pp. 23-45.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Naval forces and diplomacy in the 21st century
- The politics of military basing

Class 3

Measuring military power (10 February)

How can we measure military power? What are the relevant indicators? Does it matter?

Mandatory readings

Ann Hironaka, *Tokens of Power. Rethinking War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Read chapter 2, "The Measurement of Military Power", pp. 34-67.

Jon R. Lindsay and Erik Gartzke, "Politics by Other Means: The Comparative Strategic Advantages of Operational Domains", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2020.

Additional readings

Bastian Giegerich, Nick Childs and James Hackett, "Military Capability and International Status", *Military Balance Blog*, 4th July 2018.

Available at: <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2018/07/military-capability-and-international-status>

Ashley J. Tellis *et al.*, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age*, Santa Monica, Rand Corporation, 2000.

Read chapter 7: Measuring Military Capability, pp. 133-176.

Yee-Kuang Heng, "Old Wine in New Bottles? Reconfiguring Net Assessment for 21st. Century Security Analysis", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 28/3, 2007, pp. 423-443.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- French assessments of German military power in the interwar period
- Measuring military power in conventional arms control agreements

2. Military power and international relations

Class 4

Military power and international hierarchy (17 February)

- Deadline for submitting research paper proposals -

How does military power shape the international system? To what extent do international hierarchies depend on military power?

Mandatory readings

Ann Hironaka, *Tokens of Power. Rethinking War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Read chapter 4, "Great Power Competition and the Causes of War", pp. 101-133.

Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wholforth, "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the Twenty-First Century", *International Security*, 40/3, 2015/16, pp. 7-53.

Additional readings

Evan Braden Montgomery, "Signals of Strength: Capability Demonstrations and Perceptions of Military Power", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43/2, 2020, pp. 309-330.

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2014 (2001). Read chapter 1, "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power", pp. 29-55.

Christian Reus-Smith, "Liberal Hierarchy and the Licence to Use Force", *Review of International Studies*, 31/S1, 2005, pp. 71-92.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Nuclear capabilities and international status
- Military power and international ambitions: the case of China

Class 5
Military power and international alliances (24 February)

Why do states combine their military power? What are the trade-offs involved?

Mandatory readings

Steven M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", *International Security*, 9/4, 1985, pp. 3-43.

Kathleen J. McNinnis, "Lessons in Coalition Warfare: Past, Present, and Implications for the Future", *International Politics Reviews*, 1/2, 2013, pp. 78-90.

Olivier Schmitt, *Allies that Count. Junior Partners in Coalition Warfare*, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2018.

Read the Introduction, pp. 1-42.

Additional readings

Derrick V. Frazier and J. Wesley Hutto, "The Socialization of Military Power: Security Cooperation and Doctrine Development through Multinational Military Exercises", *Defence Studies*, 17/4, pp. 379-397.

Marina Henke, "Buying Allies: Payment Practices in Multilateral Coalition-Building", *International Security*, 43/4, 2019, pp. 128-162.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- NATO's intervention in Afghanistan: the dilemmas of coalition warfare
- The politics of multinational military exercises

Class 6
The international diffusion of military power (3 March)

What are the mechanisms facilitating the diffusion of military power? How does that shape international hierarchies?

Mandatory readings

Michael Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010. Read chapter 2, "A Theory of the Diffusion of Military Power", pp. 18-65.

Julien Pretorius, "The Security Imaginary: Explaining Military Isomorphism", *Security Dialogue*, 39/1, 2008, pp. 99-120.

Additional readings

Theo Farrell, "World Culture and Military Power", *Security Studies*, 14/3, 2005, pp. 448-488.

Andrea Gilli and Mauro Gilli, "Why China has not Caught Up Yet: Military-Technological Superiority and the Challenges of Imitation, Reverse Engineering, and Cyber-Espionage", *International Security*, 43/3, 2018/19, pp. 141-189.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- The influence of colonial legacies on the design of African armed forces
- The influence of alliances on military transformation

3. Generating military power: the issue of military effectiveness

Class 7

Military effectiveness (1): institutions (5 March)

Why study military effectiveness? How do civil-military interactions and norms shape military power? Do defense expenditures matter? Should states invest in defense industries?

