



***FOUNDATIONS OF
MILITARY THEORY:
THE EVOLUTION OF WAR AND
MILITARY THOUGHT***

**SYLLABUS
AY 23**

**JOINT PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION PHASE I INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
COURSE**

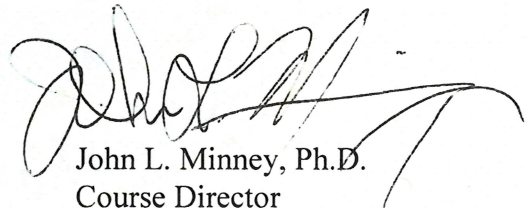
**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
21st Century Leaders for 21st Century Challenges**

5 August 2022


**AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
MAXWELL AFB, AL**

FOREWORD

This syllabus for Foundations of Military Theory for the Air Command and Staff College, August-September 2022, provides an overview of the course narrative and objectives. Included herein is information about course methods of evaluation, the course schedule of lectures, readings, and deliverables, and the fulfillment of joint professional military education core goals.



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Course Director
Foundations of Military Theory



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
COURSE OVERVIEW.....	4
COURSE DESCRIPTION	4
COURSE OBJECTIVES.....	4
COURSE REQUIREMENTS	4
REQUIRED BOOKS	5
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS	6
DAY 1 – COURSE INTRODUCTION AND THUCYDIDES.....	6
DAY 2 – HUMAN NATURE AND JUST WAR	7
DAY 3 – WAR AS SCIENCE AND PREDICTABILITY	7
DAY 4 – WAR AS ART AND COMPLEXITY.....	8
DAY 5 – WAR AS STRATEGY AND POLICY.....	9
DAY 6 – INDIRECT STRATEGY.....	10
DAY 7 – OPERATIONAL ART AND MANEUVER.....	10
DAY 8 – DETERRENCE.....	11
DAY 9 – IRREGULAR WARFARE.....	11
DAY 10 – APPLICATIONS OF MILITARY THEORY.....	12

FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY THEORY COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Foundations of Military Theory fosters understanding of classical thought on the nature and character of war. The course introduces canonical works of military theory, drawing explicit links between historical concepts of war and strategy, the conduct of the profession of arms, and the tenets of contemporary doctrine. Highlighting the effects of emergent ideas and technologies on the practice of warfare, the course analyzes continuity and change in armed conflict over the past three centuries. Foundations of Military Theory is designed to elicit critical thinking about the organization and employment of joint forces in support of national strategic objectives and frame subsequent engagements in the ACSC program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Foundations of Military Theory aims to cultivate students' habits of mind and patterns of inquiry for thinking about warfare. It invites students to grapple with contending ideas, question their own assumptions about war and the profession of arms, and appreciate the relevance of classical military theory amid current and evolving national security challenges. More specifically, it asks that students:

1. Understand both the nature and character of war, as well as continuity and change in warfare across the competition continuum.
2. Understand military theory and its relationship to concepts of human nature, science, operational art, strategy, and policy.
3. Understand the evolution of foundational military theories and their relevance to contemporary and emerging warfare.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. MT-600 (E): MIDTERM ESSAY

Choose one of the historical cases provided on Canvas. Write a 3-4 page essay that depicts and evaluates the case from the perspective of at least one of the theorists covered in the course. This assignment is worth 30% of the final MT 5510 grade. The essay is due by 1700 L on 29 August 2022, which is the gray day following Day 6 of the course.

2. MT-601 (E): FINAL ESSAY

Human nature, strategy, science, art, and politics are useful concepts for understanding military theory. Write a 5-6 page essay that explains which theorist or theorists will be most useful for your future study of wars and why. This assignment is worth 50% of the final MT 5510 grade. The essay is due on Day 10, 15 September 2022, which is the final day of the course.

3. MT-602 (P): CLASS EXERCISES, PREPARATION, AND CONTRIBUTION

Each student is expected to attend lectures and seminars, read the assigned texts, participate in class exercises, and contribute to seminar discussions. Participation is worth 20% of the final MT 5510 grade.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The course includes readings from books issued by ACSC and readings from electronic files posted on Canvas (indicated as “[EL]”). Students can access the syllabus, lecture videos, electronic readings, and other supplemental materials online through Canvas. ACSC provides students with copies of the following course books, which must be returned at the conclusion of the course:

- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004 [1911].
- Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006 [1964].
- Kilcullen, David. *The Dragons and the Snakes: How the Rest Learned to Fight the West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Liddell Hart, B.H. *Strategy*, 2nd Revised Edition. New York: Meridian, 1954, 1991.
- Paret, Peter, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1986.
- Slessor, John C. *Air Power and Armies*. 1936. Reprint, Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2009.
- Strassler, Robert, ed. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1996.
- Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Translated by Samuel Griffith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th Edition. New York: Basic Books, 1977.

