Civil-Military Relations
SE-704, AOS 13 (Leadership and Ethics)
Lindsay P. Cohn, PhD
Jessica D. Blankshain, PhD

Overview of Course:

The primary problem of Civil-Military Relations (CMR) is how a society, which creates experts in the use of force in order to protect its interests and its way of life, can keep those experts in force from turning their expertise against society in order to advance their own special interests and way of life. After all, a military that has been given the material, financial, and human resources to be effective in carrying out whatever defense and security tasks the government may desire is also strong enough to seize power so as to rule for itself, or at least to eat up more resources than the society would choose to spend. But if, on the other hand, the military is kept small, weak, and marginalized so it will not pose a threat to society, will it be capable of carrying out the national security policy?

Does this problem become more acute as civilian society loses its connection with the military? How distinctive must the culture and institutional setting of the military be from its host society—especially if that society is a liberal democratic one—to fulfill its special mission? Does the military’s focus on the management of violence require military culture to stand apart from or even contrary to the civilian society from which it springs? Or should the military, particularly in a democracy, adapt to the culture of civilian society, reflecting civilian values and norms of behavior? Should the military be made up of conscripted “citizen-soldiers,” or of volunteer professionals? What responsibilities do the government and the general public have with respect to those who serve in uniform? What does society “owe” the soldiers?

This course will examine these issues primarily in the context of the United States, but will be looking at theoretical concepts that could be applied to advanced democracies in general. However, the U.S. is in many ways an exceptional case for CMR, and thus we will take every opportunity to compare and contrast it with other states whose political systems and/or geopolitical position is very different.

Response Papers:

Students should plan on writing one short (2pg) response paper each week (one “pass” will be allowed, and no paper the first week, so each student should write at least 8 response papers). For these papers, students should pick one reading from that week (or two, if they seem to speak directly to each other), and answer the following six questions:

1. Who is/are the author(s)? What are their qualifications? Potential biases?
2. What is the central question the author(s) is/are trying to address or answer?
3. What is the central argument (or answer to the question)?
4. What is one plausible alternative argument (an alternative answer to the question)?
5. What evidence does the author give in support of his argument?
6. Do you find that evidence convincing? Why or why not?

These are the six questions you should be thinking about with every text that we ask you to read (unless it’s purely historical or informational), and these papers will help you get into that habit. Note that these papers are NOT either a pure summary of the article or the student’s emotional or opinionated response to the argument presented in the article. The point is for the student to understand the author’s argument and assess, as impartially as possible, whether the evidence the author employed was appropriate and sufficient. Papers will be evaluated on accuracy (about the text and its meaning), insightfulness, quality of written communication skills, persuasiveness, use of evidence, consideration of alternative viewpoints, and attention to detail.

Papers should:
· Include the student’s name.
· Be NO MORE THAN 3 pages. Two pages is appropriate. One is probably too short.
· Be edited and proof-read for grammar and spelling mistakes.
· Address all six questions.
· Convey information in an economical format.

Learning Objectives

* To master the basic texts and arguments in civil-military relations theory and practice.

* To appreciate the richness of the field of civil-military relations and to be sensitive to questions that remain unsettled, as well as to the complexity of democratic governance and foreign policy in general.

* To think about the duties involved in the notion of democracy and to confront issues of citizenship in a democratic society.

* To understand common research and argument techniques, so that students are able to evaluate statistical, logical, historical, and other arguments critically.

* To hone analytical skills and to refine one's ability to make a convincing argument.

* To improve written communication skills, especially precision and conciseness.

Readings
Most readings will be available through the Naval War College Library’s electronic databases or online. Those that are not will be provided to you through Blackboard.

**Required Text:**


**Class Schedule**

**Week 1**

**Introduction: Civil-Military Relations**


**Week 2**

**Logic, Argument, and Evidence**


**Theory: Liberal Theory and the American Founding Fathers**

Constitution Articles I section 8 and II section 2.

Federalist Papers, No.s 8, 26, 29, and 51.


Recommended:

Declaration of Independence

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty* Ch. 5.

**Week 3**

**Theory: Classical and Neo-Institutional Theory**

Huntington, Samuel. 1957, *Soldier and State*, read Ch 4 (pp. 80-97), Ch 6 (p 148-157 only), Ch 7 (p 177-192 only), Ch 17 (p 464-466); **skim** Ch 1-3 if not already familiar.

Janowitz, Morris. 1961, *The Professional Soldier*, read Ch.s 1, 5; **skim** Ch.s 2-3, 10-12, 17-19.

Avant, Deborah. 1994, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons From Peripheral Wars*, Ch. 6 (11 pg)

Feaver, Peter D. 2003, *Armed Servants*, read pp. 58-87; **skim** Ch.2, pp. 87-95, 128-145, and174-178.

Recommended:

Cohn, Lindsay P. 2011, “It Wasn’t in my Contract” *Armed Forces and Society* 37(3): 381-392.


Plato, *The Republic*, Book II 369a-383c; Book III 412b-Book IV 434b (pp. 45-61; 91-113 in the Bloom translation).
Week 4

The U.S. System in Context: Structure and History


Recommended:

**General/Multiple Regions**


**Africa**

Middle East


Asia


Latin America


Week 5

The U.S. System in Context: Manpower


**Recommended**


Week 6

The Gap: The 90s Crisis and the Culture Gap


Skim/familiarize from Soldiers and Civilians:

Holsti, Ole. “Of Chasms and Convergences: Attitudes and Beliefs of Civilians and Military Elites at the Start of a New Millennium”, pp. 15-99.


Recommended

“Exchange on Civil-Military Relations”: William Odom (pp. 25-26), Samuel Huntington (pp. 28-29) and Richard Kohn (pp. 29-31), National Interest (Summer 1994)


Feaver, Peter D. 2003. Armed Servants, pp. 180-193
Week 7

The Gap: The Familiarity Gap


Recommended


Week 8

Policy-making: Partisanship and Politics


Recommended:


Week 9

Policy-making: Advice and Dissent, Resource Demands


Recommended:


Week 10

Back to the Big Picture: Liberty, Democracy, Prosperity, and Security


Additional Literature for the Interested Reader


