

ISS 1712: What is a “Just War”

Quest 1: War and Peace

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2025
- Attendance: 100% In-Person
- Time: T 5:10 – 6:00/R 5:10 – 7:50
- Location: CSE 453

Instructor

- Dr. Michael Leggiere
- Office: CSE 542
- Office Hours: T: 3:00-5:00/R: 2:00-4:00
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Course Description

Can war be just? What is a ‘just cause’ for war? The idea that war can and should be just holds a middle position between the refusal to impose any moral restraints on the waging of war (realism) and the rejection of all warfare as immoral (pacifism). Western just war theories gradually developed from the confluence of Greek philosophy, Roman Law, and the Judeo-Christian scriptural tradition. Just war theory asks two essential questions. Is the cause for going to war just (*jus ad bellum*)? And, is the conduct of the war just (*jus in bello*)? This multidisciplinary course surveys just war thinking from antiquity to the First World War. It includes historical case-studies so that students can develop their own concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S–U.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Required Readings and Works

1. This course helps to satisfy the Writing Requirement; students are recommended to obtain a copy of *The New Oxford Style Manual*, (Oxford University Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-0198767251.
2. Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a
3. All other readings will be made available in Canvas or provided in class; bibliographic information is included in the weekly schedule:

Course Objectives

1. Identify, describe, and explain the methodologies used across humanities disciplines to examine essential ideas about just war.
2. Identify, describe, and explain key ideas and questions about just war from antiquity to the present.
3. Analyze how philosophical, political and historical works from antiquity through the present explore just war.
4. Analyze and evaluate specific accounts of human reaction to concepts that challenge our own notions of just war, using close reading, critical analysis, class discussion, and personal reflection.
5. Develop and present clear and effective written and oral work that demonstrates critical engagement with course texts, and experiential learning activities.
6. Communicate well-supported ideas and arguments effectively within class discussion and debates, with clear oral presentation and written work articulating students' personal experiences and reflections on just war.
7. Connect course content with students' intellectual, personal, and professional lives at UF and beyond.
8. Reflect on students' own and others' experience with just war, in class discussion and written work.

War, unfortunately, is part of the human condition that we seemingly cannot escape. We will confront its many consequences throughout our lifetimes. You may have (or had) a parent, sibling, cousin, or high school friend who is an active-duty soldier or officer. At this very moment, he or she can be preparing for war. For those of you who plan to have children, one day they might decide to join the military. In this regard, no other government action can affect you as much as watching a loved one go to war. Our government spends billions of tax dollars every year to ceaselessly remain prepared to conduct war. As citizens, we need to accept the responsibility of holding our government accountable over issues of national security and how it allocates our tax dollars for defense. As the logical extension of this duty, we must make the government accountable over questions of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. To do so, we need to understand the concepts of both. To gain this understanding, we will start with the literary contributions of some of the great thinkers of the Western world. In a multidisciplinary approach, we will consult experts in history, political science, philosophy, international affairs, theology, classics, law, ethics, and sociology. From this combination of primary and secondary sources, we will develop our own principles to judge *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. In the last third of the course, we will put this knowledge

to work in exercises designed to make us think about government actions and decisions that relate to war. Most important of all is that as informed citizens we will be use this knowledge to honor our civic duties.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

1. Active Participation: 10 %

- A. An exemplary participant shows evidence of having done the assigned reading before each class, consistently offers thoughtful points and questions for discussion, listens considerately to other discussants, and presents their practicums with clarity and confidence.
- B. Students with concerns about speaking in class discussions should reach out to the instructor directly.
- C. For details about how active participation will be assessed, see participation rubric below. Your active participation grade will be posted at both the midterm and the end of the semester.

2. Reflection Essay: 10%

- A. On Wednesday, 3 September, you submit a Reflection Essay through Canvas by 11:59 PM.
- B. The reflection essay (min. 300 words) will discuss how the readings and discussions for Units 1 and 2 have shaped or changed the way you think about the concept of just war.
- C. Reflection essays will be assessed as full credit/half-credit/no credit assignments; to earn full credit, the assignment must:
 - i. meet or exceed the required word count
 - ii. explain how the assigned readings have affected your thinking about just war
 - iii. discuss specific evidence from the readings to explain how they have affected your thinking about just war

3. Experiential Learning Component: 10%

During the semester, the Hamilton School at UF will host guest speakers on 26 August, 3 September, 15 October, 5 November, and 19 November as part of its “War, Strategy, and Statecraft” undergraduate and graduate program. The class will attend the 26 August event instead of meeting in the classroom. To earn the full 10%, attendance at TWO of these events exclusive of the 26 August event is mandatory.

