Objectives: Whether it was the “smart” weapons used by the United States or the weapons of mass destruction it was looking for, the recent Iraq wars confirmed again the central importance of weapons technology and capabilities in international relations. During the past century the pace of change in military technology has accelerated greatly. It easy to forget that a mere one hundred years ago many of the weapons that we take for granted today did not even exist. There were, for example, no tanks, bombers, or missiles, not to mention nuclear weapons or laser-guided munitions. In the centuries before the industrial revolution military technology changed slowly whereas today it seems that revolutionary new weapons appear every few years. While the impact of changing military technology is most obvious in terms of the conduct of warfare, the effects do not stop there. Somewhat less obvious but by no means less important are the profound social and political consequences that often accompany changing military technology. In this course we will examine evolving military technology, both in terms of the immediate impact on the conduct and nature of war as well as the broader social and political implications of military change, from the introduction of gunpowder weapons in the fifteenth century to the United States wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Requirements and Grading: There are three texts for this class that have been ordered for purchase:

Max Boot, War Made New: Technology, Warfare and the Course of History (Gotham, 2006)

Keith Shimko, The Iraq Wars and America’s Military Revolution (Cambridge, 2010)

Other readings will be available on Blackboard.
There will be three exams for this class, two during the term and a final. Your final grade will be the average of the three exams (i.e., they are equally weighted). Each exam will receive both a number grade (0-100) and a letter grade (F-A). We will average both and your final grade will be whichever is better (95% of the time there is no difference). The format of the exams will vary and will include during the semester short answer and essays. Specifics will be announced about two weeks before each exam.

**Make-Up Policy:** If you miss an exam, you must notify me before the exam at the email address indicated above. Please retain a copy of the email as proof that you did notify me in time. If you fail to provide prior notification, you will not be allowed to take a make-up unless you can prove extreme extenuating circumstances (e.g., you were unconscious in the hospital or in a car accident on the way to class). Make-up exams for students with a legitimate excuse will be given one week after the regular exam during class time (they will be proctored by the teaching assistant in another classroom). You will responsible for getting material missed in that class from a fellow student.

*NOTE:* Do not make plans to leave campus at the end of the semester before the date of the final exam is announced. That you (or your parents) bought a ticket to leave before that will not be considered a valid reason to reschedule your final exam.

**Classroom Etiquette:** This class meets for 50 minutes three times a week. If you come to class, I expect you to remain until it is over. If there is some reason you need to leave early, tell me at the start and sit near a door so you can make an unobtrusive exit. If you feel there is some reason you may not be able to sit through a 50 minute class on a given day, please do not attend. If you think there will be many such days, please drop the class and take another. Leaving in the middle of class is rude and disruptive. I reserve the right to penalize students for disruptive conduct by reducing their final grade.

*Cellphones are to put away out of reach (and turned off) once the class begins.*
SCHEDULE

8/24: Organizational/Thinking About Weapons and Warfare

Scenes from The Last Samurai

PART I: MILITARY REVOLUTIONS IN HISTORY

8/26 What is a “Military Revolution”?

Boot, Introduction (pp. 7-16)

Williamson Murray, “Thinking About Revolutions in Military Affairs,” Joint Force Quarterly (Summer 1997), 69-76.

Shimko, Iraq Wars, pp. 1-9

8/28 Gunpowder Revolution: The Military Roots of a Social/Political Revolution

Boot, pp. 19-24, 74-76.


8/31 and 9/2: The Napoleonic Revolution: The Social/Political Roots of a Military Revolution

Boot, 83-92.


9/4 and 9: The Industrial-Military Revolution: Technology and Early Manifestations

Boot, 116-146, 196-201

NO CLASS 9/7 (Labor Day)

9/11 and 14: The Late Industrial-Military Revolution

Boot, 77-83, 146-169

9/16 and 9/18: Total War on the Ground: World War I and the Triumph of Weapons – The Rise and Demise of the Continuous Front


9/21: Total War and Air Power in Theory: The Prophets of the Air


9/23 and 25: Total War and Air Power in Reality: Blitzkrieg and Strategic Bombing

Boot, 268-294

9/28: The Legacies of Total War

No readings

9/30: Total War: A Recap

Boot, 295-304

VIDEO: The Road to Total War

Exam #1: 10/2
PART II: A NUCLEAR REVOLUTION?

10/5: The Dawn of the Nuclear Era

VIDEO: War and Peace in the Nuclear Age I: Dawn

Note: There is no class October 9

10/7 and 14: Nuclear Strategy in the Cold War: The Emergence of M.A.D.

10/16: Was There Really a “Nuclear Revolution”?

John Mearsheimer, “Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War,” The Atlantic
(November 1990). Access at:

John Mueller, “The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons,” from Retreat
from Doomsday, pp. 110-116.

10/19 and 21: The History of Nuclear Proliferation and Non-proliferation

10/23 and 26: Nuclear Proliferation: Might it be a Good Thing?

Shimko, International Relations, Ch.11.

10/28: Nuclear Proliferation: What About Iran?

Paul Pillar, “We Can Live with A Nuclear Iran,” Washington Monthly
(March/April 2012).


10/30: Nuclear Defense?

Reading may be assigned

11/2: Exam #2
PART III: A NEW REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS?

11/4: The Origins and Elements of a Contemporary Revolution in Military Affairs
   Shimko, Ch 2 (skim over the parts of Ch 1 assigned for 8/26).

11/6, 9, 11: The First Iraq War (1991): The Promise of the RMA?
   Shimko, Ch. 3
   VIDEO: selections from The Gulf War

11/13 and 16: The RMA in the 1990s
   Shimko, Ch. 4 (do not read 104-116)

11/18: The Afghan Prelude
   Shimko, pp. 131-142

11/20 and 30: The Second War Against Iraq (2003): The Promise of the RMA?
   Shimko, pp. 142-172

NOTE: There is no class November 23

12/2, 4, 7: Third Iraq War (2003 - 11): The Limits of the RMA?
   Shimko, Ch. 6
   Keith Shimko, “The United States and the RMA: Revolutions do Not Revolutionize Everything,” in Andrew Futter and Jeffrey Collins (eds.), Reassessing the Revolution in Military Affairs (Palgrave, 2015)
   VIDEO: Battle Plan Under Fire

12/9: The Future of the RMA and America Defense Policy
   Shimko, Conclusion