Mandatory readings

Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley, *Creating Military Power. The Sources of Military Effectiveness*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2007.

Read the introduction: "The Impact of Culture, Society, Institutions and International Forces on Military Effectiveness", pp. 1-26.

Caitlin Talmadge, "Different Threats, Different Militaries: Explaining Organizational Practices in Authoritarian Armies", *Security Studies*, 25/1, 2016, pp. 111-141.

Additional readings

Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France Between the Wars", *International Security*, 19/4, 1995, pp. 65-93.

Anit Mukherjee, "Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil-Military Relations in India", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 40/1-2, 2017, pp. 6-34.

Jacques Aben and Jacques Fontanel, "Military Expenditure as a Proxy for State Power. The Case of France", *Defence and Peace Economics*, 30/2, 2019, pp. 133-141.

Marc R. De Vore, "Commentary on the Value of Domestic Arms Industries: Security of Supply or Military Adaptation?", *Defence Studies*, 17/3, 2017, pp. 242-259.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Military interventions in politics in the United States
- The global arms market and the evolution of defense industries

Class 8

Military effectiveness (2): force employment and military strategies (10 March)

Is the "modern system" the key to victory in modern warfare? Are there counterproductive ways to employ military force?

Mandatory readings

Ryan Grauer and Michael C. Horowitz, "What Determines Military Victory? Testing the Modern System", *Security Studies*, 21/1, 2012, pp. 83-112.

Stephen Biddle, Julia Macdonald and Ryan Baker, "Small Footprint, Small Payoff: The Military Effectiveness of Security Force Assistance", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41/1-2, 2018, pp. 89-142.

Additional readings

Patricia L. Sullivan, "War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51/3, 2007, pp. 496-524.

Rosella Cappella Zielinski and Ryan Grauer, "Organizing for Performance. Coalition Effectiveness on the Battlefield", *European Journal of International Relations*, 2020, online first.

Pascal Vennesson and Amanda Huan, "The General's Intuition: Overconfidence, Pattern Matching and the Inchon Landing Decision", *Armed Forces and Society*, 44/3, 2018, pp. 498-520.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- The German military performance in World War II
- Why can't Western countries win contemporary wars?

Class 9
Military effectiveness (3): the armed forces (17 March)

What motivates people to fight? Are there “good practices” in the shaping and management of armed forces?

Mandatory readings

Jasen J. Castillo, *Endurance and War. The National Sources of Military Cohesion*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2014.

Read Chapter 2: “Cohesion Theory: Explaining a Military’s Will to Fight”, pp. 16-43.

Jason Lyall, *Divided Armies: Inequality and Battlefield Performance in Modern War*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020.

Read Chapter 2: “Divided Armies: a Theory of Battlefield Performance in Modern War”, pp. 39-89.

Additional readings

Caitlin Talmadge, “The Puzzle of Personalist Performance: Iraqi Battlefield Effectiveness in the Iran-Iraq War”, *Security Studies*, 22/2, 2013, pp. 180-221.

Eric Hundman and Sarah E. Parkinson, “Rogues, Degenerates, and Heroes: Disobedience as Politics in Military Organizations”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 2019, advanced publication.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Small unit cohesion and the US armed forces’ combat effectiveness in World War II
- Brutality, group cohesion and war crimes from the Vietnam War to the Iraq War

4. Challenges to military power

Class 10

Destruction, victims and the dangers of military power (19 March)

When does the use of military power become militarism? Is there a "good way" to use military power? When do the human suffering outweigh the strategic benefits of using military power?

Mandatory readings

Bryan Mabee and Srdjan Vucetic, "Varieties of Militarism: Towards a Typology", *Security Dialogue*, 49/1-2, 2018, pp. 96-108.

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals", *Signs*, 12/4, 1987, pp. 687-719.