Please refer questions to Dr. John Minney, Course Director (john.minney.1@au.af.edu) or Wg Cdr Robin Kemp, Deputy Course Director (robin.kemp.uk@au.af.edu).

FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY THEORY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

DAY 1 – COURSE INTRODUCTION AND THUCYDIDES

DATE: 8 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the relationship between military theory, joint doctrine, and the profession of arms.
2. Understand historical trends related to war and their relationship to the contemporary security environment.
3. Understand the contemporary relevance of the Peloponnesian War.

MT-500 (L): Course Introduction. Dr. John Minney

CONTACT HOURS: 30-minute lecture.

MT-501 (L): Title The Peloponnesian War. Dr. Paul Johstono.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture.

MT-502 (S): The Nature of War

1. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1: *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 12 July 2017, Chapter 1, “Theory and Foundations,” I-1-I-21, and Appendix B, “The Profession of Arms,” B-1-B-3. [EL]
2. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides*, ix-xxii, 16-17, 41-45, 96-97, 123-128, 199-201, 351-357, 366-376, 407-410.
3. Ryder, Paul. “What Thucydides might have taught Vladimir Putin.” *Voices from the Hill*, 8 April 2022. <https://www.norwich.edu/news/voices-from-the-hill/peace-and-war/3733-what-thucydides-might-have-taught-vladimir-putin> [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 1.5-hour seminar.

DAY 2 – HUMAN NATURE AND JUST WAR

DATE: 11 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the different perspectives of Hobbes and Rousseau on the relationship between human nature, government, and war.
2. Discuss the arguments of Hobbes and Rousseau as they relate to humans' historical propensity for conflict.
3. Understand the principles of Just War and how they relate to Rousseau and Hobbes' arguments about the nature of man and the state.

MT-503 (L): Man, the State, and (Just?) War. Lt Col Michael Kreuzer, Ph.D.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture.

MT-504 (S): Human Nature and Just War

1. Ebenstein and Ebenstein, eds. *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*, 355-379 (selections from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*), 442-472 (selections from Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*). [EL]
2. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 21-47.

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DAY 3 – WAR AS SCIENCE AND PREDICTABILITY

DATE: 15 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the elements of continuity and change in the Wars of the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars.
2. Understand Jomini's fundamental principles of warfare, including offensive, objective, strategy, lines of operation, mass, maneuver, decisive points, and strategic combinations.
3. Discuss Jomini's scientific approach to war, its extensive influence on Western militaries, and its expression in the U.S. military's principles of joint operations.
4. Recognize Jomini's influence on Mahan's theories of naval warfare.

MT-505 (L): Jomini and the Science of War. Dr. Jordan Hayworth.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture.

MT-506 (S): War as Science

1. Jomini, *The Art of War*, 1-19, 44-75. [EL]
2. Crowl, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian," *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Paret, 444-477.
3. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*, 17 January 2017 (incorporating Change 1), Appendix A, "Principles of Joint Operations," A-1-A-4. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DAY 4 – WAR AS ART AND COMPLEXITY

DATE: 18 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend Clausewitz's arguments about the conduct of war, and in particular his distinctions of tactics versus strategy, theory versus doctrine, and preparation for war versus war proper.
2. Comprehend Clausewitz's arguments concerning the roles of art, science, and genius in war.
3. Comprehend Clausewitz's concepts of strategy, the engagement, moral factors, economy of force, maneuver, and the culminating point of victory.

MT-507 (L): The Making of On War. Dr. Vanya Bellinger.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture.

MT-508 (S): War as Art and Complexity

1. Clausewitz, *On War*, Book II: 127-155; Book I: 75-114, 119-121; Book III: 177-189, 204-209, 213, 220.
2. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0: *Joint Operations*, 17 January 2017 (incorporating Change 1), Chapter V, "Joint Operations across the Conflict Continuum," V-1-V-5; Chapter I, "Fundamentals of Joint Operations," I-12-I-14; Chapter II, "The Art of Joint Command," II-3-II-8. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DAY 5 – WAR AS STRATEGY AND POLICY

DATE: 22 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend Clausewitz's arguments about the relationship between politics and war, effective civil-military relations, and the relationship between political objectives and military objectives in war.
2. Comprehend Clausewitz's views on the trinity, friction, centers of gravity (COG), absolute war vs. real war, the relationship between offense and defense, the principle of continuity, limited war, and decisive victory.
3. Recognize Clausewitz's influence on Corbett's thoughts on naval warfare and consider ways in which Corbett's ideas about maritime strategy diverged from Clausewitz and other theorists.
4. Discuss how the development of the People's Liberation Army Navy reflects competing ideas about war and strategy proposed by theorists to include Jomini, Mahan, Clausewitz, and Corbett.

