

SAASS 60I

FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGY

SYLLABUS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019



Hoplite battle scene. *The Chigi vase*. (c.640 B.C.) Rome, Villa Giulia 22679.

“We are not schooled in that useless over-intelligence which can make a brilliant verbal attack upon an enemy’s plans but fail to match it in consequent action. Rather we are taught to believe that other people’s minds are similar to our own, and that no theory can determine the accidents of chance . . . We do not need to suppose that men differ greatly from one another, but we can think that the strongest are those brought up in the hardest school.”

Archidamus II, King of Sparta
Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* I.84

Course Director: Col Kristi Lowenthal
Syllabus Approved: Col Timothy Cullen
Date: 2 July 2018

SAASS 60I: Foundations of Strategy

Course description: There are many ways to undertake the study of strategy. The approach we use in this course is inter-disciplinary. The foundation of the study of strategy is the study of history, and in particular, the sub-discipline of military history. Thus, the motto of your school is “From the Past, the Future.” Historians’ careful scholarship provides the data set of human experience which many other disciplines utilize in their analyses and development of theories on human behavior and social conduct. Many other academic disciplines are also crucial for the study of strategy and from this broad range of scholarship we will read works of political science (and in particular its sub-discipline international relations), economics, sociology, anthropology, history’s cousin biography, and philosophy. You might think of these subjects as orbits of interest around which our conversations about strategy will take place, as well as other conversations that you will have throughout the year. In short, you will read widely and be exposed to a number of ways humans think about social phenomena.

Since this is your first complete SAASS course, a number of preliminaries are in order. We will begin our examination of the day’s topic from a common starting point: readings. At this school we read books. Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said:

“I put a proposition to you all: we have entered a time of total change in human consciousness of how people look at the world. Reading books requires you to form concepts, to train your mind to relationships. You have to come to grips with who you are. A leader needs these qualities. But now we learn from fragments of facts. A book is a large intellectual construction; you can’t hold it all in mind easily or at once. You have to struggle mentally to internalize it. Now there is no need to internalize because each fact can instantly be called up again on the computer. There is no context, no motive. Information is not knowledge. People are not readers, but researchers, they float on the surface. Churchill understood context. This new thinking erases context. It disaggregates everything. All this makes strategic thinking about world order nearly impossible to achieve.”¹

From a common set of books, our analysis may proceed along different lines. You yourselves may draw different conclusions from the readings and discussions. This is as it should be, for we are not striving for a checklist, “Samples of Behavior,” or a leadership model. Rather, the “take away” for this course is what we shoot for all year at SAASS—the education of a strategist.

As one of our colleagues once observed, “A strategist is made of many things, none more important than the development of a mind that seeks to understand the complexities of humankind; one that recognizes the fragility of civilization and grasps the importance of science and the humanities; a mind that is conscious of the fact that self-determination and freedom may not be the same thing, but nevertheless remain essential elements of social life; a mind that is practiced in the art of work well done and strives to build bridges across bodies of knowledge that

¹ Charles Hill, *Grand Strategies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 298.

at first glance appear to be only loosely related.” At the same time, we should also seek, as Clausewitz put it, “to distinguish precisely what at first sight seems fused.”

Seminar discussion could begin with a question from those listed for each lesson in the syllabus. However, as Andrew Marshall emphasizes, asking the right questions is the key to strategy; thus, the questions you bring to class are as crucial a part of the seminar experience as those your professor poses. Students are expected to analyze and discuss the arguments the course books’ authors present in a comprehensive, sophisticated fashion—skills which will serve you well come comprehensive exam time.

Second, the books we have selected can be considered “exemplars” of the types of reading you will do at SAASS all year. Reading a classic, influential, or iconic work, analyzing and evaluating its argument, and using it to illuminate issues of importance to the contemporary strategist—this is the real goal of the exercise. And the readings are “exemplars” in another important respect—they may be seen as models of idea development, argumentation, and factual support—skills you will demonstrate this year in class papers and ultimately in writing your own theses. In addition to coming from a variety of academic disciplines, the books’ forms offer several different scholarly frameworks. These forms offer varying research and argumentation methods which in turn perform two important tasks: honing the development of your critical analysis and suggesting models for your own scholarship in the M.Phil. thesis.

