

Michigan State University
James Madison College
Fall 2013

Professor Yael Aronoff
Office: 317 South Case Hall
Class Meeting: T, TH 12:40-2:30
Class Location: 319L Case Hall
Office Hours: T, TH 9:00-10:00, T
2:40-5:15, and by appointment
Email: aronoffy@msu.edu

SENIOR SEMINAR MC492: The Dilemmas of Asymmetric Wars

Course overview, structure, and objectives:

This seminar will concentrate on the dilemmas of modern asymmetric warfare, and will treat Israel's conflicts with Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah forces in a comparative manner with NATO and U.S. actions in Afghanistan and drone strikes in Pakistan. There has been much debate as to whether low intensity conflict against a group operating from the midst of civilians poses new dilemmas for militaries and whether new, amended, or specified rules of warfare for this particular kind of conflict need to be established. Soldiers on the ground have greater freedom to make operational tactical decisions that can have grave consequences. We will analyze the role of military decision-making, international law, and the media in these wars.

Israel's Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza in 2009, the subsequent Goldstone Report alleging Israeli and Hamas war crimes during that operation, and Goldstone's retraction in April 2011 of the charge that Israel intentionally targeted civilians, is an example of this debate. Michael Walzer, one of the preeminent scholars on just means and ends for war, criticized the report (and Goldstone's retraction) for not acknowledging its failure to engage a serious discussion of the difficulties posed by this kind of asymmetric war.

The current scholarly debate focuses on whether rules of proportionality are sufficient to guide the conduct of militaries fighting non-state actors operating from civilian areas. Some scholars argue that these rules of war are too inhibiting for militaries in current environments, and that these militaries are so constrained that they cannot achieve military victory. Others argue that rules of proportionality are too permissive and excuse civilian casualties by militaries forced to fight in these areas. This debate includes these additional questions: how do military forces pursue adversaries who conduct strikes from within civilian areas? How do decision-makers—individual units on the ground, or strategic planners overseeing operations—balance the risk of harming civilians and the risk to soldiers?

The seminar will draw contrasts and comparisons regarding ethical dilemmas surrounding the means of war in these contexts, explore the question of how these rules of war might be clarified, and examine the political alternatives available when traditional notions of military victory are altered by the war of narratives playing out in the international arena, which expand and change the political consequences of military decisions. Ultimately, although international law states that

much weight should be given to the local commander's judgment and intention, one could argue that it is the subjective judgment of international opinion that significantly determines the political outcome of such wars. Instantaneous media seems to advantage groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah who manipulate sensationalist accounts of civilian casualties. Information regarding accidents, faulty intelligence, accurate accounts of combatants vs. civilians, always comes out much later and gets much less traction from the media. Does this mean that these new types of asymmetric wars not only challenge traditional notions of military victory, but also the extent to which militaries can turn tactical victories into political ones? We will ask what role the media plays in these new kinds of conflicts. How do the narratives propagated by the media *about* these operations become important arbiters or factors in judging an operation a "success" or "failure"? And how do these media narratives thus become part of the tactics pursued by decision-makers on all sides of a conflict?

In order to further examine multiple policy options and the varied perspectives that different bureaucratic and societal actors bring to the table in making decisions, you will be representing different institutional interests in our decision-making simulations: decision making prior to and during the 2006 war with Hezbollah, current policy dilemmas surrounding Israeli relations with Hamas and Gaza; U.S. policies on and criteria for drone attacks. Finally, near the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to present your paper drafts and receive constructive comments from classmates.

This course has three main objectives:

- 1) To hone your research, analytical, and writing skills by conducting a substantial research project of your own.
- 2) To explore in a comparative way, how democracies face the dilemmas of fighting asymmetric wars, assess the criteria by which military and political effectiveness is measured, assess international law regarding means of war in these types of wars, and assess the increasing role of the media in shaping the war of narratives shaping interpretations of these wars.
- 3) To improve your critical thinking, reading, and speaking abilities. Particular attention will be given to developing argumentation skills, both orally and in writing, through written assignments, oral presentations, and in class discussions and simulations.

