

BOWDOIN COLLEGE  
Department of Government and Legal Studies  
Government 3620  
Spring 2020

**COUNTERINSURGENCIES**

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Office Hours Wed 2:15 – 4:15  
T TH 10:05 – 11:30 pm  
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Counterinsurgency warfare – the political and military struggle to destroy an insurgency – is complex, variable and arduous. As one U.S. Special Forces officer in Iraq noted, counterinsurgency is “not just thinking man’s warfare—it is the graduate level of war.” How do we make sense of the intricate, violent contest between insurgent and counterinsurgent? Why have the U.S. wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan been exceedingly drawn out, irregular and destructive? Connecting classic and critical military texts such as Clausewitz and U.S. Army/Marine Corps operational manuals, with case studies from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan this course entwines political/military theory with battlefield history to deepen understandings of “thinking man’s warfare.”

**Reading**

The required books for the class are as follows:

1. Dexter Filkins. *The Forever War*, Vintage, 2008.
2. David Galula. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, Westport: Praeger, 2006.
3. Carl Schmitt. *Theory of the Partisan*, Telos, 2007.

Other assigned readings are available on Blackboard. Readings are **due on the day** they are assigned on this syllabus.

**Assignments**

These assignments provide ways for me to assess your understanding of key concepts presented in the readings and class discussions. There is positively no dishonesty or cheating tolerated. Contact me if emergencies arise that affect your work. Please review the honor code of the college:

[www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/student-handbook/college-policies/](http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/student-handbook/college-policies/)

1. Participation (20%)
2. Critical Response Paper (15%) Anytime Before March 5.
3. Research Proposal:  
Question, Thesis, Outline and Bibliography (10%) March 26.
4. Simulation Paper (10%) April 2.
5. Research Presentation (10%) April 23, April 28 or April 30.
6. Final Research Paper (35%) May 13, 4pm.

*Participation* – Student participation in this course is a requirement. Each student will prepare *two discussion questions for every class* meeting based on the readings or the news. The professor will ask for volunteers, or call on students at random to present a question to the class. The goal is to have every voice in the room be heard and considered in our collective project to explore complex modern warfare. Students are allowed one absence (including illnesses) during the semester. Any additional absences will be counted against participation. A letter from the Dean's office indicating extraordinary circumstances may excuse additional absences. Please keep all laptops, tablets and phones on silent and stored in your bag.

*Critical Response Paper* – Students will prepare a 4-page paper anytime before our last class before spring break (10:05am on March 5). The paper should analyze a selection of readings and producing a cohesive analysis. There is no specific prompt, as students are encouraged to think critically about finding a topic that strikes them as important. Papers should move past summarization, and instead provide critical analysis by grouping, critiquing, or comparing multiple authors read thus far in the semester. Students may also want to think about how these readings might apply to their potential future research subject. Papers should be handed in at the start of class, at a date of choosing by the student. *Think and plan ahead*. Late papers (submitted after the last class meeting before spring break) will *not* be accepted.

*Simulation Paper* – We will conduct a simulation to allow students to practice applying the theories learned in the class to a “live” counterinsurgency operation in Afghanistan. A 2 – 3 page paper assignment due April 2 will ask students to reflect on the simulation, lessons learned, and ways to relate these lessons to the readings.

*Final Research Proposal and Paper* – The primary written assignment for the class is a 20-page research paper, due May 13 at 4pm. Note that a research proposal, including a proposed question, thesis, outline and bibliography is due on March 26. This research paper is an opportunity for students to follow their interests and develop critical research skills. What is a question about counterinsurgency you find particularly vexing? What is your argument? Be sure to ask and answer questions that require analysis and argument, instead of relying on description. An example of a promising analytical question might be: “What three factors most contributed to the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan?” As opposed to a likely less successful question prone to description such as: “What happened during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan?” Based on the proposal, the professor will work with each student individually to help students craft a compelling research project. Students will choose their own topics based on their interests. The research and analysis must be original and substantial. *Think and plan ahead*.