4. Briefs: 20%

- A. For Units 3–8, you will submit through Canvas a “brief” (300-word minimum) that extracts the important points of that week’s assigned readings. You will be evaluated for your critical analysis skills and your ability to clearly state the facts to make it evident that you have a firm grasp of the main ideas and concepts.
- B. Briefs are due on September 10, 17, and 24; October 1, 8, 15, and 22.
- C. The Brief will be assessed on a scale of “A” through “F”; does it:
 - i. meet or exceed the required word count
 - ii. state the main points of the assigned readings
 - iii. discuss specific evidence from the readings
 - iv. for assessment, see grading rubric below

5. Analytical Essays: 20%

- A. For Units 9–13, students will submit through Canvas an essay (400-word minimum) that takes a position on that week’s case study and is supported by a logical argument grounded

in specific evidence from the multiple course readings. In the essay, you must be sure to articulate the strongest possible argument in favor of one belligerent's *jus ad bellum* or one belligerent's lack of *jus ad bellum* and explain why. More than merely explaining the history, you should be able to put forth a convincing argument just like a lawyer arguing a position in front of a jury.

- B. Analytical Essays are due on October 31; November 7 and 19; and December 3.
- C. The Analytical Essay will be assessed on a scale of "A" through "F"; DOES IT:
 - i. meet or exceed the required word count
 - ii. state the main points of the assigned readings
 - iii. discuss specific evidence from the readings
 - iv. for assessment, see grading rubric below

6. Analytical Practicum: 30%

- A. I will give you a scenario and you will write a paper (1000-word MINIMUM) making the strongest possible argument in favor of one belligerent's *jus ad bellum* or one belligerent's lack of *jus ad bellum* and explain why.
- B. You will take a position and make an argument that is supported by a logical argument grounded in specific evidence from the multiple course readings. In the essay, you must be sure to articulate the strongest possible argument in favor of one belligerent's *jus ad bellum* or one belligerent's lack of *jus ad bellum* and explain why. More than merely explaining the history, you should be able to put forth a convincing argument just like a lawyer arguing a position in front of a jury.
- C. I will evaluate and provide written feedback on your written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- D. The Analytical Practicum will be assessed on a scale of "A" through "F"; see the Analytical Assignments grading rubric below
- E. For this assignment, you may want to access the university's [Writing Studio](#). An additional writing guide website can be found at [OWL](#).
- F. **The Analytical Practicum is due through Canvas by 7:30 pm on 12/11/2025**

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

UNIT 1 (21-26 AUGUST): CONCEPTS OF JUST WAR

When political leaders are contemplating war, just war theory requires them to test their decision by evaluating several variables. The main just cause is to right a wrong. Sometimes a war fought to prevent a wrong from happening may be considered a just war. In the modern era, wars to defend the innocent are increasingly regarded as just. This week we will survey the various currents of thought that conceptualized “Just War.”

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 21 August: Course Introduction.
2. Tuesday, 26 August, Experiential Learning Activity, room TBD

Readings (51 pages):

1. Gregory M. Reichberg, “[Historiography of Just War Theory](#),” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics of War*, eds. Seth Lazar and Helen Frowe (Oxford, 2015), pp. 59–79.
2. Rory Cox, “[The Ethics of War up to Thomas Aquinas](#),” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethics of War*, pp. 99–121.
3. Joel H. Rosenthal, “[Ethics and War in Homer’s Iliad](#),” *Carnegie Council in International Affairs* (21 March 2012), pp. 2–11.

