Strategic Studies

Prof. Vittorio Emanuele Parsi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

This course aims to explore the main issues developed by politological literature concerning war, and in a more general sense, the use of force for political reasons. The first part of the course focuses on defining key concepts of Strategic Studies. The course then explores the relations between the organization of political synthesis, economic system, military structure and forms of war, from ancient times to the present day. The course will then present contributions to strategic theory by main classic and contemporary authors.

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

– know the main theoretical contributions of Strategic studies

– understand the relationship between the evolution of political organization and the forms of war

– evaluate strategic choices of state actors

– define the role of non-state actors within asymmetric wars

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

– recognize and orientate themselves through fundamental questions around which the discipline is structured

– assess the appropriateness of strategic choices made by individual actors in different contexts

– use historical knowledge for profitable interaction with strategic thinking

– link theory to practice, past and present, expectations and reality

– develop critical thinking to understand different theoretical approaches

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. tactics, Strategy and grand strategy;
2. security and national interest;
3. organization of political synthesis, military structure and war form;
4. From the *polis* to the empire, from the phalanx to the legion;
5. The feudal system: the role of cavalry and castles;
6. Development of fortifications and mercenary activities;
7. Formation of the absolute State and the permanent and national armies;
8. 20th century mass destruction wars;
9. new wars and asymmetric wars;
10. The Revolution in Military Affairs;
11. Terrorism;
12. Humanitarian conflicts and peace operations;
13. Contributions of classic and contemporary authors to strategic thinking.

***READING LIST***

The reference texts for the 2022-2023 academic year valid **for all students** are:

G. Giacomello-G. Badaletti, *Manuale di Studi Strategici. Da Sun Tzu alle 'nuove guerre',* Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2016.

V.E. Parsi, *Il posto della guerra. E il costo della libertà, Bompiani, Milano, 2022.*

C. Stefanachi, *’Guerra indolore’. Dottrine,* *illusioni e retoriche della guerra limitata*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2011.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is taught through lessons in *dual mode,* delivered in class and also accessible remotely. The course may be organised into modules, also through topic-based seminars and experts’ talks. The contents of the seminars which take place during the year will be part of the exam programme.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

All exams will be written (in person or remotely, depending on the evolution of the health situation) and will cover the entire programme. The test will consist of close ended questions and broader open-ended questions. Further details on the test format will be made available during the year.

Only attending students will be allowed to take an interim test assessing their knowledge of the first two volumes *(Manuale di Studi Strategici* + *Il posto della guerra*). This test will take place during the winter session (January- February) and will count for 2/3 of the final mark. In the second semester, attending students, previously divided into groups, will complete a Power Point presentation of a paper of about 40,000 characters on a volume previously agreed with the lecturer (which replaces “*Guerra indolore”*). Students will be assessed on both the quality of the paper and the form and effectiveness of the presentation (to take place in class or remotely, depending on the health situation). The list of books to be used for group work will be communicated during the first semester. This assessment method weighs 1/3 of the final mark.

To take the interim test, students must be enrolled in the presentation programme. Students are required to be present at the presentations of the various groups as part of this assessment method.

Non-attending students (or those who have attended classes but have not participated in the presentation programme) must take a single exam on the three volumes indicated in the reading list. The exam is written and will include close and open-ended questions.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

A general knowledge of history certainly facilitates understanding of the covered topics.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at [http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG](http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG%2522%2520%255Ct%2520%2522_blank), or on the Faculty notice board.