Israel faces many opportunities and challenges in a rapidly changing Middle East. The region has seen a number of challenges to long-standing authoritarian regimes by popular demonstrations calling for democracy. After a four year period of hostility, in which Hamas controlled the Gaza Strip and Fatah the West Bank, several circumstances have coincided this spring to encourage the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah: the growing relationship between the new transitional Egyptian regime and Hamas (as opposed to Mubarak's clear favoring of Fatah); Palestinian demonstrations calling for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas; Abu Mazen's push to show a united Palestinian front in its bid for Palestinian statehood at the United Nations this September (despite Hamas's opposition, since the UN bid would

confine the new Palestinian state to pre-1967 borders); the increasing uncertainty surrounding

Israel faces opportunities to end the conflict with the Palestinians and live alongside a Palestinian state in accepted and recognized territorial borders, with a strengthened democracy, and increased acceptance in the region. However, it also faces continued challenges by groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah who formally oppose the peace process and the recognition of Israel.

We will begin the class by reviewing how we can create and test hypotheses, select and compare case studies, and use process tracing, each of which are important skills that will aid you in your own thinking about your research papers.

In order to further examine multiple policy options and the varied perspectives that different bureaucratic and societal actors bring to the table in making decisions, you will be representing different institutional interests in our four decision-making simulations: current policy dilemmas surrounding Israeli relations with Hamas and Gaza. Finally, near the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to present your paper drafts and receive constructive comments from classmates.

Course Requirements:

1) Class Participation (25%):

On-time attendance to all classes is expected. Students must faithfully complete a close reading of assignments before class, and participate in all class discussions. In these discussions, you will have the opportunity to engage the viewpoints of other students, make connections among the readings, link theory with empirical examples, and ask clarifying questions. As a seminar, we will focus on discussion; for the most part I will not be lecturing, but participating in discussions with you.

Twice during the semester you will be responsible for launching our class discussion on the day's readings by providing an oral 10-15 minute analysis/critique of one or more of the texts. **You should not summarize the readings! You should not just read notes that you have taken or a short essay that you have written.** You should refer to an organized outline that you have prepared, but retain eye contact with the class, and speak in a clear and an engaging manner. It is assumed that everyone has closely read the materials, and therefore summarizing them is not intellectually stimulating. Highlight what was most interesting for you, what you agreed or disagreed with and why, critically analyze the logic and evidence for the argument, compare and contrast the arguments in different readings for that day, make connections to previous readings or to your own research topic, etc. When you have completed your 15 minute analysis, provide three questions for the class to discuss and begin the class discussion.

The atmosphere for constructive discussions must be one in which we all speak respectfully to

one another and treat one another's ideas and contributions with respect. That does not mean that we cannot critique each other's ideas respectfully. Critical analysis of the readings and their arguments requires us to challenge one another as to the logic, evidence for, and exceptions to a variety of arguments. This helps us discover how to better build our arguments, as well as recognize their limits.

Your participation grade also includes your participation in our simulations. You will be graded on your preparation, your argumentation and persuasive skills in trying to get others to adopt your recommendations, and your ability to incorporate new information that will be periodically supplied during the simulation. Additional guidelines will be provided separately for each simulation.

You are permitted 2 absences from the seminar during the semester **except** on days where we have simulations, paper presentations, or guest speakers. You can take these absences for being sick, having to go to a wedding, extra-curricular trips such as Model UN or debate, job interview, etc... Use them wisely and only when you absolutely need to. Any absence beyond these two, and/or during a simulation or class devoted to paper presentations, will require medical notification from a doctor. Otherwise, any additional absences will negatively impact your participation grade.

Reading Memos and Written Critiques of Each Other's First Drafts: (10%) Participation in weekly web discussions on the readings and then written critiques of each other's research papers.

Discussion question(s) regarding each week's reading will be posted for your response every Friday. Participation in web forums will enable you to come to class better prepared for deepening the discussion, and will give you an opportunity to discuss the material outside of class. I will be checking, and at times participating in, these discussions. You will have the opportunity to engage the viewpoints of other students, make connections among the readings and link theory with empirical examples. Your first post should answer the questions in approximately two paragraphs and directly refer to the readings. The next day, or a few hours later, read the other posts and respond to at least one in a paragraph. Posts made after Mondays at 11pm will no longer be counted.

2) Topic Statement and initial sources (not graded): Due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, September 28th. Submit a paragraph articulating your main argument or thesis with 10 sources.

3) Paper Proposal (10%): Due Thursday, October 10th at the beginning of class.

See guidelines at the end of the syllabus. Write a 5-9 page (double spaced, not including the required bibliography) research proposal, in which you articulate a research question on a topic of your choice that is related to asymmetric conflicts. Be sure to pick a topic and thesis that is sufficiently narrow to be able to research and persuasively test within a single semester. You will explain the topic, articulate your main thesis or hypothesis, outline the methodology you will use to prove your hypothesis, and explain your project's theoretical and policy significance. Situate your hypothesis and research within the existing debates pertaining to your topic. Include a preliminary bibliography of at least 15 sources that you have found, with brief explanations as to

how this will aid your research.