UNIT 2 (28 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER): MORAL AND LEGAL ARGUMENTS

A war can be considered “just” only if it is fought for a reason that can be justified, meaning a reason that carries sufficient moral and/or legal weight. For the decision to go to war to be just (*jus ad bellum*): 1) it must be made by the lawful and duly constituted national government 2) the intention of waging war must be morally upright; 3) it must be a self-defense response to a serious injustice committed by an aggressor. This week we will read about the moral and legal arguments that define just and unjust war.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 28 August January: Lecture on Moral and Legal Arguments.
2. Tuesday, 2 September: Discussion on Concepts & Moral and Legal Arguments.
3. Wednesday 3 September: Experiential Learning Opportunity 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, room: TBD
4. Wednesday, 3 September: **Submit Reflection Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (64 pages):

1. Arthur Nussbaum, “[Just War—A Legal Concept?](#)” *Michigan Law Review* 42 (1943): 453–479.
2. Anna Stilz, “[Territorial Rights and National Defense](#),” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics of War*, pp. 242–259.
3. Cian O’Driscoll, “[Rewriting the Just War Tradition: Just War in Classical Greek Political Thought and Practice](#),” *International Studies Quarterly* 59 (2015): 1–10.
4. Endre Begby, Gregory Reichberg, and Henrik Syse, “[The Ethics of War. Part I: Historical Trends](#),” *Philosophy Compass* 7, no. 5 (2012): 316–327.

UNIT 3 (4 SEPTEMBER – 9 SEPTEMBER): HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES

Now that we understand the twin concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, we turn to the ancient Greco-Roman era (fifth to first centuries BC), the first of three that comprise the historical roots of just war theory. This week we will look at the “Father of History,” Herodotus (484–425 BC), and the great chronicler of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), the historian and general Thucydides (460–400 BC), to determine if the Greeks engaged in conflict simply for the sake of waging war itself or did they seek a just cause?

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 4 September: Lecture on Herodotus and Thucydides.
2. Tuesday, 9 September: Discussion on Herodotus and Thucydides.
3. Wednesday, 10 September: **Submit Unit 3 Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (49 pages):

1. Paul Kelly, “[Thucydides–The Naturalness of War](#),” in Paul Kelly, *Conflict, War and Revolution: The Problem of Politics in International Political Thought* (2022), pp. 31–61.
2. Eric Robinson, “[Thucydides on the Causes and Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War](#),” in *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides*, eds. Sara Forsdyke, Edith Foster and Ryan Balot (Oxford, 2017), pp. 115–124.
3. Herodotus, [On the War for Greek Freedom: Selections from the Historians](#), trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis, 2003), pp. 1–3, 90–98.

UNIT 4 (11- 16 SEPTEMBER): SOCRATES, PLATO, AND ARISTOTLE

Socrates (470–347 BC) bequeathed to his student, Plato (427–347 BC), the idea that moral virtues such as justice must govern all human acts, including war. Both Plato and his student, Aristotle (384–322 BC), shared the conviction that war-making should be subordinated to, and guided by, the demands of justice. This led Aristotle to criticize the militaristic culture of Sparta. This week we will answer the question if Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle bequeathed to the Western World an objective moral order against which human acts such as war can be measured.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 11 September: Lecture on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
2. Tuesday, 16 September: Discussion on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
3. Wednesday, 17 September: **Submit Unit IV Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (52 pages):

1. Plato, [Laws](#), Book I 627d–630d.
2. Plato, [Republic](#), Book II 373b–375d; Book V 466d–469a.
3. Plato, [Statesman](#), 304c–308b.
4. Daniel Little, “[A Socratic Morality of War](#),” *Understanding Society*, 19 September 2021, pp.1–7.
5. Henrik Syse, “[The Platonic Roots of Just War Doctrine: A Reading of Plato’s Republic](#),” *Diametros* 23 (2010): 104–123.
6. Neel Burton, “[Socrates at War: Philosopher and Soldier](#),” *Psychology Today* (July 2023): 1–6.

UNIT 5 (18-23 SEPTEMBER): CICERO AND ST. AUGUSTINE

Like the Greeks, the Romans celebrated war as a virtue, conquering the greatest empire in the history of the Western World. With such a politically-driven grand strategy of conquest, did the Romans wage war according to the dictum of just war? The Christian world of Western Europe arose amidst the collapse of the Roman Empire. How did early Christian leaders justify the contradictions between their own teachings and

the almost non-stop warfare that accompanied the fall of Rome? This week we finish the first era of just war theory and begin the second, the medieval, which lasted from the 4th to the 14th century.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 18 September: Lecture on Cicero and St. Augustine.
2. Tuesday, 23 September: Discussion on Cicero and St. Augustine.
3. Wednesday, 24 September: **Submit Unit 5 Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (44 pages):

1. Jed W. Atkins, "[Cicero on the Justice of War](#)," in *Power and Persuasion in Cicero's Philosophy*, eds. N. Gilbert, M. Graver and S. McConnell (Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 170–204.
2. John Langan, "[The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory](#)," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 12 (1984): 19–38.

