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 if 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.

Many observers believe that we are at a critical turning point with new technologies fundamentally changing the way nations (especially the United States) prepare for and fight wars. These changes could, in turn, have a tremendous impact on American society, its military, and its relations with the rest of the world. We will examine this so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) from a historical and contemporary perspective. We will compare the current RMA to past military revolutions, such as the gunpowder revolution of the 1400s and 1500s as well as the changes in warfare wrought by the industrial revolution. The bulk of the course, however, will focus on the debates and challenges of the current revolution. Among the questions we will explore: Can air power win wars in places like the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, and Afghanistan without the use of ground forces or extensive American and local civilian casualties? Can and should the proliferation of nuclear weapons be prevented? And, most importantly, what does the American experience in Iraq since 2003 indicate about the role of technology in changing the character of warfare?
**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)


Other readings will generally be available on Blackboard (indicated by BKBD)

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).

**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 a teaching assistant in another classroom). You will responsible for getting material missed in that class from a fellow student. Students should also refrain from making plans to leave campus at the end of the semester until the final exam schedule has been released. *That you already made plans to leave before knowing the time of the final will not be considered a legitimate excuse for missing the exam at the scheduled time.*

**Classroom Etiquette:** This class meets for 75 minutes twice 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 75 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 be put away at the start of class. They are not to be left on your desk or checked at any point during class.
SCHEDULE

1/13: Organizational/Thinking About Weapons and Warfare

Scenes from The Last Samurai

PART I: MILITARY REVOLUTIONS IN HISTORY

1/15: 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. BKBD

1/20: Gunpowder Revolution: The Military Roots of a Social/Political Revolution

Boot, pp. 19-24, 74-76


1/22: The Napoleonic Revolution: The Social/Political Roots of a Military Revolution

Boot, 83-92.

John Weltman, World Politics and the Evolution of Warfare (Johns Hopkins, 1995), pp. 35-40. BKBD


1/27 and 29: The Industrial-Military Revolution: Technology and Early Manifestations

Boot, 116-146, 196-201
2/3: The Industrial-Military Revolution: European Global Dominance

Boot, 77-83, 146-169

2/5 and 2/10: Total War on the Ground: World War I and the Triumph of Weapons – The Rise and Demise of the Continuous Front


2/12: Air Power in Theory


2/17: Air Power in Reality: Strategic Bombing and Blitzkreig

Boot, 268-304

2/19: EXAM #1

PART II: A NUCLEAR REVOLUTION?

2/24: The Dawn of the Nuclear Era

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

2/26: Nuclear Strategy in the Cold War: The Emergence of M.A.D.

3/3: Was There Really a “Nuclear Revolution”?

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

3/5: Nuclear Proliferation: Why So Many Nuclear Powers? Why so Few?

Shimko, *International Relations*, Ch.11. BKBD

3/10: Nuclear Proliferation: Might it be a Good Thing? What about Iran?


Another short reading may be added

3/12: No Class

3/24: Nuclear Defense?

3/26: Exam #2

PART III: A NEW REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS?

3/31: The Origins and Elements of a Contemporary Revolution in Military Affairs

Shimko, Chs. 1 and 2

4/2 and 4/7: The First War Against Iraq (1991): The Promise of the RMA?

Shimko, Ch. 3

VIDEO: selections from *The Gulf War*

4/9: The RMA in the 1990s

Shimko, Ch. 4

4/14: The Afghan Prelude

Shimko, Ch. 5

4/16: The Second War Against Iraq (2003): The Promise of the RMA?
Shimko, Ch. 5

4/21 and 23: Third Iraq War (2003 - ?): The Limits of the RMA?

Shimko, Ch. 6.

VIDEO: *Battle Plan Under Fire*

4/28: The Future of the RMA and America Defense Policy

Shimko, Conclusion