Third, although you might not agree, we have taken into account the demands of your daily lives and have chosen the readings accordingly. This does not imply that the readings for this course will be light. In fact, the literature on strategy is huge and growing every day, which is why you must re-learn how to read a book, culling from it the essential arguments while integrating and synthesizing areas of interest and concern. One of our goals is to train you how to bridge the gap between theoretical concerns and policy choices. **There is only one honest way to do this: read, think, speak, and write—a lot.** During these first few days, you may find this hard, but you will adapt to the demands of SAASS and make your way through a mountain of material. In this course, expect to read somewhere between 200-600 pages per night.

Grading - Class Participation: Class participation will be weighted at 40% of your total grade. With respect to our assessment of your performance in seminar—quality is far more important than quantity. Additionally, with the prospect of great power conflict rearing its head again, students are expected to keep up with current events through a variety of media sources. We suggest *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*, but any major city or national newspaper is suitable. *The Economist* is the best weekly and should be read by every SAASS student. Although digital versions of periodicals are convenient and useful, there is nothing quite like the feel of crisp newsprint in your hands early in the morning. While some broadcast media is reliable, *caveat emptor*. For any media, the independent poll below may be of use in this regard: <http://www.businessinsider.com/here-are-the-most-and-least-trusted-news-outlets-in-america-2014-10>

Grading – Paper: The written assignment will be weighted at 60% of your total grade.

Paper requirements: Details will be provided by your professor during class. The paper is due to your instructor at the beginning of class on the last day of the course, Friday, 3 August 2018.

Questions? See your professor.

Faculty: We are here to assist you with anything concerning the course, your introduction to the SAASS environment, thesis topic development, or anything else.

Course Texts:

Allison, Graham and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision*. New York: Longman, 1999.

Brooks, Risa A. *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Caryl, Christian. *Strange Rebels: 1979 and the Birth of the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books, 2013.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013.

Khong, Yuen Foong. *Analogies at War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996.

Murphy, James G. *War's Ends: Human Rights, International Order, and the Ethics of Peace*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014.

Peifer, Douglas Carl. *Choosing War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian War*.
(We will use an English translation: *The Landmark Thucydides*. New York: Free Press, 1998.)

Zhang, Xiaoming. *Den Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Course Administration: Overall course administration is the responsibility of the SAASS 601 Course Director.

Course Calendar:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson Title</u>	<u>Reading</u>
16 Jul	The Philosophy of Science	Kuhn
17 Jul	The Thinking of Strategy	Kahneman
19 Jul	The Peloponnesian War I	Thucydides
20 Jul	The Peloponnesian War II	Thucydides
23 Jul	Organizational Behavior	Jervis
24 Jul	Cognitive Processes	Allison and Zelikow
26 Jul	Analogical Reasoning	Khong
27 Jul	History and Strategy	Peifer
30 Jul	Civil-Military Relations and Strategy	Brooks
31 Jul	The Ethics of Strategy	Murphy
2 Aug	The Art of Strategy	Zhang
3 Aug	The Actors of Strategy	Caryl

ASSIGNMENT: Read Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.



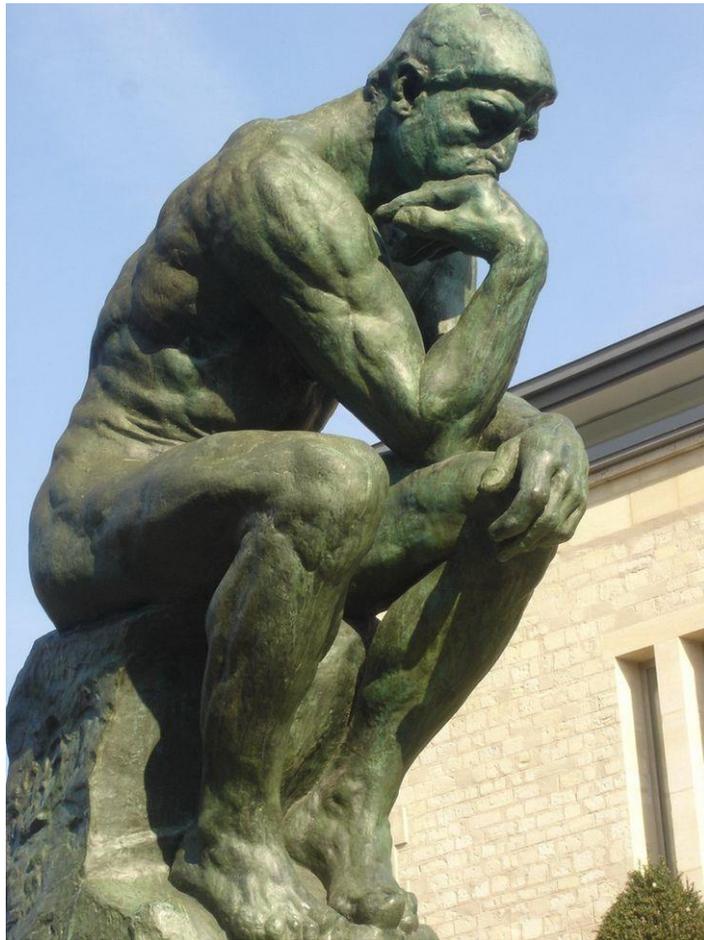
In 1620, Sir Francis Bacon published a new investigative philosophy in *Novum Organum*. Bacon's method used empirical inductive techniques and was a paradigm shift from Aristotle's methodology toward the modern scientific method.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: How does science take place? What is a paradigm? How and why do scientific revolutions take place? How does an understanding of normal science help us think about strategic puzzles? What strategic puzzles does the US face? Is there such a thing as "normal strategy making"? What does this book tell us about organizational and cultural change? Is there a science of strategy?