UNIT 6 (25-30 SEPTEMBER): THOMAS AQUINAS AND THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

The Christian world of Western Europe could not escape war and the issue of just and unjust war. With the thousand years between the 4th and 14th centuries just as bloody as the preceding millennial, did the Church have a position on *jus ad bellum*? If so, how did it justify the Crusades? We look at one of the medieval church's leading theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), for answers.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 25 September: Lecture on Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Tradition.
2. Tuesday, 30 September: Discussion on Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Tradition.
3. Wednesday, 1 October: **Submit Unit 6 Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (48 pages)

1. Thomas Aquinas, '[Just War Theory from Summa Theologiae](#),' 2 pp.
2. Gregory M. Reichberg, "[Thomas Aquinas between Just War and Pacifism](#)," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 (2010): 219–241.
3. Marco Alexandre Ribeiro, "[The Double Effect Doctrine in Thomas Aquinas's War](#)," *Mirabilia* 31 (2020), pp. 1–18.
4. Reed Bonadonna, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, by Gregory M. Reichberg, *Journal of Military Ethics*, 2 pp.
5. Richard Benson, "The Just War Theory: A Traditional Catholic Moral View," *The Tidings*, 25 August 2006, 2 pp.
6. E. Christian Brugger, "What is Catholic Just War Doctrine and How Does it Apply Today?," [National Catholic Register](#), 28 April 2021, pp. 1–5.

UNIT 7 (2-7 OCTOBER): HUGO GROTIUS AND JOHN LOCKE

During the early modern period, the Church split, pitting Christian against Christian for roughly 150 years. Next, commerce eclipsed religion as a primary cause for war between states. These two developments, the Wars of the Reformation and the Rise of Capitalism, introduced new and challenging questions about *jus ad bellum*. Is it just for a Christian to kill another Christian in the name of God? Is it just for states to wage war over trade and fishing rights? Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and John Locke (1632–1704) offered answers to these questions that remain relevant today.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 2 October: Lecture on Hugo Grotius and John Locke.

2. Tuesday, 7 October: Discussion on Hugo Grotius and John Locke.
3. Wednesday, 8 October: **Submit Unit 7 Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (49 pages):

1. Hugo Grotius, [*On the Law of War and Peace*](#), ed. Stephen C. Neff (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 23–42, 301–318, 343–348.
2. Steven Forde, “Hugo Grotius on Ethics and War,” *The Political Science Review* 92, no. 3 (1998): 639–648
3. Alexander Moseley, “[John Locke’s Morality of War](#),” *Journal of Military Ethics* 4 (2005): 119–128.

UNIT 8 (9-14 OCTOBER): TOTAL WAR

What constitutes total war as opposed to earlier forms of warfare? Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), the nineteenth century “philosopher of war” formulated the concept of total war that led to the slaughter of the First World War. Can such a massive loss of life as that which occurred during the First World War ever be considered just? Does total war honor the principles and spirit of *ad jus bellum*? Does the end justify the means?

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 9 October: Lecture on Total War.
2. Tuesday, 14 October: Discussion on Total War.
3. Wednesday, 15 October: Experiential Learning Opportunity 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, room: TBD
4. Wednesday, 15 October: **Submit Unit 8 Brief** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (67 pages):

1. Ian Roxborough, “[Clausewitz and the Sociology of War](#),” *British Journal of Sociology* 45 (1994): 619–636.
2. Jan Willem Honig, “[The Idea of Total War: From Clausewitz to Ludendorff](#),” *Proceedings: The Pacific War as Total War* (Tokyo, 2012), pp. 29–41.
3. Joseph R. Stromberg, ‘[The Claims for Total War Revisited](#)’ (2002), 10 pp.
4. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. Peter Paret and Michael Howard (Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 577–582 and pp. 617–640.

