

**Humane Warfare:
Ancient and Medieval Perspectives on Ethics in War
CI-H
Spring 2018
Tuesday 3-5; Thursday 3-4**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 5-6; Thursday 4-6**

Despite, on one hand, the devastations wrought by terrible wars and the growth of technologies that have the potential to destroy the world, and, on the other hand, the rise of international organizations through which nations might resolve conflicts peacefully, the end of war is nowhere on the horizon. Nor have modern developments simplified arguments about when to wage war and about what is and is not permissible (or even appropriate) in its conduct. On the contrary, we are confronted by a range of new challenges as technology – and our capabilities through it – have changed. For example, ethical questions about nuclear deterrence have been long debated, but we now must add questions about drone and cyber warfare, and the possible use of robots in war.

This course explores the norms of war by focusing on primary texts of pre-modern approaches to this topic, namely, the classical rationalist tradition and the Biblical monotheistic tradition as it was codified in the Middle Ages (and which was informed by and in some sense a response to the rationalist tradition). We return to these pre-modern thinkers for two main reasons. First, because they lived amid almost continuous war, the stresses of which present the demands of justice especially starkly, these thinkers addressed the nature and extent of these demands in an especially vivid and thorough way. Second, returning to different, even alien, ways of articulating the norms of war and bringing them into conversation with each other, will help us gain a critical distance from our own assumptions about questions of justice in war, enabling us to examine those questions with fresh eyes.

Our study proceeds through the early Renaissance, with the beginning of a formalized doctrine of just war theory by Francisco de Vitoria. We discuss throughout but devote direct attention at the very end to readings about current ethical dilemmas and different ways of addressing them.

Our objectives in this course are threefold:

- 1 To acquaint students with the dominant strands of thinking about just war by studying primary texts of the Classical Greek, Ancient Roman, Medieval Christian, and Early Islamic *Falasifa* traditions;
- 2 To encourage reflection on and analysis of the problem of justice as it is crystallized when most under pressure, namely, in the context of war; and

- 3 To familiarize students with the ethical challenges of waging war in our highly technological age and consider ways in which these older approaches can provide guidance.

Required Texts for Purchase:

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Landmark edition: <https://www.amazon.com/Landmark-Thucydides-Comprehensive-Guide-Peloponnesian/dp/0684827905>)

Course Packet (Selections from Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, *Falasila* readings), which will be available for purchase.

Some suggested additional readings:

Fairbanks, Charles. "The Politics of Resentment" *Journal of Democracy* 5:2 (April 1994): 35-41

_____. "The Postcommunist Wars." *Journal of Democracy* 6:4 (October 1994): 18-34.

Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?": *Foreign Affairs* 73:3 (Summer 1003), 22-49.

Hassner, Pierre, "Huntington's Clash of Civilizations: Morally Objectionable, Politically Dangerous." *National Interest* 46 (Winter 1996/7): 63-60

Ignatieff, Michael. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*. New York. Noonday Press. 1993

Tamas, G. M. "A Disquisition of Civil Society"." *Social Research* 61:2 (Summer 1994), 205-221

_____. "Ethnarchy and Ethno-Anarchism" *Social Research* 63:1 (Spring 1996), 147-9

Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars*

Reading on general issues of ethics in war:

Battle Lessons

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/01/17/battle-lessons>

Thomas E. Doyle, "Reviving Nuclear Ethics: A Renewed Research Agenda for the Twenty-First Century," *Ethics & International Affairs* 24.3 (Fall 2010)

Torture: Jeremy Waldron, "Security and Liberty: The Image of a Balance," in *Torture, Terror, and Trade-Offs*

The problem of Drones:

Do Drones Undermine Democracy?

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/opinion/sunday/do-drones-undermine-democracy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

The Case for Drones:

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-case-for-drones/>

The Paradox of Riskless War

http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1325&context=fss_papers

Cyberwarfare:

The Ethics of Cyberwarfare

<http://www3.nd.edu/~cpence/eewt/Dipert2010.pdf>

Is it Possible to Wage a Just Cyber War?