MT-509 (L): "Professional Jominian" vs. "Natural Clausewitzian." Dr. Terry Beckenbaugh.
CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture

MT-510 (S): War as Strategy

1. Clausewitz, *On War*, Book VIII: chapters 577-616; Book VI: chapters 357-371, 479-483; Book VII: chapters 523-531, 541-542, 545-550, 566-573.
2. Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*, 13-16, 87-104
3. Rajesh, M.H., "The Party's Maritime Power: Four Roles and Three-and-a-half Fleets," *China Report* 53:1 (2017), 46-58. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DAY 6 – INDIRECT STRATEGY

DATE: 25 August 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the “indirect approach” to war and military strategy.
2. Recognize Sun Tzu’s ideas about strategy, deception, surprise, and intelligence.
3. Comprehend Liddell Hart’s arguments about strategy and success in war.
4. Recognize the indirect approach in the contemporary Chinese approach to war.

MT-511 (L): Sun Tzu: The Non-Western Perspective. Dr. Robert Kerr.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture

MT-512 (S): The Indirect Approach

1. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel Griffith, 63-110, 144-149.
2. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 319-333.
3. Kilcullen, *The Dragons and the Snakes*, 167-176, 200-214.

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DELIVERABLES

Submit MT-600E: Midterm Essay on Canvas any time before 1700 hours 29 August 2022.

DAY 7 – OPERATIONAL ART AND MANEUVER

DATE: 1 September 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the technological and doctrinal developments that emerged prior to the First World War, their contribution to static warfare, and efforts to innovate and adapt to overcome the deadlock.
2. Comprehend Isserson’s theory of Deep Battle and the operational art.
3. Comprehend Slessor’s ideas on aircraft and maneuver on the battlefield.

MT-513 (L): Soviet Deep Battle Theory. Dr. Matthew Schwonek.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture

MT-514 (S): Maneuver Warfare

1. Isserson, *The Evolution of the Operational Art*, trans. Bruce W. Menning, (Ft. Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 43-74, 105-111. [EL]
2. Fuller, *On Future Warfare*, (London: Sifton Praed, 1928), 83-105. [EL]
3. Slessor, *Air Power and Armies*, 1-10, 61-85.
4. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 5-0: *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020, Chapter I, “Joint Planning,” I-1-I-7. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.

DAY 8 – DETERRENCE

DATE: 8 September 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the arguments of Brodie, Schelling, and Kahn, which represent the three classical approaches to nuclear deterrence.
2. Discuss Brodie's ideas concerning nuclear deterrence.
3. Discuss deterrence in the current environment of strategic competition.

MT-515 (L): Nuclear Revolution or Evolution? Nuclear Deterrence Theory. Dr. Melvin Deaile.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture

MT-516 (S): Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence

1. Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, Project RAND Report R-335 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 15 January 1959), 71-106; 264-304. [EL]
2. Betts, "Thinking About the Unthinkable in Ukraine: What Happens if Putin Goes Nuclear," *Foreign Affairs*, 4 July 2022. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar

DAY 9 – IRREGULAR WAR

DATE: 12 September 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the theories of irregular warfare as outlined by Mao Zedong and David Galula.
2. Comprehend the range of violence covered by the term "irregular warfare," including insurgency, civil war, and terrorism, and the similarities and differences between these types of conflict and a more traditional understanding of conventional war.
3. Understand how contemporary insurgents learn and adapt during irregular operations.

MT-517 (L): Theory and Practice of Irregular Warfare. Dr. Bill Dean.

CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour lecture

MT-518 (S): Irregular Warfare

1. Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-18, *Mao Tse-tung on Guerilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, 5 April 1989, 3-8, 41-50, 88-103. [EL]
2. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, xi-xiv, 1-47.

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar

DAY 10 – APPLICATIONS OF MILITARY THEORY

DATE: 15 September 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Apply foundational military theory to the contemporary security environment.

MT-519 (L): Applications of Military Theory. Dr. Robert Mahoney, Dr. Samantha Taylor ,
CDR Keith Henderson.

CONTACT HOURS: 1.5-hour panel

MT-520 (S): Applications of Military Theory (No Readings)

CONTACT HOURS: 1.5-hour seminar

DELIVERABLES

Submit MT-601E: Final Essay electronically any time before 1700 on 15 September 2022, the last day of class.