HH-385: History of the United States Marine Corps
United States Naval Academy
Spring 2019

Instructor Information
Dr. Mark Folse
Sampson Hall 318
Extra Instruction: by Appointment
Email: folse@usna.edu
Phone: 410-293-6254

Class Time/Location
Tues. & Thurs.
1330-1445
Sampson Hall 111

Course Description and Purpose

This course is a history of the United States Marine Corps from its founding in 1775 until roughly the present. Its purpose is to familiarize students with a basic narrative concerning the growth and development of the Marine Corps over time. Like the Army and Navy, the growth of the Marine Corps has coincided with the growth of American economic, military, and naval power. The Marine Corps is a military and naval institution and we will discuss how that peculiar amalgam of traditions and jurisdictions has affected Marine mission, identity, culture, and history.

The Marine Corps is warfighting institution. Therefore, attention will be devoted to its history of combat operations across the breadth of the United States’ military and naval history. It’s development from ships guard’s and naval landing parties to the modern-day Fleet Marine Force is a complicated and complex evolutionary process. Much of that evolution was informed by the conflicts that the Marines fought at home and abroad. How the Corps contributed to American military and naval thought throughout this process will also be discussed.

The Marine Corps is also an American institution comprised of men and women from all walks of life. That was not always the case. How the Marine Corps came to more accurately reflect the make up of the general population along social, racial, and gender lines will be an important question that we discuss throughout the semester.

The Marine Corps’ own institutional culture will be a frequent point of discussion. The Corps’ world view, ethos, image construction, myths, legends (often a mix of truth and fictions), and
purpose will be explored. The Marine Corps, like the Navy, Army, and Airforce is a military means to a political end subject to the perceived needs of Congress and the American people. It is not an end in and of itself. Therefore, we will discuss how the Corps has been dependent upon the goodwill of the society that it serves. How Marine culture both helped and hurt the Corps’ public image will be explored.

This class has practical value for students beyond learning for learning’s sake. While in this class you will all be exercising mental and intellectual effort under criticism, the purpose of which is to get your minds used to thinking critically and historically. Regarding critical thinking, I want students better able to ask and answer questions of the past. Through historical study students will become better prepared for how messy, chaotic, and complex life will be both here and, in your future, as naval officers.

You all will be expected to communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly and persuasively. Making sound and persuasive arguments that are backed by thorough research and credible evidence is a skill that is valued in nearly every profession both military and civilian. That skill will be exercised in this class via essay and short-answer based exams as well as a research paper. See Appendix A for USNA’s statement on academic rigor.

**Course Framework**

HH 385 will introduce you to five cardinal themes that frame U.S. Marine history: global & national context, naval/military policy, strategy, technology, and institutional culture.

With “asking questions of the past” in mind, the five themes will help us to apply historical knowledge, understanding, and skills in ways that address several important questions:

a. Why does the United States have a Marine Corps? What purposes does it serve? What benefits does the nation derive from it and what costs does it incur?

b. How does the Marine Corps change over time? Why does it change? How do political, strategic, economic, social/cultural, and technological trends shape the Marine Corps?

c. How do Marines help accomplish national goals? How does it interact with other instruments of national power (diplomatic, information/ideas, military, economic) to achieve these goals?

d. How do individuals shape—and how are they shaped by—their Marine experiences? How can we understand the uncertain, complex, and messy worlds they faced? How does our situation as naval professionals today reflect the experiences and choices (agency) of our predecessors?

e. How does the history of the Marine Corps explain the current world power status of the United States?

Taken together, these key questions will guide our historical studies throughout the semester.

**Core Objectives**

At the end of HH 385, you should be able to demonstrate:
a. Historical competence. Identify factors that shape change over time; to explain historical narratives; and to analyze historical evidence as well as apply it to historical questions.

b. Communications competence. Express ideas in writing clearly, precisely, and in an organized fashion.

c. The ability to accurately describe, explain, and apply to historical examples basic concepts inherent to the profession of arms, such as policy, strategy, tactics, technology, logistics, doctrine, and civil-military relations.

d. Analyze and explain the Marine Corps’ impact on American strategy, foreign relations, and society. Analyze and explain the inverse of the previous sentence as well.

Required Texts


Grading

A=100-90%; B=89-80%; C=79-70%; D=69-60; F=59 and Below

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Assignments

All assignments must be completed in good faith to pass this course. Late Assignments will be penalized 10 points each day it is late.

