EC224 War and Economy in the Twentieth Century: 2013/14

Aims
To familiarize students that have already acquired Honours-level competence in economic analysis with the economic background and experience of two World Wars and the Cold War, particularly in Europe and North America, and with some applications of economics that have been specific to defence and warfare in the twentieth century.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the module, you should be able to:
- Demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of the economic background and experience of two World Wars and the Cold War, particularly in Europe, North America, and the Near East.
- Demonstrate familiarity with some applications of economics that have been specific to defence and warfare in the twentieth century.
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding to others using seminar presentations and an essay.
- Apply critical analysis to the topics of the module, formulate concepts and hypotheses, and show how they are tested in relevant literature.
- Review the relevant literature and evidence and write a report based on this review.
- Lectures, seminars, and independent study will enable you to achieve these learning outcomes. A 2,000-word term paper and a 1½ hour unseen examination will measure your achievement of these outcomes.

Teaching Arrangements

Lecture Programme
The module is taught in term 2. Lectures are normally **Thursdays, 11AM to 12 noon in B2.04/5, and 2 to 3PM in R0.03/4.**

- **Introduction** (2 lectures): Some historical trends and some applications of economics to military organization and conflict.
- **World War I** (5 lectures): Economic background and origins of the conflict; economic policies used to wage the war; costs and results of the war.
- **World War II** (6 lectures): Economic background and origins of the conflict; economic policies used to wage war; costs and results of the war. The political economy of food security and military occupation. Alliances and burden sharing.
- **The Cold War** (4 lectures): Economic background and origins of the conflict (included those inherited from the era of the World Wars);
economic policies used to support the Cold War; costs and results of the Cold War. More on alliances and burden sharing. The economics of defence procurement and military industrial lobbies. Military Keynesianism.

Seminars
The Modern Records Centre has scanned some documents from twentieth century British history that are relevant to the module. These are available at http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/mrc. The MRC documentation will provide the basis of seminars in weeks 5, 7, and 9 of the term, held in the centrally timetabled slot on Thursdays at 2PM. The sequence of topics will be:

- **Week 5. Food rationing and price control.**
- **Week 7. War savings: compulsion or voluntarism.**
- **Week 9. The arms trade.**

Questions
In the seminars, we will try to find answers to the following questions:

- Who wrote these documents and why did they write them?
- What beliefs did they hold about economic and political causation?
- What evidence did they use to support their causal beliefs?
- How do these beliefs differ from yours?

Why should we consider beliefs? You can look up my explanation and some notes on this subject at http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/beliefs.

Each seminar will take the form of a student-led presentation, based on one of the case studies. As explained below, each seminar will be preceded by online discussion. All students will take part.

Presentation teams
In a large class only a few will have the chance to present. At the first lecture, I will invite bids from presentation teams. There are no rules about how to form a team. I expect teams to form on the basis of private acquaintance and public appeal. One team member should bid for the team’s preferred slot by email to me. I will allocate slots on the basis of first come, first served. Those that are not selected will also have important roles to play in preparation and discussion.

The minimum size of presentation team is two. There is no upper limit, but the team should not be so large that any member may free-ride. My intuition is that the optimal team size is three.

Joining a presentation team and submitting a bid that I accept is a binding commitment to fill the slot. Once your bid is accepted, you may drop out only on medical or equivalent grounds.

Preparation and on-line discussion: All students
We will prepare for each seminar in stages.

- **Week X minus 2: Online seminar.** Go to the web page devoted to the seminar topic, including one or two items of supplementary reading for
additional context. Everyone should read the case-study documents and consult the background reading. Note, however, that the purpose of the seminar is to discuss the documents, not the background!

During the week, all students not on the presentation team should post at least one original comment of at least 100 words (a summary, review, or a criticism of some issue or evidence provided in the documentation), or a considered response to another student’s comment. You can post a question, but it should be a reasoned question, not just an invitation for others to do the work for you. Individual and group submissions are equally acceptable. If you upload a comment on behalf of a group, make clear who is included. I will monitor participation, and I will be in touch with any that do not take part.