2. The Thinking of Strategy

17 July 2018

ASSIGNMENT: Read Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.



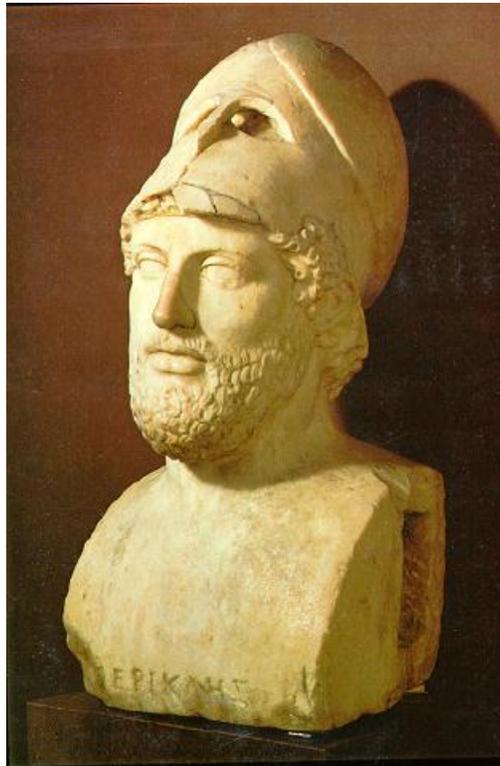
Le Penseur (aka *The Thinker*), Auguste Rodin, 1880. Musée Rodin, Paris.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: In what ways are our human minds fallible? Are some of these cognitive habits actually helpful? Do you recognize any of these characteristics in your day-to-day thinking? How can strategists accentuate helpful cognitive patterns while minimizing detrimental effects?

3. The Peloponnesian War I

19 July 2018

ASSIGNMENT: Read *The Landmark Thucydides*: Introduction and Books I-5.24



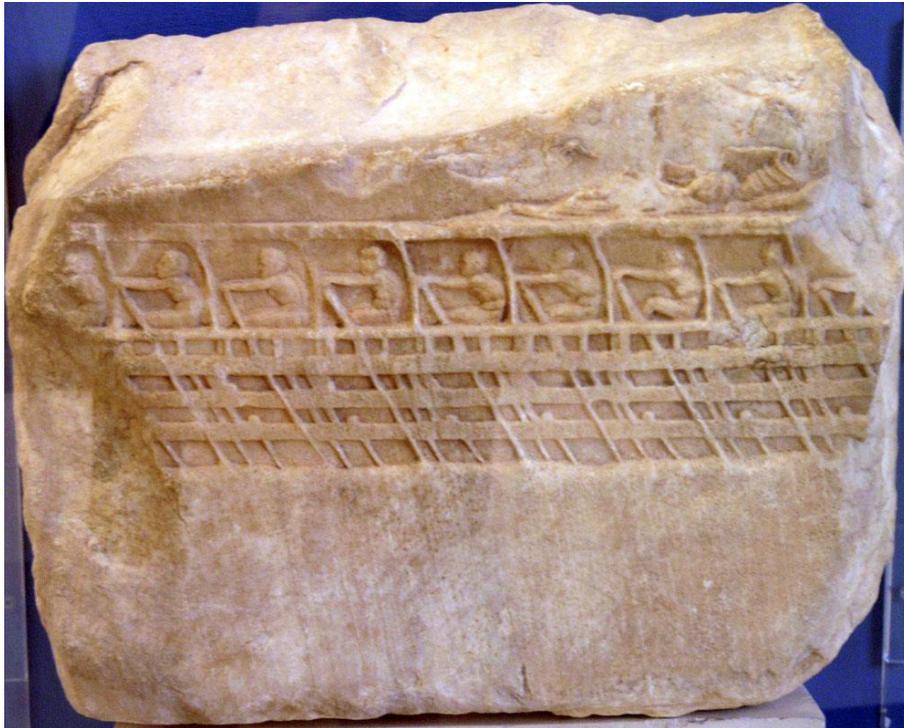
Marble portrait bust of Pericles. Roman, 2nd Century AD. British Museum, London. The bust is thought to have originally been on display in the Emperor Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, Lazio, Italy.

