

SAASS 60I

FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGY

SYLLABUS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

THE 30TH YEAR OF SAASS



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* 1.84

Course Director: Dr. Jim Tucci

Syllabus Approved: _____

Date: _____

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 professors were trained as historians or as political scientists. 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 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, 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 recently 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 representative 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 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 methodology and styles, 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. Be wary of the temptation to take shortcuts away from this path to enlightenment. As the great mathematician Euclid said to King Ptolemy of Egypt: “There is no royal road to geometry.”

Grading - Class Participation: Class participation will be weighted at 30% of your total grade. With respect to our assessment of your performance in seminar—quality is far more important than quantity. Additionally, 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. Very little television or digital-only media is reliable; most is malodorous refuse. *Caveat emptor*. Look for sources of information, not opinions. For any media, the following link may be of use in this regard: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/least-most-trusted-news-sources/>

Grading – Paper: The written assignment will be weighted at 70% of your total grade.

Paper requirements: Read Christopher Chivvis’ *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the limits of liberal intervention*. Write an essay comparing strategic decisions in the Peloponnesian War with those made in the 2011 intervention in Libya. Utilize course readings in composing your essay. Limit

your answer to no more than 2500 words, using Times New Roman, 12-font, double-spaced, and one-inch margins. The paper is due to your instructor at the beginning of class on the last day of the course, Friday, 24 July 2020. 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.

- Dr. James M. Tucci, Course Director
- Col Shawn Cochran, PhD
- Col Jeff Donnithorne, Ph.D
- Lt Col Sarah Bakhtiari, Ph.D

Course Texts:

Allison, Graham and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision*. New York: Longman, 1999 (local reproduction by permission of the authors).

Chivvis, Christopher S. *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and The Limits of Liberal Intervention*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Gaddis, John. *On Grand Strategy*. New York: Penguin books, 2019.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. New Ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Free Press, 2013.

Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II 1937-1945*. Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2014.

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

Smith, Ron. *Military Economics: The Interaction of Power and Money*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.

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

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

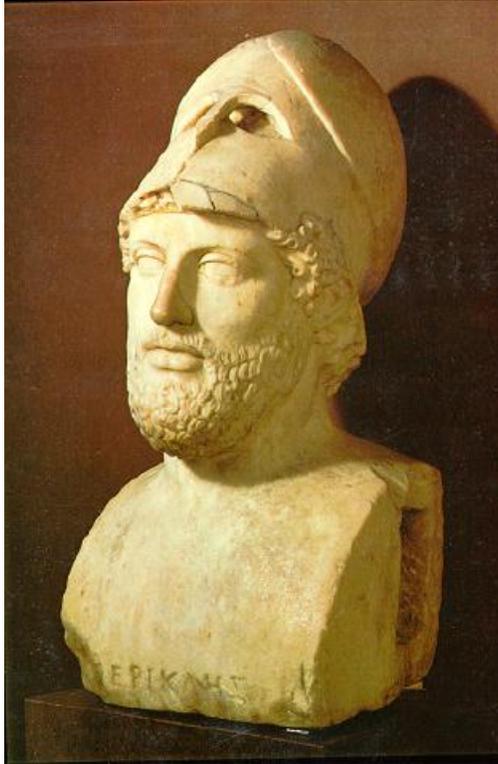
Course Calendar:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson Title</u>	<u>Reading</u>
9 Jul	The Peloponnesian War I	Thucydides
10 Jul	The Peloponnesian War II	Thucydides
13 Jul	Cognitive Processes	Kahneman
14 Jul	The Hedgehog and the Fox	Gaddis
16 Jul	Organizational Behavior	Jervis
17 Jul	Economics and Strategy	Smith
20 Jul	Modeling Strategy	Allison & Zelikow
21 Jul	Ethics and Strategy	Murphy
23 Jul	History and Strategy	Mitter
24 Jul	<i>ex Africa semper aliquid novi</i>	Chivvis

I. The Peloponnesian War I

9 July 2020

ASSIGNMENT: Read Thucydides Intro and Books I-5.



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 Pericles as a strategist? 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?