Discussions

We will be discussing the readings and lecture material every week in class, typically on Thursdays. You will need to participate and engage with me and other students in the class about the course material for several reasons. First, discussions can be the most valuable and effective way to learn about historical actors and events. Second, discussions encourage polite and professional discourse that require participants to think critically and communicate their position verbally. Third, how well you participate in these discussions comprises 20 percent of your total grade.

Book Responses

You will have five 2-3 page (times new roman, 12 point font, double spaced) book responses this semester, one for each book (not including the text book). These responses will be a part of our discussions on the books. Students will submit them to blackboard the night before our class meets so I can read over them before-hand. Each response is expected to persuade me that you have done the reading by addressing the following questions:

- Who is the author? (this will require some quick research on your part)
- What is the central theme/argument of the book?
- If it is an academic title (i.e. Shulimson’s Search for a Mission, or O’Connell’s Underdogs), what kind of evidence do they use to support their argument and how persuaded are you by their claims?
- If it is a novel or combat memoir (i.e. Boyd’s Through the Wheat, Sledge’s With the Old Breed, and Krulak’s First to Fight), how do the authors flesh out the central theme or themes of their book?
- What does the book do well?
- What are your criticisms of the book? What could the author have done better and why?
- Finally, what does this book tell us about the Marine Corps? What is its value to you as a student and to the Marine Corps today?

Each book response is 5 percent of your grade for a total of 20 percent. I’ll drop your lowest attempt. Be warned, that is not an invitation to skip a book entirely. Only good-faith effort responses will qualify to be dropped.

Exams

There will be two exams. They will not be comprehensive, meaning they will only cover material since the previous exam. For example, the final exam will only cover material given after the midterm. The exams will consist of two parts: identification (ID’s), and essay. The ID’s will be drawn from lecture and the text books and will include important people, events, and ideas. Students need to correctly identify in two or three sentences who or what these ID’s are and why they are important. The essay will address a historical question and it will be the
student’s task to write an essay in response that demonstrates mastery of the material germane to the question. The better students can make an argument backed up by important evidence/key terms from the text book and lecture, the better grade they will receive. Exams will be closed book with no notes. No headphones, no cellphones, no laptops or any other electronic devices allowed during the exam. Each exam is 20 percent of your grade.

Research Paper

Students will write an 8-10 paper on a topic of their choosing that explores an important aspect of U.S. Marine history. Each student must make an appointment to meet with me to discuss and get approval on their proposed topic by 7 February. Students will then turn in an annotated bibliography on 7 March, their thesis statements and outlines on 28 March, and their complete draft on 18 April. I will distribute handouts that provide greater detail on each step of this process as the semester goes on via Blackboard and in class.

Note on E-mails

Emails are a useful, convenient, and effective method of communication. What many people do not realize, however, is that there is such a thing as proper e-mail etiquette. My advice to students who are contacting me via email is to be polite and courteous. Beginning an e-mail with “Dr. Fosse,” is the best way to get my attention. I will not respond to “yo’s, what’s up’s, prof’s, hey’s, hola’s, what the hell’s,” addressing me solely by my last name or anything else of that nature. I do not know any of you personally. Therefore, keep your correspondence with me or anyone else that you have a professional relationship with polite and professional. Also, in your emails I need your full name so that I know who exactly is writing to me. I will not respond to emails without this information.

Laptop Computers/ Portable Electronic Devices

Laptops are allowed in class for note taking purposes only. Please place cell phones on silent before lecture starts. Texting, talking, playing games, trading stocks, or accessing the internet from one’s cell phone while in class is prohibited. Taking notes on one’s cell phone is also prohibited.

Student Conduct

Students are not to engage in any activity that is distracting to other students while in class. I expect all students to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to an effective learning environment. Students doing anything that can be considered an overt or intentional disruption of my class will be asked to leave. This behavior includes but is not limited to, sleeping, excessive talking to other students during class, reading the newspaper, doing homework for another class, using a cell phone (which is prohibited), using a laptop to check scores and stalk people on facespace, and being disrespectful to me or other students in the class room. A good rule of thumb is to not do or say anything to anyone else in class that one would not say or do to one’s own mother (or the equivalent to one’s mother).
- **Ground Rules**

