

EC224 War and Economy in the Twentieth Century: 2018/19

Aims and outcomes

Academic 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 two-hour unseen examination will measure your achievement.

Teaching arrangements

Lecture programme

- **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. Military Keynesianism. More on alliances and burden sharing.
The economics of defence procurement and of military industrial lobbies.

Seminars

Your attendance and participation at seminars is a public good: it will help you and it will also help your fellow students. Therefore, I expect you to make every effort to attend. While the Department will not monitor your seminar attendance, I will. I understand everybody gets sick or suffers other difficulties from time to time. If that happens, all I expect is that you will let me know; don't make me chase you.

- Week 3. What happened in the twentieth century

This is a knowledge-based module. Do you have a grasp of the basic events of international conflict in the twentieth century? Before the seminar, pick any country in the world, which can be (but does not have to be) your own, unless you reside permanently in the UK; in that case pick some other country. Find out what part that country played in the two world wars and the Cold War. Come prepared to give an outline in two minutes or less.

- Week 5. Rational wars?

It is sometimes argued that war is irrational, or that particular wars were irrational. When people say that, what do they mean? By "rationality," do they mean what an economist means? Rationality can be defined in various ways. Look up some definitions of rationality, and work out which ones you would classify and more or less useful. For a view that you might sympathise with, or react against, read "Why War Is Never Really Rational" at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-atran/libya-war-obama_b_842298.html, by the political scientist Scott Atran, first published in The Huffington Post in 2011.

- Week 7. Writing an essay in this module.

What do the essay topics (listed below) mean? How should you write about them? How will I mark your work? Before the seminar, read about Steven Pinker's idea of the "curse of knowledge" as a source of bad academic writing here <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/the-curse-of-knowledge-pinker-describes-a-key-cause-of-bad-writing>

Advice

General questions: please post these to the forum

<https://warwick.howcloud.com/course/ec224-war--economy-in-the-twentieth-century>. Personal questions: email me or come to my office hour, normally Mondays 11:30 to 12:30 in Room S2.108 – my updated schedule is here <https://warwick.ac.uk/markharrison/officehours/>.

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, with hints to go with each one. Choose *one*.

- What strategic considerations motivated economic warfare in either the First or the Second World War? Why did the results often appear to disappoint? What was the contribution of economic warfare to the outcome of the war?

Hints. "Economic warfare" has a clear meaning: warfare against the adversary's economy. It does *not* mean the use of resources in warfare. "Strategic considerations": strategic, not tactical.

- Does the record of the 1930s and 1940s support a Keynesian view of the relationship between military spending and employment? Did World War II get the rich market economies out of the Great Depression?

Hints. Keynes has had many interpreters, so be clear what *you* mean by "Keynesian." "Rich market economies": you decide which to write about; choose more than one.

- Explain the problem of free riding in alliances. Does this analysis sufficiently explain the empirical behaviour of economically smaller countries in NATO in the Cold War? What limitations or extensions of the theory does the longer-term record of the twentieth century suggest?

Hints. The way you explain the problem should introduce the ideas that set up the discussion of the Cold War (and the longer term). So think about where you want the essay to go *before* you write the set-up.

Your deadline:

Monday 8 April 2019 at 11:55PM

Detailed essay guidance, including my "Top Ten Do's and Don'ts," is at <https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=524902>.