4) First Draft of Paper (20%): due Tuesday, November 12th at the beginning of class.

See further guidelines at the end of the syllabus.

Write a polished 20-25 page paper with at least 20 sources. A substantial number of the resources must be from academic books and journals articles. Your oral presentation will be based on this draft which will be read and commented on by the entire class.

5) Oral Presentation of Research Paper (10%): I will group papers together on different days based on topic areas. You will give a 20 minute oral presentation of your paper, working from an outline of the paper you will use as an aid and hand out to the class (in other words, you will not read the paper itself). Present your main argument and hypotheses, how you tested them, the evidence you found, and the relevance of your findings for the academic debates on asymmetric war. You will also address the policy implications of your findings. Tell us why the research project is interesting and important. You will be evaluated based on the substance and organization of your presentation, as well as whether you present your presentation in a clear and engaging manner. Practice timing yourself before class so that you do not rush through your project in 5 minutes, or go on for 40 minutes. When you are finished, the whole class will give you comments and suggestions that will aid you in your revision process.

7) Revised Seminar paper (25%): Due Tuesday, December 10, 12:45-2:45, in my office.

See further guidelines at the end of the syllabus.

Write a 25-35 pg. (double spaced, 12 point font) paper that significantly revises your first draft based on my comments and those of your classmates. Attach a bibliography with at least 20 sources, and only use those resources that you actually cite in your paper. The first time that you cite an article, give a full citation. In future citations of that same article just use the author followed by the page number. When in doubt as to whether you need a citation, always use one. Remember that unless you significantly paraphrase the entire sentence, put the sentence or sentence phrase in quotation marks. Of course, borrowed ideas, arguments and evidence, when paraphrased, still require a citation with an exact page number(s).

There will be significant penalties for any paper proposals, paper first drafts, or revised papers that are handed in late.

This course is part of the I.R. major Tier 2 “cluster” requirement. As part of this requirement, submit the draft and final paper to the electronic writing portfolio on their Angel site.

Readings:

The following books are available in the book store. Also, feel free to purchase used copies online, especially Waxman’s book, which is expensive to purchase new.

- 1) Daniel Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*

(Oxford University Press, 2011).

- 2) Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (Simon & Schuster, 2010).
- 3) Micah Zenko, *Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies* (Council on Foreign Relations Special Report no. 65, January 2013)
- 4) Course Pack including relevant journal articles available at Collegville Textbook Co. 321 E. Grand Rive.
- 5) Knowledge of current events is expected for class discussions.
All students are required to regularly read *The New York Times*, *Haaretz* www.haaretzdaily.com *Jerusalem Post* www.jpost.com, and the *Jerusalem Report*.

Office Hours and Availability:

I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of the four and a half hours a week I have devoted to office hours. Please do contact me if you cannot make the office hours due to your class schedule, and I will be happy to make an appointment with you at another time. You are expected to come to office hours to discuss your paper topics, proposals, and drafts. But please also come if you have questions concerning the readings or assignments. My door is open to you, and I look forward to having stimulating discussions with you outside class (over lunch and in office hours), as well as in class. I would like everyone to succeed, and am available to help you do so.

Instructional Model: Because this course receives 5 credits for 4 in-class contact hours, you will be expected to do considerably more out-of-class work than for a regular 4 credit class. Out-of-class work will include regular meetings with me to discuss course materials as well as your research paper. You are also required to attend several lectures and films directly related to the class that I have included in the syllabus.

Academic Integrity: James Madison College and Michigan State University policies on academic integrity and plagiarism will be strictly enforced in this course. See the James Madison College Handbook section, Standards and Expectations, and the MSU Academic Programs catalogue, for further information. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Course Schedule

Overview of Research Methodology

August 29, TH: Introduction to the class and overview of methodology : Causality and Comparative Case Studies. Also visit by reference librarian, Deborah Margolis, to assist with research papers

Reading:

Andrew Bennet and Colin Elman, "Case Study Methods on International Relations Subfield," *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(2) 2007: 1-26 (in the course pack).

September 3, T: Early Israeli Conflicts with the PLO until Oslo
Byman book, pp. 1-76.

September 5, TH: Class cancelled for Rosh Hashanah. Make up class will be Monday, October 7th. Professor Daniel Byman, author of the book that we are reading, will meet with our seminar from 10-11:30am in the Madison library, and then you are also required to attend his public lecture in Sparta Club from 12:40-2:00 on "***Israeli Counterterrorism: Successes, Failures, and Challenges Ahead.***" Also, required to attend the viewing of and discussion of the film *The Gatekeepers* on September 24th 7pm.

