

Military History to 1500 HIST 130

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 4 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/17/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr Isabelle Pafford

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Please use email or DM through Canvas.

Office Hours

- Tuesdays from 10:30-11:30, in Person
- My Office - ARTH 117 or in zoom by appointment

Course Information

The purpose of this course is to trace the development of military force and warfare from its origins to 1500.

Various aspects of military conflict will be considered including technology, organization, culture and leadership. The role of war and armies in culture and in the development of civilization will also be considered.

Another purpose is to teach you about the sources for military history and how historians use them. Finally, you will be challenged to think about the “why” of military history, its development and its impact. The class will also improve your reading, writing and analytical skills.

Meeting Time

Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:45
Dudley Moorhead Hall 359

Course Description and Requisites

The development of military force and warfare from its origins to 1500.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

This is an in-person class. I will post a recording of the class within 24 hours.

Please come to class or listen to the recordings

Complete the short lecture summaries.

Please don't come to class if you are unwell.

Please be respectful and courteous to the instructor and your classmates in all discussion.

Most importantly, please **enjoy** this opportunity to explore the evidence for our shared past.

POLICY ON LATE WORK

I will take all work WITHOUT PENALTY through the end of the semester.

You do not need to explain why you need a bit of extra time.

HOWEVER, you should keep up with the suggested due dates and avoid falling behind.

AI Policy

Please do not use AI programs such as Chat GPT to write your essays or notes. Such shortcuts defeat the purpose of an upper division class.

Program Information

Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1 Describe and explain how peoples and societies evolved across time and space demonstrating the importance of context (social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, ideological, and technological).

PLO 2 Illustrate the complexity of historical causality and describe past events from multiple perspectives.

PLO 3 Analyze the credibility of historical sources and arguments, revising interpretations as new evidence warrants.

PLO 4 Conceive and carry out historical research, constructing persuasive evidence-based arguments using primary and secondary sources according to recognized standards of the historical discipline.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

CLO 1: Understand the definitions of war and questions about its origin.

CLO 2: Describe the relationship between war and world history.

CLO 3: Analyze the interaction between technological development, culture and war.

CLO 4: Critically follow a theoretical historical argument and the evidence and reason used to support it.

CLO 5: Explain how historians use primary sources and other means to reconstruct ancient history

Course Materials

Required Texts

Raaflaub, Kurt A., and Nathan Stewart Rosenstein. 2001. *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds : Asia, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Mesoamerica*, Revised Edition. Harvard University Press. **I have asked the bookstore to order the paperback edition of this book for you. You may buy used copies. The first edition and the revised edition are basically the same.

Keen, Maurice. 1999. *Medieval Warfare : A History*. Oxford University Press. This book is available electronically in our university library.

Lendon, J. E. 2005. *Soldiers and Ghosts : A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*. 1st ed. Yale University Press. This book is available electronically in our university library.

Goldsworthy, Adrian Keith. 2016. *Pax Romana : War, Peace and Conquest in the Roman World*. Yale University Press. This Book is available in our university library.

We will also read selections of source texts and articles. Everything will be available electronically either through the library or as a PDF on Canvas. Please consult the syllabus for recommended reading for each topic.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Weighted Assignments

Participation	20%	CLO 1-5
Book Reviews (2)	30%	CLO 4 and 5
Exam One	15%	CLO 1-5
Exam Two	15%	CLO 1-5
Final Exam	20%	CLO 1-5

Participation

You are required to come to class. Please take notes in class and upload images of those notes to canvas. (Assignments located in the modules). We will also have several online discussions to solidify topics that develop during class.

Book Reviews

You will write two book reviews on the following texts:

Lendon, J. E. 2005. *Soldiers and Ghosts : A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*. 1st ed. Yale University Press.

Goldsworthy, Adrian Keith. 2016. *Pax Romana : War, Peace and Conquest in the Roman World*. Yale University Press.

We will discuss these books, as well as strategies for writing book reviews over the course of the semester.

Exams

Exams combine objective knowledge questions (names, terms, etc) with a short essay question. All exams are open book and on-line. They are meant to help you solidify your knowledge.

✓ Grading Information

Numerical Grade Equivalents

93% and above	A
92%-90%	A-
89%-88%	B+
87%-83%	B
82%-80%	B-
79%-78%	C+
77%-73%	C
72%-70%	C-
69%-68%	D+

67%-63%	D
62%-60%	D-
Below 60^	F

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
	8/20	Introduction to the Class	
1	8/25	The Origins of War - The Paleolithic and Neolithic to 4000 B.C.E.	Reading: Gat, Azar. 2006. <i>War in Human Civilization</i> , Chapter 9, pp. 157-175. This book is available on-line in our library.
2	8/27	Warfare in the Early Bronze Age (4000-2000 B.C.E.)	Van de Mieroop, Marc author. 2016. <i>A History of the Ancient near East, Ca. 3000-323 Bc</i> . This book is available on-line in our library. Please read Chapter 3
	9/1	Labor Day - No Class	
3	9/3	Warfare in the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 B.C.E.)	Van de Mieroop, Marc author. 2016. <i>A History of the Ancient near East, Ca. 3000-323 Bc</i> . This book is available on-line in our library. Please read Chapter 4.
4	9/8	Warfare in the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 B.C.E.)	Roy, Kaushik, and Michael W. Charney. 2024. <i>Routledge Handbook of the Global History of Warfare</i> . 3-17 of the print version, This book is available on-line in our library. There is also a PDF available in the "reading" module

	9/10	The "Catastrophe" and the Early Iron Age (1200-900 B.C.E.)	
5	9/15	Iron Age Warfare in the Mediterranean Region (1000-500 B.C.E.).	
	9/17	Warfare in the Persian Empire (500-300 B.C.E.)	
6	9/22	Review and Discussion	
	9/24	Exam One - On Line - No Class Meeting	
7	9/29	Classical Greek Warfare (500-400 B.C.E.)	
	10/1	Classical Greek Warfare (400-330 B.C.E.)	
8	10/6	Warfare of the Early Roman Republic. (500-300 B.C.E.)	
	10/8	Hellenistic Warfare (300-100 B.C.E.)	
9	10/13	Warfare in the Steppes and Early Asia (1000-200 B.C.E.)	
	10/15	Warfare in Classical South and East Asia (200 B.C.E.-600 C.E.)	
10	10/20	Warfare of the Middle Roman Republic (300-100 B.C.E.)	
	10/22	Warfare of the Late Roman Republic (100 B.C.E.-30 C.E.)	
11	10/27	Early Imperial Roman Warfare (30 C.E.-200 C.E.)	
	10/29	Review and Discussion	
12	11/3	Exam Two. - On Line - No Class Meeting	
	11/5	Late Roman and Persian/Sassanian Warfare (200-600 C.E.)	

13	11/10	Warfare in the New and Far East (600-1200 C.E.)	
	11/12	Warfare in Early Medieval Europe (600-1200 C.E.)	
14	11/17	Mongol Warfare (1200-1300 C.E.)	
	11/19	Warfare in 14th c. Europe	
15	11/24	Discussion	
	11/26	Non- Instructional Day	
16	12/1	Late Medieval Warfare	
	12/3	Warfare in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas before 1500 C.E.	
17	12/8	The "Cornd Gunpowder" Revolution (1400-1500 B.C.E.)	
	12/16	Final Exam On Line - The exam will open December 11 and remain open until December 17	
		Last Day for Late Work December 16	