COURSE DESCRIPTION

The practice of armed conflict has changed rapidly and dramatically. Who can be a soldier, what constitutes an army, what war-fighting practices are legitimate, and what technologies are available to target and destroy enemies: these and many other questions have found radically new answers at the opening of the 21st century. This course examines the changes to the practice of war and their consequences for military personnel, civilians, and the very shape of the international system of states. By examining scholarly studies, as well as journalistic reports, first-person narratives, fictional accounts, documentaries, and feature films, students will reflect on the implications of contemporary understandings of war and potential future developments. Students will learn to analyze representations of armed conflict, to evaluate claims as to the legitimacy of any particular war, and to compare the conduct of past wars to the more recent experiences of armed conflict.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete all assigned readings before each class period and be active participants in each class session. In addition to class participation, evaluation will take place through a group presentation and a writing assignment.

Group Presentation: Students will be divided into small groups, and each group will be in charge of leading the second half of class on a given day. On the assigned day, the group will make a presentation and lead discussion on the topic for that day. In particular, the groups will be required to expand on the topic either from an historical perspective or from a different cultural or international perspective.

Writing Assignment: Each student will write a report connected to the group presentation/discussion to which he/she has contributed. The report should be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins, and it should be carefully written and edited. The content of this report should focus on a specific aspect of the topic the group researched, and it should address such aspect with a clear thesis, well documented evidence, and reasoned conclusions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following are required texts for this course and are available for purchase at the bookstore.


Other supplemental readings are available online. Access to certain websites is available only via a Calvin College internet connection. All movie clips will be shown in class.

COURSE READINGS

January 4 - Course Overview


Movie Clip: Blackhawk Down (Revolution Studios/Jerry Bruckheimer Films, 2001)
Part I: The Changing Technology of Warfare

**January 5 – Gunpowder Era Warfare and Early Industrial Age** [JW]

**January 6 – Late Industrial Warfare and the Nuclear Age** [JW]

**January 9 – Information Age Warfare and the Revolution in Military Affairs** [JW]

**January 10 – READING DAY**

Part II: The Changing Participants in Warfare

**January 11 – The All-Volunteer Army and Private Contractors** [SG]

**January 12 – Women in Wars without Frontlines** [SG]

**Movie Clip:** *Lioness* (Room 11 Productions, 2008)

**January 13 – Parents at War, Families at Home** [SG]
**January 16 - Non-Uniformed Combatants** [JW]

Movie Clip: Restrepo (Outpost Films, 2010)

Movie Clip: Platoon (Hemdale Film, 1986)

**January 17 - The Robotics Revolution** [SG]


**January 18 - READING DAY**

**Part III: The Changing Effects of Warfare**

**January 19 - Technological Diffusion and Asymmetric Warfare** [JW]


**January 20 – Laws of War, Challenges of Peace** [JW]


**January 23 – Injuries, Physical and Not** [SG]


Movie Clip: Operation Homecoming (True Entertainment, 2005)

**January 24 – Impact on Politics, Culture, and Society** [SG]