  - Arrive at the class venue early and ready to start at the appointed hour. Unless you have an authorized absence (documented SIQ, pre-approved movement order, etc.), I expect you to attend each class meeting. It is your responsibility why you missed a class session—students absent from class without official authorization will receive a “zero” participation grade for the day.
  - Do not sleep in class. If you feel tired during a class session, you should quietly stand at the back of the room.
  - Manage your learning space: During class sessions you should work with textbooks, notebooks, writing tools, and other materials pertaining to the course. Conversely, you should clear from the desktop all covers, electronic devices, materials for other courses, etc. Beverage containers are OK.
  - You may consume beverages in class, but no eating, chewing gum or using tobacco products.
  - We do not belittle others for asking questions or expressing opinions.
  - We encourage debates and critical analyses, but we do not tolerate personal attacks.
  - We do not tolerate remarks that are crude, profane, sexually suggestive or explicit, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, misogynistic, or otherwise offensive.
  - Should you need to visit the restroom, please do so quietly and quickly—no need to ask permission. Absences greater than 5 minutes may incur a grade penalty.
  - Clean your desk area and remove trash before departing the classroom.
  - I will try to learn your first names; you can call me “Doctor” or “Professor.” This is how you will interact with seniors in the Fleet.

**Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism**

These are serious offenses. Issues of academic dishonesty, including cheating, inappropriate collaboration, and plagiarism will result in failure for the related assignment or exam, which may result in failure for the class. Since these issues are also honor violations, they will trigger action per USNAINST 1610.3J. For detailed information on plagiarism, its definition, and its consequences, please visit: [http://libguides.usna.edu/plagiarism](http://libguides.usna.edu/plagiarism). See Appendix B for more details on plagiarism.

**Tentative Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Week One: 10 Jan
Introduction to the Course,
Readings:
*First to Fight*: Preface and Introduction only;
A. Scott Piraino’s "Never Faithful: The Rivalry Between our Army and Marines"

**Week Two: 15 & 17 Jan**

American Revolution, War of 1812
Readings:
Millett, Introduction and Ch. 1-2
Jack Shulimson’s *Search for a Mission*

**Week Three: 22 & 24 Jan**

Marines in the Mexican-American War and the Civil War
Readings:
Millett Ch. 3-4
Jack Shulimson’s *Search for a Mission*

**Week Four: 29 & 31 Jan**

Marines of the New Navy and War of 1898
Readings:
Millett Ch. 4-5
Brain McAllister Linn’s “We Will go Heavily Armed”: The Marines’ Small War on Samar,” (blackboard)

**BOOK RESPONSE I: Due 31 January on Jack Shulimson’s *Search for a Mission***

**Week Five: 5 & 7 Feb**

Marine Identity leading up to The Great War
Readings:
Millett Ch. 6 & 10
Thomas Boyd’s *Through the Wheat*

**Research Paper Topics need to be approved 7 February.***

**Week Six: 12 & 14 Feb (Academic Reserve)**

Great War and It’s impact on the Corps
Readings:
**BOOK RESPONSE II: Due 14 February on Boyd’s, *Through the Wheat*

**Week Seven: 19 & 21 Feb**

Hispaniola, Nicaragua, and China  
Readings:  
Millett Ch. 7-9  
Excerpts from *Small Wars Manual*  
(provided by me via black board)  
Bruce J. Calder’s “Cuadillos and Gavilleros versus the United States Marines.”  
(blackboard)  
Eugene Sledge’s *With the Old Breed*

**Week Eight: 26 & 28 Fe**

Interwar Period: Amphibious Development  
Readings:  
Millett Ch. 12  
Smedley Butler’s *War is a Racket* (blackboard)  
Eugene Sledge’s *With the Old Breed*

**MIDTERM EXAM: 28 February**

**Week Nine: 5 & 7 Mar**

WWII: Pearl Harbor to 1943  
Readings:  
Millett Ch. 13

**BOOK RESPONSE III: Due 7 March on Eugene Sledge’s *With the Old Breed*;  
**Annotated Bibliography Due 7 March

**Spring Break**

**Week Ten: 19 & 21 Mar**

WWII: 1944-1945  
Readings:  
Millett Ch. 14  
Victor Krulak’s *First to Fight*

**Week Eleven: 26 & 28 Mar**

Defense Unification
Readings:
Millett Ch. 15

**BOOK RESPONSE IV: Due 28 March on Krulak’s *First to Fight*
**Working Thesis and Outline Due 28 March.

**Week Twelve: 2 & 4 Apr (Academic Reserve)**

Cold War Marine Corps; Korea
Readings:
Millett Ch. 16
Aaron O’Connell’s *Underdogs*