September 10, T: Israel's War With Hezbollah
Byman book, pp. 207-266.

Marvin Kalb, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War Of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," 35 pages, Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government on ANGEL.

September 12, TH: Screening of the movie *Waltz with Bashir*, about the first Israeli War against the PLO in Lebanon.

September 17, T: From Oslo to the 2nd Intifadah

Reading:

Pages 77-112 and 267-285 of Byman book

September 19, TH: **Written paper topics due at the beginning of class**

The 2nd intifadah

Reading:

Byman book, pp. 113-169

September 24, T: The War Against Hamas

Readings: all readings for today are in the course pack

Byman book, pp. 170-206

Transcript of Moyers-Goldstone Interview, September 23, 2009, 460-480.

Goldstone's retraction, *Washington Post*, in course pack

Moshe Halbertal, "The Goldstone Illusion: What the U.N. Report Gets

Wrong about Gaza-and War," *New Republic*, November 6, 2009, 482-491.

7pm I will be introducing the film, "The Gatekeepers," which we will view and then discuss after the movie, 147 Comm Arts Building. Documentary based on telling interviews with six former heads of Israel's secret agency, *Shin Bet*. Nominated for an Oscar, foreign film category, 2013.

September 26, TH: Dilemmas of Counter-Terrorism
Findings and Conclusions of Byman's book, pp. 295- 362

October 1, T: Operation Pillar of Defense and the Subsequent Cease Fire
Amichai Magen, "Hybrid War and the Gulliverization of Israel," *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 5:1, January 2011, pp. 396-409.
Emanuel Adler, "Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't" Performative Power and the Strategy of Conventional and Nuclear Defusing," *Security Studies* 19, 2010, pp. 410-439.
Will add additional articles and post them on ANGEL.

October 3, TH: **Simulation of Israeli policy toward Gaza**

October 7, M: 10-11:30am, Professor Daniel Byman will meet with our class. From 12:40-2:00 he will have a public lecture in Sparta Club, 3rd floor Case, on "**Israeli Counterterrorism: Successes, Failures, and Challenges Ahead.**" He is a Professor at Georgetown University, Security Studies; Senior Fellow and Research Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute; author of *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (2012), which of course we have read.

October 8, T:

October 10, TH: **Formal Paper Proposal Due at the Beginning of Class**
The Impact of the Arab Uprisings of the Last Two Years on Israel's Asymmetric Wars
Reading: in course pack
Moshe Maoz, "Quo Vadis Syria?" *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 5(2), May 2011, pp. 118-121.
Yoel Guzanksy, "Tacit Allies: Israel and the Arab Gulf States," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 5(2), January 2011, pp. 152-160.
Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, "Riyalpolitik," *The Jerusalem Report*, August 29, 2011, p. 26. (handing out)

October 15, T: Professor Moshe Maoz speaking to our class in the JMC library. Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Hebrew University, Visiting Fellow, Frankel Jewish Studies Center at UM, speaking on ***“The Arab Spring Upheavals, Syria and Israel,”*** James Madison College library, Case Hall, 12:40 pm-2:30 pm.

Debating U.S. Drone Policy

October 17, TH: Debates about the use of drones

Reading:

Micah Zenko, *Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies*, January 2013

Micah Zenko, “Why Drones Work,” *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2013

Audrey Cronin, “Why Drones Fail,” *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2013

October 22, T: Video Conference with Dr. Micah Zenko, Council on Foreign Relations

October 24, TH: **Simulation on Drone Policy**

Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen

October 29, T: Differing Advice as to Pursuing Counter-Terror or Counter-Insurgency and the Relative Priority of Afghanistan and Pakistan

Reading:

Obama’s Wars, pp. 1-143.

October 31, TH: debates as to overall goals and strategy, including how many additional troops should be sent to Afghanistan

Reading:

Obama’s Wars, pp. 144-221.

November 5, T: Discussions over defeating or disrupting the Taliban

Reading:

Obama’s Wars, pp. 222-324.