UNIT 9 (16-21 OCTOBER) CASE STUDY: WORLD WAR I

In 1961, German historian Fritz Fischer published *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, which roughly translates into “seizing world power,” to blame Germany for the outbreak of the First World War (1914–1918). In so doing, Fischer seemed to confirm what the victors of the war believed when they made the Germans accept the Treaty of Versailles and its “War Guilt Clause” forty years earlier. Some thirty years after Fischer, historians have revised the narrative, some placing blame on Russia, others on France, some even on Great Britain. Current scholarship holds that there is enough blame to go around.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 16 October: Discussion
2. Tuesday, 21 October: Discussion
3. Wednesday, 22 October: **Submit Unit 9 Analytical Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (52 pages):

1. John G. Stoessinger, [Why Nations Go to War](#) (Boston, 2010), pp. 3–25.

2. Joe Fox, "[Making Sense of the War](#)," *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. by Ute Daniel et al. (Freie Universität Berlin, 2017-01-08), pp. 1-16.
3. Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, "[Making Sense of the War \(Germany\)](#)," *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. by Ute Daniel et al. (Freie Universität Berlin, 2017-01-08), pp. 1-14.

Analysis prompt:

Could Austria claim *jus ad bellum* in the First World War?

OR

Could Russia claim *jus ad bellum* in the First World War?

OR

Could Germany claim *jus ad bellum* in the First World War?

UNIT 10 (28-30 OCTOBER): CASE STUDY: WORLD WAR II

On 13 February 1945, British aircraft launched an attack on the eastern German city of Dresden. In the days that followed, they and their US allies would drop nearly 4,000 tons of bombs in the assault. The ensuing firestorm sucked the oxygen from the air and suffocated people trying to escape the flames; some 25,000 civilians died. Dresden was not unique. Allied bombers killed tens of thousands and destroyed large areas with attacks on the German cities of Köln, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Berlin. The US flattened the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs, killing well over 100,000 civilians.

Calendar:

1. Tuesday, 28 October: Discussion
2. Thursday, 30 October: Discussion
3. Friday, 31 October: **Submit Unit 10 Analytical Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (60 pages):

1. Elbridge Colby, "[Terrible, But Justified](#)," *Journal for the East Asia Foundation* 10 (2015), pp. 1-6.
2. Ian Buruma, "Was Hiroshima a War Crime?" [Expeditions](#) [11 pages].
3. Jason Dawsey, "[Apocalypse in Dresden, February 1945](#)," National World War II Museum, 13 February 2020, 8 pp.
4. Volker Janssen, "[Why Was Dresden So Heavily Bombed?](#)" *History*, 3 August 2023, 8 pp.
5. Alex Wellerstein, "[Counting the dead at Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#)," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 4 August 2020, 27 pp.

Analysis prompt:

Can the use of atomic weapons against Japan be justified?

OR

Can the fire-bombing of Dresden be justified?

UNIT 11 (4-6 NOVEMBER) CASE STUDY: US WAR ON TERRORISM

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on New York City and Washington DC, President George W. Bush declared a "war on terror." This has caused many observers to question whether the principles of just war theory are appropriate for this new form of military engagement. Does the just war theory apply in using military force against terrorist groups and non-state actors or does just war theory need to be adjusted?

Calendar:

1. Tuesday, 4 November: Discussion.
2. Wednesday, 5 November: Experiential Learning Opportunity 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, room: TBD
3. Thursday, 6 November: Discussion.
4. Friday, 7 November: **Submit Unit 11 Analytical Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (45 pages):

1. Neta C. Crawford, "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War," *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003), pp. 5–25.
2. William R. Pfeffer, "[Jus ad bellum: Relevancy in the 21st Century](#)," USAWC Strategy Research Report, 2010, pp. 1–26.

Analysis prompt:

Does the US War on Terror meet the criteria of a "just war"?

UNIT 12 (13-18 NOVEMBER) CASE STUDY: RUSSIA & UKRAINE

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War, which started in 2014. The invasion marked the beginning of the largest and deadliest conflict in Europe since the Second World War. Russian president Vladimir Putin refers to the invasion as a "special military operation," claiming that it was to support the Russian-backed breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, whose paramilitary forces had been fighting Ukraine in the Donbas conflict since 2014. Putin espouses irredentist and neo-imperialist views, challenging Ukraine's legitimacy as a state, accusing Ukraine of being governed by neo-Nazis who were persecuting the Russian minority. His stated war aims are to "demilitarize and denazify" Ukraine.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 13 November: Discussion.
2. Tuesday, 18 November: Discussion.
3. Wednesday, 19 November: Experiential Learning Opportunity 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, room: TBD
4. Wednesday, 19 November: **Submit Unit 12 Analytical Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (62 pages):