OVERVIEW: What are the causes of the Peloponnesian War? How would you assess the elected Athenian leader, Pericles, as a strategist? the Spartan king, Archidamus? How does a combatant dominant in one domain battle an opponent dominant in a different domain? What is Thucydides' purpose in writing this book?

4. The Peloponnesian War II

20 July 2018

ASSIGNMENT: Read *The Landmark Thucydides*, Books 5.25-8 and the Epilogue.



The Lenormant Relief, 410 B.C., Acropolis Museum, Athens. This relief work is one of the only 5th century B.C. Attic depictions of the inside of an ancient Greek trireme.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What is the significance of the Melian dialogue? Why does Athens go to war with a fellow democracy, Syracuse? What is the cause of the fateful outcome of the Sicilian expedition? Why does Athens lose the Peloponnesian War? How does Sparta win? In a speech at Princeton University at the start of the Cold War, George Marshall (former US Army Chief of Staff, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense) said “I doubt seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep convictions regarding some of the basic international issues today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the Fall of Athens.” Why do you think he said this?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Jervis' *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*.



Dean Acheson, US Secretary of State 1949-53, gave a speech to the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, in which he described an American defense perimeter in the Pacific. One of the prevailing theories on the origins of the Korean War concludes that the USSR and China misperceived Acheson's speech as indicating Korea was outside of US vital security interests.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: How do humans perceive social phenomena? How do you explain the concept of cognitive consistency? How do decision makers learn from history? What is cognitive dissonance? How might we minimize misperceptions in strategic discourse?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Allison and Zelikow's *Essence of Decision*.



President John F. Kennedy talks with members of Major Rudolph Anderson's reconnaissance team. Left to right: Col. Ralph D. Steakley, photo evaluator with the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Lt. Col. Joe M. O'Brady and Major Richard B. Heyser, reconnaissance pilots; and Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, USAF Chief of Staff. Steakley was Director of the Joint Reconnaissance Center and President Kennedy considered his advice so important during the Cuban Missile Crisis that he kept Steakley on three-ring alert.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Do the authors succeed in questioning the rational actor, Model I, paradigm? Do Models II and III explain more than Model I? What makes an action "rational"? Is there a single "rationality" by which all actions/actors can be judged? What are the interrelationships between the three models? Are they mutually exclusive? What is the utility of the "Models I-II-III Questions" summarized by the authors on pages 389-390? Does the Cuban Missile Crisis offer any strategic lessons? WWCLD (What Would Curtis LeMay Do)?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Yuen Foong Khong's *Analogies at War*.



President Lyndon B. Johnson meeting with the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, General Earle Wheeler, in the Oval Office, 31 March 1965

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Why does the United States intervene in Vietnam? Has the US used analogies in its strategic thinking since Vietnam? What are the risks and advantages of analogous thinking?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Douglas Peifer's *Choosing War*.



The RMS *Lusitania* in New York harbor two years before a German U-boat would sink the vessel in the Irish Sea, with a loss of over 2,000 lives, beginning the process that would drag the US into the First World War.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What role can the study of history play in the education of a strategist? What is Peifer's purpose in writing this book? Why does he select the historical cases offered? Do you see any commonalities between the decision-making of the three featured presidents? How do they compare with recent commanders-in-chief?

