



Professor David M. Crane

*Syllabus
Spring 2008*

**The Syllabus for
The Laws of Armed Conflict
A Seminar**

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Course Overview: The paradigm shift of the so-called war on terror has challenged and focused world-wide attention on the laws that govern conflict. A compilation of centuries of customary rules, the laws of armed conflict are embodied in treaty, custom, policy and regulation. Simply, it is how nations conduct themselves under established international norms during time of heightened tension and conflict. Today, our nation has reacted to the international challenge of terror in ways that have undermined our moral authority to conduct military operations, potentially jeopardizing our fight ideologically against this scourge.

This seminar is an overview of the laws that govern armed conflict. The student will study, discuss, and write about the basic fundamentals of this important and misunderstood part of international humanitarian law. For the student who will eventually practice national security law, international criminal law, or develop policy in this area, a solid grounding in the laws of armed conflict is absolutely essential for effective operational practice.

Course timeline: This is a 2 credit hour seminar which meets once a week on Wednesday, 6-7:40 PM. Below is the weekly schedule of readings, assignments, and practical exercises:

Part I--The Historical and Legal Basis

16 January: Introduction and a History of Atrocity.

23 January: The Legal Basis for the Use of Force.

Part II—The Rules of War

30 January: The Principles.

6 February: Targets—Part 1: Persons and places.

13 February: Targets—Part 2: Property and Protective Emblems.

20 February: The Legal Use of Weapons.

27 February: Tactics.

7 March: Practical Exercise #1.

Spring Break—Enjoy!! 9-16 March

19 March: No class.

26 March: War Crimes.

2 April: Other issues—Part 1.

9 April: Other issues—Part 2.

16 April: Practical Exercise #2.

Part III--The Future of Governing Conflict.

23 April: The paradigm shift and the “war on terror”.

30 April: Course summary and wrap up.

Text: A reader called The Law of Armed Conflict with a documentary supplement compiled by Professor Crane. This reader is available through

the SU bookstore (on sale at the Dome the week of Jan. 14) Be prepared to discuss assigned readings that first day!

Grading: Class participation: 35 %; paper 65%.

Key Dates:

30 Jan: Paper proposal due.

27 Feb: Paper outline due.

5-27 Mar: Paper outline review with Professor Crane. Sign up sheet to be distributed.

2 May: Paper due.

Administrative Notes: Please turn off your cell phones and other personal electronic devices. Limit your use of lap top computers to note taking, unless otherwise directed. No tape recording.

Attendance is expected. Your views and perspectives are important to all of us. Class participation and attendance will be a factor in your overall grade. There will certainly be exceptions as to your attendance. Come see me if you anticipate not being present or you have/had an emergency. My cell phone # is 571-331-5361. Email: dmcrane@law.syr.edu . There may be make up classes, look for times and locations.

Any student with a disability that may require special accommodations on the final examination or in the classroom should contact Assistant Dean Tomas Gonzales, Suite 444, as soon as possible.