1. Roman Goncharenko, "[Ukraine's Forgotten Security Guarantee](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 5 December 2014), 2 pp.
2. Elias Götz and Per Ekman, "[Russia's War Against Ukraine: Context, Causes, and Consequences](#)," *Problems of Post-Communism* 71, no. 3 (2024): 193–205.
3. Maria Popova and Oxana Shevel, "[Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Is Essentially Not About NATO](#)," *Just Security*, Reiss Center on Law and Security at New York University School of Law, 24 February 2022, 5 pp.
4. John Davenport, "Just War Theory and Ukraine: Why Military Action Against Russia is Justifiable," [America: The Jesuit Review](#), 25 January 2022, 7 pp.
5. Princewilliams Odera Oguejiofor, "[Dissecting the Realist Argument for Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#)," *E-International Relations*, 31 March 2024, 6 pp.
6. Mohamed Mahad D. Darar, "[Returning to Realism: The Other Face of the Ukraine Crisis](#)," *E-International Relations*, 12 June 2022, 4 pp.
7. Kieran O'Meara, "[Understanding the Illegality of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#)," *E-International Relations*, 13 March 2022, 10 pp.
8. Hans Gutbrod, "[Russia's Recent Invasion of Ukraine: the Just War Perspective](#)," *Global Policy Journal*, 21 March 2022, 4 pp.

9. Paul Kirby, "[Has Putin's war failed and what does Russia want from Ukraine?](#)" BBC, 24 February 2023, 12 pp.

Select one analysis prompt:

1. JUSTIFY RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE.
- OR
2. JUSTIFY DIRECT US INTERVENTION IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR.

UNIT 13 (20 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER) CASE STUDY: TAIWAN

China sees self-ruled Taiwan as a breakaway province that will eventually be under Beijing's control and has not ruled out the use of force to take the island. But Taiwan sees itself as distinct from the Chinese mainland, with its own constitution and democratically elected leaders. Taiwan has strong links to China, its biggest trading partner. Many Taiwanese have business and family connections across the strait. But over time, polls show that the number of people who identify as Taiwanese, as opposed to Chinese, has gone up. China has spoken of "peaceful reunification" --a long-term goal to win over the island's population by showing unification in a positive light. But Beijing has also used threats. President Xi Jinping has said "reunification" with the island must be fulfilled and is believed to have a deadline.

Calendar:

1. Thursday, 20 November: Discussion.
2. Tuesday, 2 December: Discussion.
3. Wednesday, 3 December: **Submit Unit 13 Analytical Essay** through Canvas by 11:59 PM.

Readings (53 pages):

1. Emma Ashford and Matthew Kroenig, "[Is Defending Taiwan Worth the Risk?](#)" *Foreign Policy*, 8 October 2021, 8 pp.
2. Lami Kim, "[Should the United States Defend or Ditch Taiwan?](#)" *The National Interest*, 3 June 2022, 6 pp.
3. Elbridge A. Colby, "[Why Protecting Taiwan Really Matters to the US,](#)" *Time Magazine*, 11 October 2022, 8 pp.
4. Mark F. Cancian, Matthew Cancian, and Eric Heginbotham, "[The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan,](#)" *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 9 January 2023, 5 pp.
5. Jenny Li, "[Taiwan's Defense Dilemma,](#)" *The Diplomat*, 17 June 2023, 11 pp.
6. David Sacks, "[Why is Taiwan Important to the United States,](#)" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 20 June 2023, 6 pp.
7. Matthew Loh, "[2 renowned strategists say the US should defend Taiwan with nuclear strikes. Experts say such talk is just a taste of what's to come,](#)" *Yahoo News*, 1 August 2024, 9 pp.

ANALYSIS PROMPT:

WOULD A CHINESE INVASION OF TAIWAN BE JUSTIFIED?

OR

CAN US DEFENSE OF TAIWAN IN THE EVENT OF A CHINESE INVASION BE JUSTIFIED

Analytical Practicum

Due through Canvas by 7:30 pm on 12/11/2025

IV. Grading Scale and Rubrics

Grading Scale

For information on UF's grading policies for assigning grade points, see [here](#).