- **Week X minus 1: Presentation teamwork.** The presentation team will create a presentation. Base the presentation on your own reading and the online discussion; in your presentation you should aim to identify the main issues raised in the online discussion and respond to them.
  
  Ideally, produce a 20-25 minute presentation, leaving 20-25 minutes for discussion. Remember the focus should be on the documents, not the background reading (which is for background only). Don’t overestimate how much you can cover in that time. Divide the labour among you as you please. A successful presentation will generate arguments among the listeners. Big ideas and relevant evidence are both important, but remember that your purpose should be to promote discussion, not to be comprehensive (or to crush alternative views). Keep some of what you know in reserve, to be brought out if needed. You’ll find it hard to underestimate how much you can present in the time available.

- **Week X: The seminar.** I expect everyone to attend. Again, I will be in touch with you if you fail to show up.

- **Week X plus 1: Post mortem.** I will upload the presentation with my own comments. Online discussion may continue indefinitely, of course.

### Assessment

#### The summer exam

The module is assessed by a 2,000-word essay and a 90-minute summer exam. The exam carries 80% weight and the essay carries 20%. Choose your essay from the topics below; note that your choice of topic will not restrict your choice of questions on the exam paper.

#### Assessed essays

Here are three topics. Choose one.

- War is a political act. How can economics help to understand war? From the history of twentieth century warfare, provide two examples where the economist’s way of thinking has been used to explain causes and/or outcomes. In each case, show how economic thinking has been applied. Was it applied well?
What is meant by economic mobilization in wartime? Why and how did a predominantly peasant agriculture hinder war mobilization? Give two historical examples from the twentieth century. How effective were the government policies adopted to overcome this obstacle?

Briefly explain how national defence markets may fall short of textbook definitions of a perfect market. Describe at least two alternative solutions that have been applied in defence markets in the twentieth century and evaluate their effectiveness.

Submit your essay to http://warwick.ac.uk/economics/ug/esubmission/ where you will find full instructions. The deadline is:

Thursday 24 April 2014 at 11:55PM

You will find detailed essay guidance, including my “Top Ten Do’s and Don’ts,” at http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/essays/. You should also consult the full guidance in the Department of Economics assessment handbook, available at http://warwick.ac.uk/economics/ug/current/, especially with regard to length, quoting and citing, and style of referencing.

Resources

On-line resources
You will find many resources at http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/ including FAQs, notes, maps, timelines, the MRC case studies, and links to a number of references from the reading list.

Module forum
We will use the EC224 forum at http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/forum/ to talk to each other outside the timetabled meetings. I advise you to join the forum and set your preferences to allow email notification of all new messages. That way, you will not need to check the forum to see whether new messages have been posted, and you will not miss them if you fail to check.

Reading
Nearly everything that you require to study this module is available on line in one of three places:

- As a Warwick Library catalogued electronic resource.
- Under the module web page under "Resources" or "Scans."
- On my personal web page http://warwick.ac.uk/markharrison/, which holds most things I have ever written; click on “Publications” if the item you want is published in a book or journal, or “Current Research” if it is still a working paper.
Core Reading

Reading as you go
It is a requirement of success in this module that you begin to read early and that you read along with the lectures and seminars. Some students have requested weekly reading; if you like the idea of a minimal reading schedule, here is one. All items are available on line via the module web pages or my personal pages.

Before meeting in week: Read:


4 The MRC documents available under http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/seminars/food/


6 The MRC documents available under http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/seminars/saving/


8 The MRC documents available under http://warwick.ac.uk/ec224/details/seminars/armstrade/


Background

The twentieth century in context


How armies fight


Why nations fight


The uses of economics

Germany

Aggression and Conquest
Collingham, Lizzie. 2010. The Taste of War: World War Two and the Battle for Food, especially chapters 2 (Germany’s Quest for Empire) and 3 (Japan’s Quest for Empire). London: Allen Lane.


**War Mobilization**


**Economic Warfare and Food**


**Alliances and Burden Sharing**


**Costs of War**


Defence Procurement, or Costs of Peace


Military Keynesianism