2. The Peloponnesian War II

10 July 2020

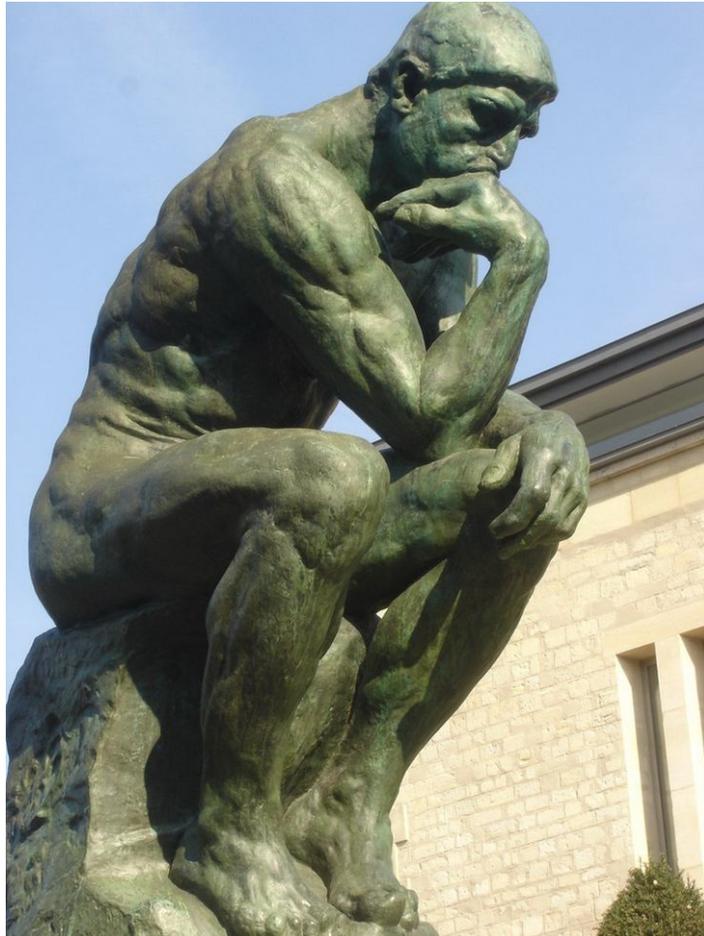
ASSIGNMENT: Read Thucydides Books 5-8 and the Epilogue.



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 Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.



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

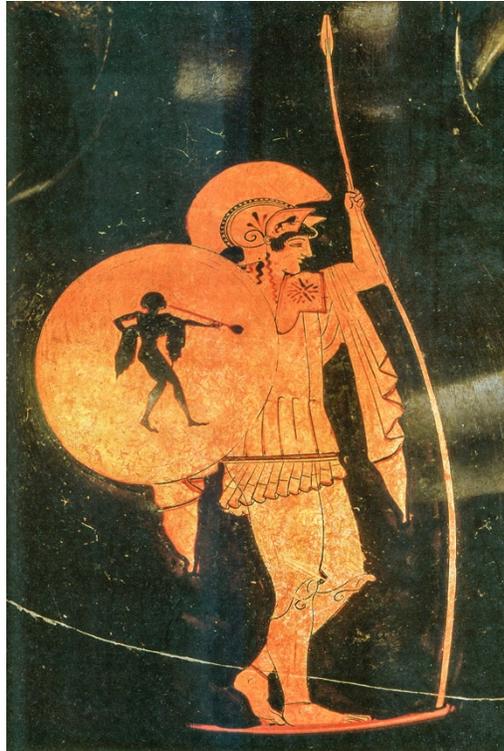
SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: In what ways are our human minds fallible? Are some of these cognitive habits actually helpful? Do you recognize any of these characteristics in your day-to-day thinking? How can strategists accentuate helpful cognitive patterns while minimizing detrimental effects?

4. The Hedgehog and the Fox

14 JUL 20

BASTILLE DAY

ASSIGNMENT: Read John Lewis Gaddis' *On Grand Strategy*



Hoplite from a vase found in Caere (480 B.C.)

Archilochus of Paros, a 7th century B.C. lyric poet and hoplite, wrote the famous poem from which “the fox and the hedgehog” fragment came. His poetry is very personal and often ribald and amusing. In contrast to the Spartan ethos about coming home with your shield or being carried on it, archilochus offered another view:

ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαῖων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἦν παρὰ θάμνοι, ἔντος ἀμώμητον, κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων·
αὐτὸν δ' ἐξεσάωσα. τί μοι μέλει ἀσπίς ἐκείνη; ἔρρέτω· ἕξαῦτις κτήσομαι οὐ κακίω.