*Research Presentation* – Students will each give a formal ten-minute presentation to the class on their research project on April 25, April 28 and April 30. Visual guides, props, handouts and other interactive tools are welcome. Classmates will have the opportunity to ask questions of the research project being presented.

## Late Policy & Extensions

This is an advanced class. Please manage your time wisely and do not ask for extensions unless you are facing extraordinary circumstances, such as medical emergencies. If you need extra time to complete an assignment, please note there is a standard late penalty: 1/2 a letter grade will be deducted from the assignment for each 24 hour period the assignment is late. For example, if you hand in a paper 23 hours late and the paper is a B+, it will be recorded as a B. If that paper is handed in 47 hours late, the B+ will be recorded as a B-, and so on.

## Assignment Calendar

January 21: Introduction

January 23: Understanding War and Violence – Clausewitz

- Carl von Clausewitz. *On War*, Chapters 1, 2 & 26 (pp. 75 – 99, 479 – 483)

January 28: Dynamics of Rebellion

- Ngo Vinh Long, “Vietnam’s Revolutionary Tradition,” 1991, in Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America* (pp. 4 – 17)
- Ho Chi Minh, “The Path Which Led Me to Leninism,” 1960, in Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America* (pp. 20 – 22)
- Ho Chi Minh, “Vietnam Declaration of Independence,” 1945, in Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America* (pp. 26 – 28)
- Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 2, “What Causes Revolutions?” (pp. 10 – 25)
- Patrick Henry, “Liberty or Death,” March 23, 1775

January 30: Insurgency Theory & Mao Zedong

- Mao Zedong, *On Guerilla Warfare*, 1937. Selections from Asia for Educators, Columbia University (pp. 1 – 10)
- John J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War*, Stackpole Books, 1966. Chapter 2, (pp. 30 – 44)
- Thomas Renard and Stéphane Taillat, “Between Clausewitz and Mao: Dynamic Evolutions of the Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003 – 2008),” *Small Wars Journal*, 2008. (pp. 1 – 5)

February 4: Vietnam – France’s War

- Ngo Vinh Long, “The Franco-Vietnamese War 1945-1954: Origins of U.S. Involvement,” 1991, in Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America* (pp. 32 – 40)
- Robert J. McMahon, *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War*, 1995. Selections from Chapters 7 & 8, (pp. 210 – 223, 292 – 336)

February 6: Vietnam – America’s War

- George C. Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 2002. Selections from Chapter 5, “On the Tiger’s Back,” (pp. 171 – 201)

- Dick Guthrie, "A Day in Binh Dinh Province" *The New York Times*, October 10, 2017.
- Robert J. McMahon, *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War*, 1995. Selections from Chapter 7, (pp. 251 – 257, 275 – 281)
- John A. Nagl, "Counterinsurgency in Vietnam," in Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Osprey, 2008. Chapter 7, (pp. 131 – 148)

#### February 11: Galula & The Center of Gravity

- David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, Forward-Chapter 2 (pp. vii – 28)
- Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Clausewitz's Center of Gravity: It's Not What We Thought," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 2003, Vol. LVI, No. 1.

#### February 13: Galula & FM 3-24

- David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, Chapters 3-6 (pp. 29-74)
- U.S. Army/U.S. Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, (FM 3-24), December 2006, *Counterinsurgency*, Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1 until "Aspects of Counterinsurgency" on p. 1-19 (pp vii – 19)

#### February 18: Galula & FM 3-24

- David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, Chapters 7-Remarks, (pp. 75-99)
- U.S. Army/U.S. Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, (FM 3-24), December 2006, *Counterinsurgency*, Remainder of Chapter 1, Starting with "Aspects of Counterinsurgency" (pp 19 – 29)

#### February 20: Structured Game Assignment

#### February 25: Schmitt

- Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, (pp. ix – 32)