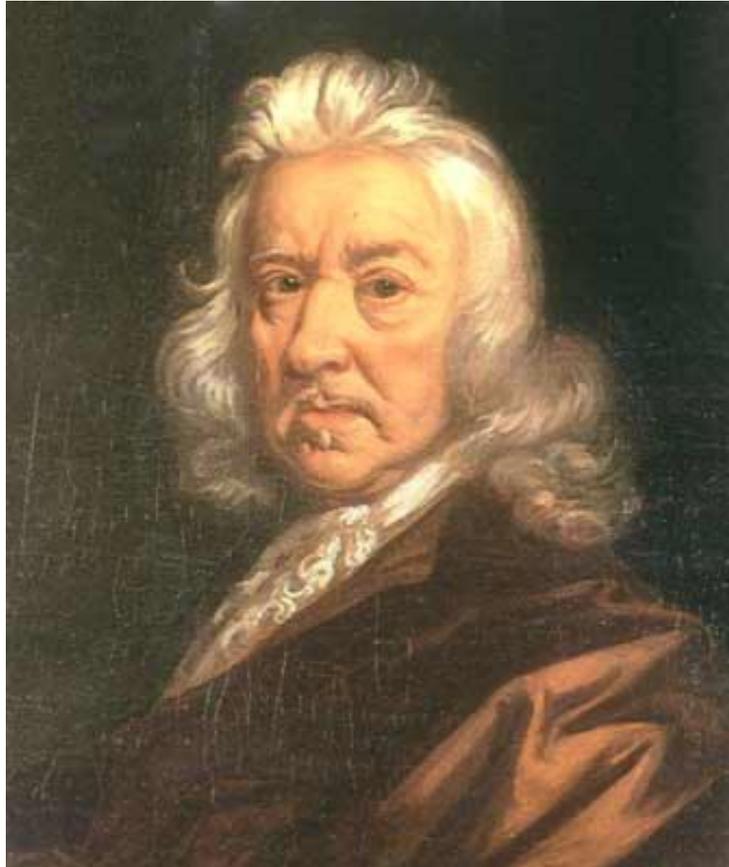
ASSIGNMENT: Read Risa Brooks' *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment*.



Wreckage of Egyptian military aircraft, destroyed on the tarmac by pre-emptive Israeli air strikes during the 1967 Six Day War. General Abdel Hakim Amer, Chief of Staff of the Egyptian military and Minister of Defense, had assured Egyptian President Nasser that in the event of an Israeli attack, the Egyptian air force would limit losses to no more than 15 %. On June 5, 1967, in a surprise attack, the Israeli Air Force destroyed 90% of Egypt's air force.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What is Dr. Brooks' theory? What evidence does she offer in support of her argument? What do her findings mean for future strategic assessment by the US? What is the proper relationship between a state's government and its military? What role do civil-military relations play in strategy?

ASSIGNMENT: Read James G. Murphy's *War's Ends: Human Rights, International Order, and the Ethics of Peace*.



Thomas Hobbes, 17th century political philosopher and author of *Leviathan*, in which he laid out the first social contract theory. Without a government, without a political community, the life of mankind would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Hobbes’ views on Natural Law suggest that each individual, and thus each state, has the right to self-preservation, which may justify the use of violence and, thus, to make war.

OVERVIEW: What is Fr. Murphy’s goal in writing *War’s Ends*? What are the criteria for *ius ad bellum*? What role do morality and ethics play in strategy? Is this a work of philosophy? What role does philosophy play in the education of a strategist?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Xiaoming Zhang's *Deng Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991*.



Deng Xiaoping, then General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee and Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, seeing off Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh at the Beijing airport in May, 1965. Deng was attempting to thwart Soviet influence in North Vietnam. Within a year, the Cultural Revolution would ensue and Deng would be purged, exiled to a rural tractor factory for four years. He survived a second purge and, after Mao's death in 1976, emerged as a top political figure in China. The Soviet-Vietnamese axis would re-emerge as one of Deng's concerns in 1979.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Why are China and Vietnam in conflict in 1979? What role does the USSR play in Chinese strategic calculations? Does Karnow's *Vietnam: A History* shed any light on the relationship between these two nations? Why does Deng Xiaoping choose the military option in resolving China's differences with Vietnam? How would you assess Deng as a strategist?

12. The Choices of Strategy

3 Aug 2018

ASSIGNMENT: Read Christian Caryl's *Strange Rebels* as directed by your professor.



Bishop Karol Wojtyła, the future Pope John Paul II, shaves during a camping trip in Poland, Poland in 1959. Elected in 1979 as the first non-Italian pope in 455 years (and at 58, one of the youngest in modern times), he encouraged his fellow Poles to affirm solidarity with one another, striking one of the fatal blows to the Communist regime and the Soviet Union.

OVERVIEW: Your course paper is due at the beginning of class. Seminar discussion will follow.