**Week Thirteen: 9 & 11 Apr**

Cold War Marine Corps; Vietnam
Readings:
Millett Ch. 17-18

**BOOK RESPONSE V: Due 11 April on Aaron O’Connell’s *Underdogs***

**Week Fourteen: 16 & 18 Apr**

Post-Vietnam, Gulf War, Global War on Terrorism
Readings:
Millett Ch. 19-20
Excerpts from Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP-1) *Warfighting* (blackboard)

**RESEARCH PAPER: Due 18 April**

**Week Fifteen: 23 & 25 Apr**

Iraq, Afghanistan, and ISIL; COIN
Readings:
TBA
Excerpts from *The U.S. Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*
(blackboard)
Excerpts from *Small Unit Actions* (blackboard)

**Week Sixteen: 30 Apr (Last Day of Class)**

**Final Exam TBA**

Appendix A:
USNA HISTORY DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC RIGOR
(adopted 29 November 2017)

We learn the human past to act with greater wisdom, prudence, and success in the present and future, an aim that is essential for military officers and civilian leaders alike. Studying history hones analytical and communication skills essential to succeed in most careers and professions. The USNA History Department offers courses with the rigor necessary to achieve these outcomes. Reaching this level of mastery involves joint responsibility.

It is the responsibility of students to master the knowledge and the skills. History helps us to understand how the world has changed over time to become the world we live in today. The world cannot be accurately understood without sound knowledge of history. History conveys the diversity of the human experience across space and time. Best practice in history education demands that students learn core competencies in historical methods (i.e. sifting, organizing, questioning, interpreting, and synthesizing complex written material and other sources of evidence) and historical writing (i.e. developing and answering open-ended questions about the past that are supported by relevant evidence and appropriately cited). In practice, students in our history courses will be asked to read 100 or more pages per week and write between 15 and 20 pages per semester. Some students view these standards as demanding; we view them as the minimum necessary to ensure that students master the history and historical skills required to be successful military and civilian leaders.

For their part, history faculty as professional educators commit to being current in our fields, for bringing the best historical knowledge and the best pedagogical practices to our courses. This means an inclination to regularly experiment, an openness to feedback, and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. In short, we promise to bring our best to the classroom, and we expect our students to do the same. As faculty, we encourage and support one another to this end.

Appendix B:

USNA STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM
STANDARD
Plagiarism is the use of the words, information, insights, or ideas of another without crediting that person through proper citation. Unintentional plagiarism, or sloppy scholarship, is academically unacceptable; intentional plagiarism is dishonorable. You can avoid plagiarism by fully and openly crediting all sources used.

GUIDELINES
1. Give credit where credit is due. Inevitably, you will use other people's discoveries and concepts. Build on them creatively. But do not compromise your honor by failing to acknowledge clearly where your work ends and that of someone else begins.

2. Provide proper citation for everything taken from others. Such material includes: interpretations; ideas; wording; insights; factual discoveries; interviews and other personal communications; outlines, argument structures or organizing strategies; charts; tables; and appendices. Citations must guide the reader clearly and explicitly to the sources used, whether published, unpublished, or electronic. Cite a source each time you borrow from it. A single citation, concluding or followed by extended borrowing, is inadequate and misleading. Indicate all use of another's words, even if they constitute only part of a sentence, with quotation marks and specific citation. Citations may be footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references.

3. Recognize the work of others even if you are not borrowing their words. Theories, interpretations, assessments, and judgments are all intellectual contributions made by others and must be attributed to them.

4. Paraphrase properly. Paraphrasing is a vehicle for conveying or explaining a source's ideas and requires a citation to the original source. A paraphrase captures the source's meaning and tone in your own words and sentence structure. In a paraphrase, the words are yours, but the ideas are not. A paraphrase should not be used to create the impression of originality.

5. Cite sources in all work submitted for credit. Your instructor may also require you to identify the contributions of others in drafts you submit only for review. Ask your instructor for his or her citation requirements and any discipline-specific attribution practices.

6. Be cautious when using web-based sources, including Internet sites and electronic journals. There is a common misperception that information found on the Internet does not need to be cited. Web-based information, even if anonymous, must be appropriately cited. Do not cut and paste or otherwise take material from websites without proper citation.

7. Provide a citation when in doubt. Always err on the side of caution.