November 7, TH: Debating Strategy and Tactics in Afghanistan

Reading:

Obama's Wars, pp. 325-390

November 12, T: **First Draft of Paper** Simulation of Decision-Making on Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan

Paper Presentations

November 14, TH: Paper Presentations

November 19, T: Paper Presentations

7pm Israeli Film, "*The Other Son*," Directed by Lorraine Levy, (2012); Israeli and Palestinian boys accidentally switched at birth.... 147 Comm Arts Building

November 21, TH: Paper Presentations

November 26, T: Paper Presentations

November 28, TH: **No Class, Happy Thanksgiving!**

December 3, T: Paper Presentations

December 5, TH: Paper Presentations

December 10, T: **Final Revised Research Paper due in my Office 12:45-2:45.**

GUIDELINES FOR THE SENIOR SEMINAR PAPER

Paper Proposal (10%):

Write a 5-9 page (double spaced, not including the required bibliography) research proposal, in which you articulate a research question on a topic of your choice that is related to the dilemmas of asymmetric conflicts. Be sure to pick a topic and thesis that is sufficiently narrow to be able

to research and persuasively test within a single semester. You will explain the topic, articulate your main thesis or hypothesis, outline the methodology you will use to prove your hypothesis, and explain your project's theoretical and policy significance. If you are making a comparison across time, across issue areas, across several decisions, etc. articulate the rationale for choosing your particular cases and how the comparison will enable you to highlight the explanatory value of certain variables. Situate your hypothesis and research within the existing academic debates pertaining to your topic and pertaining to asymmetric conflicts. Include a preliminary bibliography of at least 15 sources (from mostly academic sources) that you have found, with brief explanations as to how this will aid your research. Hand in a well organized, well argued, and polished proposal.

First Draft of Senior Seminar Paper (20%):

Write at least a 20 page paper, double spaced, 12 point font with one inch margins. This page minimum is not inclusive of the bibliography, which should be attached and should include a minimum of 20 sources, all of which you have cited in your paper. At least half of these sources should come from academic books and journals. You will articulate your main thesis or hypothesis, outline the methodology you will use to prove your hypothesis, test your hypothesis with the evidence from your research, fully address a main counter-argument to your thesis, and explain your project's theoretical and policy significance. Situate your hypothesis and research within the existing debates pertaining to your topic. Use footnotes for your citations throughout the paper. The first time that you cite an article, give a full citation (first name author, last name author, title of book in italics, (place of publication: publisher, date of publication), p.#. In future citations of that same article just use the author followed by the page number. When in doubt as to whether you need a citation, always use one. Remember that unless you significantly paraphrase the entire sentence, put the sentence or sentence phrase in quotation marks. Of course, borrowed ideas, arguments and evidence, when paraphrased, still require a citation with an exact page number(s).

Final Draft of the Senior Seminar Paper (25%):

Write a 25-35 pg. (double spaced, 12 point font) paper that significantly revises your first draft based on my comments and those of your classmates. **“There will be significant penalties for any paper proposals, paper first drafts, or revised papers that are handed in late.”** This means that the grade for the paper gets reduced by .5 for tardiness within the first 24 hours (whether it is a half hour late or 12 hours late), 1.0 reduction for tardiness within 48 hours, etc.

I have listed below some resources beyond academic books on your topic that may be of help to you. This is not a comprehensive list, but a list that you can use to begin some of your searches. In all probability, you will have to rely on inter-library loan to get all the books that you will need.

Relevant Journals

International Security, Security Studies, Political Science Quarterly, Journal of Conflict

Resolution, World Politics, International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, Perspectives on Politics, American Political Science Review, Foreign Affairs, Journal of Palestine Studies, Israel Studies, Israel Studies Forum, Israel Studies Review, Israel Affairs, The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, pij. pij.org,

Newspapers and News Magazines

Haaretz – Daily free English translation online. Center-left newspaper,
The Jerusalem Post – Daily free English translation online. Center-right newspaper,
The Jerusalem Report - News Magazine in English
The New York Times

Israeli Academic Centers That Publish Research Reports

Hebrew University, Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace

Tel Aviv University, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

Tel Aviv University, Steimetsky Center for Peace

Bar Ilan University, BESA Center for Strategic Studies

Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA), Herziliyah Interdisciplinary Center,
MERIA Journal (*Middle East Review of International Affairs*) <http://meria.idc.ac.il>.

Israeli Think Tanks or Non-Government Organizations

The Re'ut Institute, www.reut-institute.org,
Israel Democracy Institute, info@idi.org.il
Israel Syria Peace Society, www.is-peace.org,
Peace Now
The Peres Center for Peace

American Think Tanks

Middle East Institute, www.mideasti.org.

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

The Brookings Institution, Saban Center for Middle East Policy

International Crisis Group

U.S. Institute of Peace

Palestinian Public Opinion Polling

Palestinian Center for Public Opinion kukali@p-ol.com