I threw my perfectly good shield into the bushes;
now some Thracian is the proud owner.
The hell with both of them!
I'm still alive and I can buy a new one, just as good.*

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: are you a hedgehog or a fox? Or both? What is Gaddis' main argument? What role does literature play in the study of strategy? What makes a good strategist? Do you agree with Gaddis' evaluation of the Peloponnesian War?

*Translation by your cd.

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 Ron Smith's *Military Economics: The Interaction of Power and Money*.



bell b-29s being built at an aircraft plant in Marietta, ga during wwii. Today, the same building houses the Lockheed martin c-130J super Hercules assembly line.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What is the relationship between strategy and economy? Between power and money? What size military budget is enough to provide adequate national security? What are the opportunity costs of defense spending?

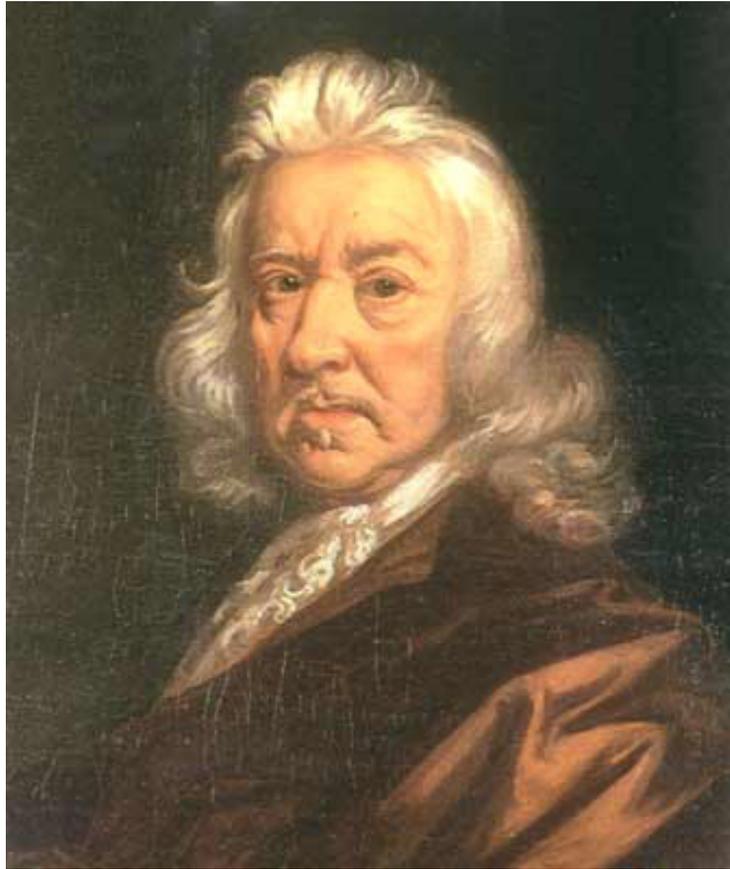
ASSIGNMENT: Read Allison and Zelikow's *Essence of Decision*.



President John F. Kennedy talks with members of Major Rudolph Anderson's reconnaissance team. Left to right: Col. Ralph D. Steakley, photo evaluator with 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?

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 Murphy’s goal in writing *War’s Ends*? What are the criteria for *ius ad bellum*? Is There an ethical basis for the notion of a responsibility to protect? What role do morality and ethics play in strategy?

9. History and Strategy

23 July 2020

ASSIGNMENT: Read Rana Mitter’s *Forgotten Ally: China’s World War II 1937-1945*.



Liu Chi-Sheng was china's top fighter ace in WWII, with 11 kills, most while flying a Polikarpov I-15 biplane (see photo). After the war, Liu rose to the rank of major general in the Republic of China's Air Force.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What is Dr. Mitter's purpose in writing this book? What sources does he use in his research? What themes do you discern in this account?

Did reading this affect your understanding of China's national experience? What role does the study of history play in understanding strategy?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Chavvis' *Toppling Qaddafi: Lybia and the Limits of Liberal Intervention*. Write the course essay in accordance with your professor's instructions. Essay is due when seminar begins.



A Swedish Royal Air Force SAAB J39 Gripen refueling during a mission in support of Operation Unified Protector, NATO's intervention into the Libyan civil war in 2011. (Dr. Svedin is not the pilot.)

overview: your course essay is due at the start of class; seminar discussion to follow.

*translation: Something new always comes out of Africa. (From Pliny the Elder's *Natural history*.)