Additional readings

Nathaniel K. Powell, "Battling Instability? The Recurring Logic of French Military Interventions in Africa", *African Security*, 10/1, 2017, pp. 47-72.

Theo Farrell and Olivier Schmitt, "The Causes, Character and Conduct of Armed Conflict, and the Effects on Civilian Population, 1990-2010", in Volker Türk, Alice Edwards and Cornelis Wouters (eds.), *In Flight from Conflict and Violence. Refugee Status and Other Forms of International Protections*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 25-58.

Siniša Malešević, "The Act of Killing: Understanding the Emotional Dynamics of Violence on the Battlefield", *Critical Military Studies*, 2019, advanced online publication.

Alex Edney-Browne, "The Psychosocial Effects of Drone Violence: Social Isolation, Self-Objectification, and Depoliticization", *Political Psychology*, 40/6, 2019, pp. 1341-1356.

James Rogers, "Drone Warfare: The Death of Precision", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 12 May 2017.

Available at: <https://thebulletin.org/2017/05/drone-warfare-the-death-of-precision/>

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Gender-based violence in contemporary armed conflicts
- After war: post-traumatic stress disorder in Western armed forces

Class 11
Trends on the modern battlefield (24 March)

Mandatory readings

How is the changing character of warfare challenging the use of military power? What is the role of technology in developing military power?

Olivier Schmitt, "Wartime Paradigms and the Future of Western Military Power", *International Affairs*, 96/2, 2020.

David Betz and Hugo Stanford-Tuck, "The City is Neutral. On Urban Warfare in the 21st Century", *Texas National Security Review*, 2/4, 2019, pp. 61-87.

Additional readings

Heather Venable, "The Air Force has Some Thinking to Do: Airpower and the Future Urban Battlefield", *Modern War Institute*, 14 February 2020.

Available at: <https://mwi.usma.edu/air-force-thinking-airpower-future-urban-battlefield/>

Keir Giles and Mathieu Boulegue, "Russia's A2/AD Capabilities: Real and Imagined", *Parameters*, 49/1-2, 2019, pp. 21-36.

Erik Gartzke, "Blood and Robots: How Remotely Piloted Vehicles and Related Technologies Affect the Politics of Violence", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2019, advanced online publication.

Michael C. Horowitz, "Artificial Intelligence, International Competition, and the Balance of Power", *Texas National Security Review*, 1/3, 2018, pp. 37-57.

Michael C. Horowitz, "When Speed Kills: Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, Deterrence and Stability", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42/6, 2019, pp. 764-788.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- Chinese A2/AD strategies and capabilities: consequences for the regional balance of power
- Commanding war in the future: autonomy, long-range strike capabilities, and command and control (C2) structures

Class 12

Beyond military power: strategic competition by other means (31 March)

Mandatory readings

Is military power still relevant in international relations? Is secrecy changing military power?

Ariel E. Levite and Jonathan Shimshoni, "The Strategic Challenge of Society-Centric Warfare", *Survival*, 60/6, 2018, pp. 91-118.

Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion", *International Security*, 44/1, 2019, pp. 42-79.

Additional readings

Rory Cormac and Richard J. Aldrich, "Grey is the New Black: Covert Action and Implausible Deniability", *International Affairs*, 94/3, 2018, pp. 477-494.

Eitan Shamir and Eyal Ben-Ari, "The Rise of Special Operations Forces: Generalized Specialisation, Boundary Spanning and Military Autonomy", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41/3, 2018, pp. 335-371.

Benjamin Jensen, Brandon Valeriano and Ryan Maness, "Fancy Bears and Digital Trolls: Cyber Strategy with a Russian Twist", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42/2, 2019, pp. 212-234.

Jacquelyn G. Schneider, "Deterrence in and Through Cyberspace", in Jon R. Lindsay and Erik Gartzke (eds.), *Cross-Domain Deterrence. Strategy in an Era of Complexity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 95-120.

Topics for the oral presentations:

- New technologies and influence operations
- The strategic logic of terrorism in the 21st Century