A	94 - 100%		C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%		C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%		D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%		D	64 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%		D-	60 - 63%
C+	77 - 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubrics

Participation Rubric

A (90-100%)	Typically comes to class with pre-prepared questions about the readings. Engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others and consistently elevates the level of discussion.
B (80-89%)	Does not always come to class with pre-prepared questions about the reading. Waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.
C (70-79%)	Attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. Is only adequately prepared for discussion.
D (60-69%)	Fails to attend class regularly and is inadequately prepared for discussion. Is an unwilling participant in discussion.
E (<60%)	Attends class infrequently and is wholly unprepared for discussion. Refuses to participate in discussion.

Writing Rubric

	Thesis and Argumentation	Use of Sources	Organization	Grammar, mechanics and style
A (90–100%)	Thesis is clear, specific, and presents a thoughtful, critical, engaging, and creative interpretation. Argument fully supports the thesis both logically and thoroughly.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are well incorporated, utilized, and contextualized throughout.	Clear organization. Introduction provides adequate background information and ends with a thesis. Details are in logical order. Conclusion is strong and states the point of the paper.	No errors.
B (80–89%)	Thesis is clear and specific, but not as critical or original. Shows insight and attention to the text under consideration. May have gaps in argument's logic.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are incorporated but not contextualized significantly.	Clear organization. Introduction clearly states thesis, but does not provide as much background information. Details are in logical order, but may be more difficult to follow. Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.	A few errors.
C (70–79%)	Thesis is present but not clear or specific, demonstrating a lack of critical engagement to the text. Argument is weak, missing important details or making logical leaps with little support.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are mostly incorporated but are not properly contextualized.	Significant lapses in organization. Introduction states thesis but does not adequately provide background information. Some details not in logical or expected order that results in a distracting read. Conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up all loose ends.	Some errors.
D (60–69%)	Thesis is vague and/or confused. Demonstrates a failure to understand the text. Argument lacks any logical flow and does not utilize any source material.	Primary and/or secondary texts are almost wholly absent.	Poor, hard-to-follow organization. There is no clear introduction of the main topic or thesis. There is no clear conclusion, and the paper just ends. Little or no employment of logical body paragraphs.	Many errors.
E (<60%)	There is neither a thesis nor any argument.	Primary and/or secondary texts are wholly absent.	The paper is wholly disorganized, lacking an introduction, conclusion or any logical coherence.	Scores of errors.

V. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the Quest the General Education student learning outcomes for Humanities (H).

Humanities (H) Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Identify, describe, and explain the methodologies used across humanities disciplines to examine essential ideas about just war (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** reflection briefs, analytical essays.
- Identify, describe, and explain key ideas and questions about just war from antiquity to the present (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** reflection briefs, analytical essays.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Analyze how philosophical, political and historical works from antiquity through the present explore just war (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** reflection briefs, analytical essay
- Analyze and evaluate specific accounts of human reaction to concepts that challenge our own notions of just war, using close reading, critical analysis, class discussion, and personal reflection. (Quest 1, H). **Assignments:** analytical essay, reflection briefs, discussion questions.

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Develop and present clear and effective written and oral work that demonstrates critical engagement with course texts, and experiential learning activities (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** experiential learning interview report and discussion, analytical essay, reflection briefs.
- Communicate well-supported ideas and arguments effectively within class discussion and debates, with clear oral presentation and written work articulating students' personal experiences and reflections on just war (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** active class participation, experiential learning component, discussion questions.

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Connect course content with students' intellectual, personal, and professional lives at UF and beyond. (Quest 1). **Assessments:** experiential learning component, analytical paper, discussion questions.
- Reflect on students' own and others' experience with just war, in class discussion and written work (Quest 1). **Assessments:** experiential learning component, analytical paper, discussion questions.

VI. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

During the semester, the Hamilton School at UF will host guest speakers on 26 August, 3 September, 15 October, 5 November, and 19 November as part of its “War, Strategy, and Statecraft” undergraduate and graduate program. The class will attend the 26 August event instead of meeting in the classroom. To earn the full 10%, attendance at TWO of these events exclusive of the 26 August event is mandatory.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is built into many of the assignments, primarily through the reading questions that students create, the analytic essay assignment, and just war experiential learning assignment. In these opportunities for self-reflection offered by specific activities throughout the course, students will reflect on the broader implications of the themes of the course, considering the impact to themselves and/or to a wider community.

VII. Required Policies

Please see <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices> for the most up-to-date online compendium of academic policies.