

SAASS 60I

FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGY

SYLLABUS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022

THE 3RD 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 philosophy and the social sciences, in particular political science. 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, both on the end-of-year comprehensive exam and in your career as a strategist.

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 his pupil, King Ptolemy of Egypt: “There is no royal road to geometry.”

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, students are expected to keep up with current events through a variety of media sources. Balance is key here. Drawing only upon a single source from one political persuasion for your news is unwise. Balance your sources. For instance, read both *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. Some sources strive for balance. *The Economist* is the widely regarded as the best weekly and should be read by every SAASS student. Very little digital-only media is reliable in and of itself; many are 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 60% of your total grade.

Paper requirements: Specifics on the essay assignment will be provided by your instructor once the course begins. The paper is due to your instructor at the beginning of class on the last day of the course, Friday, 23 July 2021. 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. Jim Tucci, 60I Course Director.
- Dr. Rich Muller, SAASS Research Director.
- Col Jeff Donnithorne, Ph.D., SAASS Commandant
- Dr. Wendy Whitman Cobb, AU Ph.D. Program Director.

Course Texts:

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

Brands, Hal and Charles Edel. *The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order*. Yale University Press, 2019.

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.

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

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

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

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

Zhang, Xiaoming. *Deng Xiaoping's Long War*. University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Course Administration: Overall course administration is the responsibility of the SAASS 60I Course Director.

Course Calendar:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson Title</u>	<u>Reading</u>
8 Jul	The Tragedy of Strategy	Brands & Edel
9 Jul	The Peloponnesian War I	Thucydides
12 Jul	The Peloponnesian War II	Thucydides
13 Jul	The Hedgehog and the Fox	Gaddis
15 Jul	Thinking and Strategy	Kahneman
16 Jul	Modeling Strategy	Allison & Zelikow
19 Jul	Analogies and Strategy	Khong
20 Jul	The Art of Strategy	Zhang
22 Jul	Ethics and Strategy	Murphy
23 Jul	<i>ex Africa semper aliquid novi</i>	Chivvis

I. The Tragedy of Strategy

8 July 2021

ASSIGNMENT: Read Brands & Edel's *The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order*.



Bust of Aeschylus, the father of Greek tragedy, and thus of all western drama, on public display in contemporary downtown Athens, Greece. Aeschylus wrote an estimated 70-90 plays, although only 7 complete tragedies have survived into the modern era. Despite his immense success as a playwright, no mention of his literary achievements appears on his tombstone, only that he had fought in the battle of marathos. You may well see this sculpture in September.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: What do the authors mean by “tragic sensibility”? Do you agree with their characterization of American foreign policy in the 20th century? Since 9/11? What is their main argument? What role does democracy play in US foreign policy? What role should it play? Is there a contemporary cultural American equivalent to the role the dramatic arts played in Greek civilization?

2. The Peloponnesian War I

9 July 2021

ASSIGNMENT: Read The Landmark 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?

3. The Peloponnesian War II

12 July 2021

ASSIGNMENT: Read The Landmark 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?

4. The Hedgehog and the Fox

13 July 2021

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:

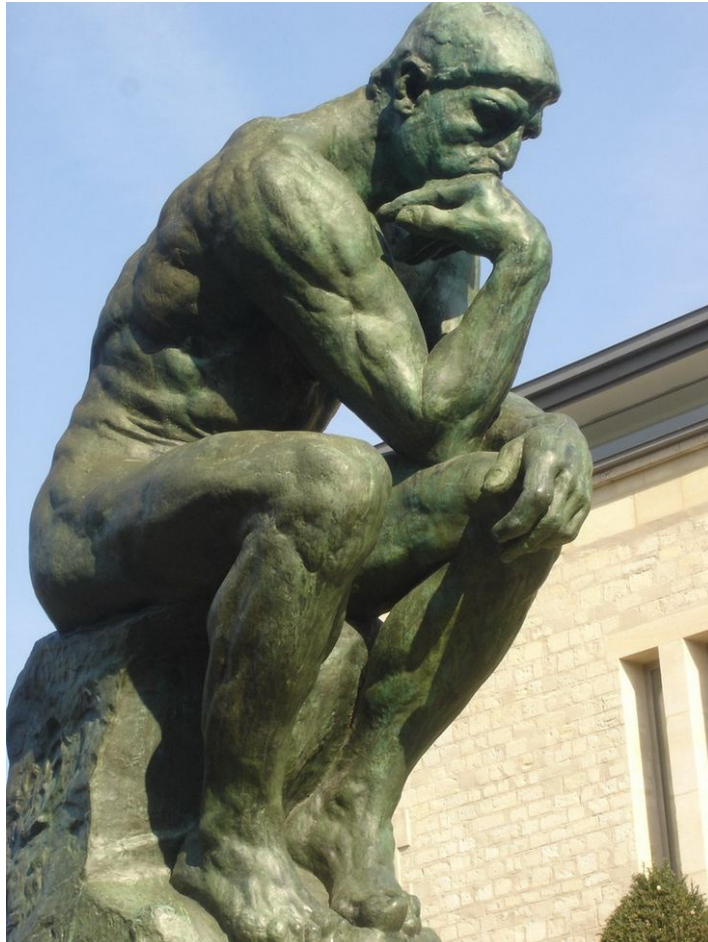
ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαῖων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἦν παρὰ θάμνῳ, ἔντος ἀμώμητον, κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων·
αὐτὸν δ' ἐξεσάωσα. τί μοι μέλει ἀσπίς ἐκείνη; ἔρρέτω· ἕξαὔτις κτήσομαι οὐ κακίῳ.

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 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?

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 Khong's *Analogies at War*.



President Lyndon B. Johnson meeting with the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, Gen 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? Is the Vietnam War the great tragedy of the American Cold War Experience? What are the legacies of Vietnam today?

8. The Art of Strategy

20 July 2021

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



President Jimmy Carter, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Chairman Deng Xiaoping during the first official visit by Communist China's leadership to the US in 1979.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Why are China and Vietnam in conflict in 1979? Does Khong's *Analogies at War* 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?

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?

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.

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*.)