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/06/is-it-possible-to-wage-a-just-cyberwar/258106/>

Robotics:

Robots in War: Issues of Risk and Ethics

http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=phil_fac

Schedule of Readings

Week 1 (Feb 6) – Introductory lecture; Thucydides I.1-23

Week 2 (Feb 13) – Thucydides I.24-1.138

Week 3 (Feb 22 – THURSDAY [no Tuesday class]) – Thucydides I.139-146; II.1-65

Week 4 (Feb 27) – Thucydides III.1-88

Week 5 (March 6) – Thucydides IV.1-41, 58-65, 78-88

Week 6 (March 13) – Thucydides IV.102-V.26

Week 7 (March 22 THURSDAY [no Tuesday class]) – Thucydides V.84-116

March 27 (Spring break – NO CLASS)

Week 8 (April 3) – Thucydides VI, VII (all of both books)

Week 9 (April 10) – Plato/Aristotle

Week 10 (April 19 THURSDAY CLASS [no Tuesday class]) -- Cicero

Week 11 (April 24) –Augustine/Thomas Aquinas

Week 12 (May 1) – *Falasila*

Week 13 (May 8) – Dante/Vitoria

Week 14 (May 15) – Just war theory

Course Requirements

Two papers will be submitted. The first one will be a shorter analytical/interpretive paper (1250 words), which you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit. Your second paper (2500 words) can be either a longer interpretive paper on any of the thinkers above, *or* a case study of a current issue related to the theme of the course and devised in conjunction with me. It could be about the ethical implications of some new technology (e.g., drones, AI/robots) or about the ethical questions raised in any particular international crisis (e.g., North Korea, Middle East). In this case, the idea is to analyze the issue from the perspective of some combination of the thinkers that we are examining. In both cases you will submit an outline for your paper 2 weeks prior to the due date, which is the last day of classes.

Grades are calculated as follows:

Paper 1	10%
Revision	10%
Outline	10%
Paper 2	20%
Question sets	10%
Class Participation	40%

Expectations

Class Attendance/Participation:

Regular class attendance is MANDATORY. Absences from class without a legitimate reason (e.g., illness) can lead to a failing grade.

Your presence in class alone, however, does NOT constitute participation. Your most important task for this course is to do each week's reading with care. This means that you should come to class ready to reflect on the portion of the text assigned for that week. Daily exploration, analysis and class discussion of the materials we will read is crucial. You do not learn something well by hearing someone else explain it; active thinking, questioning and discussing are necessary.

Engaging in class discussion does not mean that you have to know the answers before you speak; often – or even usually – the most useful kind of discussion involves a question rather than an answer. The quality of your experience in class, and that of everyone else's in it, depends to a large extent on **YOU**. Your participation grade will be based on the extent to which you are a responsible and active discussant. Being a discussant means taking responsibility for helping the class as a whole investigate and explore whatever question is on the table. For some of you, this may mean learning to speak up more than you have before; for others, this may mean learning to be more judicious and patient.

Question Sets:

You must do 5 of these over the course of the term, which you will hand in to me prior to the class of that week. You should come up with 2 or 3 questions, the development and articulation of which should not exceed one typed double-spaced page. Please consider the following guidelines when writing them:

- Questions should be connected explicitly to a quoted or cited section of text.
- Questions should be answerable from within or on the basis of the text.
- Questions should be trying to get to something important for a thoughtful interpretation of the text. One should be able to explain why the question is important and have an idea about how the answer to it might influence our interpretation of the work.
- Questions should be honest. If you think you already know the answer to your question, then you should challenge yourself to ask another question

Papers:

You must submit both an online and paper version. Papers should follow standard formatting (typed, page-numbered and double-spaced, etc.).

Please familiarize yourself with MIT's policy on academic integrity, which you can find here: <https://integrity.mit.edu>. If you have any questions at all about what constitutes plagiarism (a most serious academic offence), please do not hesitate to speak with me about it.

You will find a document with advice about how to write a paper for this class on our stellar site. Please consult this BEFORE beginning to work on your papers.

Miscellaneous:

Laptops, iPads or any such devices are not permitted in class (this should go without saying, but neither are cell phones – they must be stored away and turned off). Please see me directly if you have a special request for using a device.

You are welcome to bring coffee or water with you to class. If you must eat, please try to do it discreetly so as not to bother (or distract) your classmates. **And do please resist as much as possible the temptation to get up during class** — to fill a bottle of water, send a text, or perform your daily ablutions.