#### February 27: Schmitt

- Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, (pp. 40 – 67)
- Vo Nguyen Giap, "The Political and Military Line of Our Party," 1964. Published in Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America* (pp. 193 – 201)

#### March 3: Schmitt

- Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, (pp. 68 – 95)

#### March 5: Al-Qaeda & ISIS

- Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Loyalty and Enmity," 2002. Published in Raymond Ibrahim, *The Al-Qaeda Reader*, (pp. 63 – 75, 101 – 115)
- Simon Mabon, "Nationalist Jāhiliyyah and the Flag of the Two Crusaders, or: ISIS, Sovereignty, and the 'Owl of Minerva,'" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2017, Vol. 40, No. 11, (pp. 966 – 985)

[Spring Break]

March 24: Afghanistan

- Dexter Filkins, *The Forever War*, 2008. Prologue, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 3 – 67)
- Daniel Victor, “Need a Refresher on the War in Afghanistan? Here Are the Basics,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 2018
- Mark Mazzetti, “The Devastating Paradox of Pakistan” [Book Review of Directorate S by Steve Coll.] *The Atlantic*, March 2018
- “Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia,” Arlington, Virginia. August 21, 2017

March 26: No Class – Professor at an Academic Conference [**Research Proposal Due**]

- Dexter Filkins, “The Forever War,” Chapters 4 – 6 (pp. 69 - 113)

March 31: **Counterinsurgency Simulation**

April 2: Afghanistan & Iraq – **Simulation Paper Due**

- Dexter Filkins, “The Forever War,” Chapters 7 – 8 (pp. 114 – 148)

April 7: Iraq

- Edward Wong, “Overview: The Iraq War” *The New York Times*, 2008.
- Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco*. 2006. Chapter 11, “Getting Tough” (pp. 214 – 269)
- Dexter Filkins, “The Forever War,” Chapters 9 – 10 (pp. 149 – 188)

April 9: Iraq

- Carter Malkasian, “Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003 – January 2007,” in Marston and Malkasian, eds. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Osprey, 2008 Chapter 13 (pp. 241 – 259)
- Conrad Crane, “Military Strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq” in *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*, (pp. 124 – 146)
- Dexter Filkins, “The Forever War,” Chapters 11 – 12 (pp. 189 – 238)

April 14: Iraq

- Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?” *International Security* Volume 37, Issue 1, Summer 2012 (pp. 7-40)
- Robert K. Brigham, “The Lessons and Legacies of the War in Iraq,” in *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan*, (pp. 286 – 307)
- Dexter Filkins, “The Forever War,” Chapters 13 – 14 (pp. 239 – 253)

April 16: The Hearts and Minds Fallacy?

- Jacqueline L. Hazelton, "The 'Hearts and Minds' Fallacy: Violence, Coercion, and Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare," *International Security* Volume 42, Issue 1, Summer 2017 (pp. 80-113)
- Robert Egnell, "Winning 'Hearts and Minds'? A Critical Analysis of Counter-Insurgency Operations in Afghanistan," *Civil Wars*, Volume 12, Issue 3, September 2010 (pp. 282-303)

**April 21: Insurgency in Yemen Simulation**

- Bruce Riedel, "Who Are The Houthis, and Why Are We At War With Them?" *The Brookings Institute*, December 18, 2017
- Michael Barbaro, Alexandra Leigh Young and Paige Cowett, *The New York Times, The Daily*, Podcast, "Why U.S. Bombs Are Falling in Yemen," November 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/20/podcasts/the-daily/yemen-war-saudi-arabia-united-states.html>

April 23: Student Presentations

April 28: Student Presentations

April 30: Student Presentations

May 5: Concluding Debate – How To Win a Counterinsurgency?

- Dexter Filkins, "The Forever War," Chapters 15 – Epilogue (pp. 254 – 342)

**Final Paper Due – Wednesday, May 13, 4pm**