

Political Science 2145B: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine (Summer 2026)

On 24 February 2022 Russia escalated and launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. This course gets behind the headlines and explores the what, why, and how of this brutal, unprovoked war in modern Europe. Themes include hybrid warfare, disinformation, geopolitics, international law, humanitarian impact, and more.

Prerequisites: (None)

Antirequisites and Exclusions: Political Science 2192A/B if taken in 2022-23.

Instructor / Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Mark Yaniszewski

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Contact

Since this is a Distance Education course, there are no formal office hours. Instead, e-mail will be the primary method of contact save for more complex consultations when video conferencing over Zoom is an option. In any event, e-mails will be answered within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over the weekend — although in practice most e-mails will be answered much, *much* faster than this.

- Please use your UWO e-mail account when communicating with the instructor as the University's anti-spam software may treat e-mails from other accounts as spam.
- Students should check their UWO e-mail regularly for messages, updates, and other important information from the instructor.

Distribution of Marks

Students will be graded on the basis of the following components:

- First Midterm Examination = 20%
- Second Midterm Examination = 20%
- Final Exam = 60%

Midterms and Exams

Midterms and exams for this course may, at the discretion of the instructor, be held remotely using the University's **Proctortrack** software. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded.

Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Lecture Format

Lectures will be delivered as asynchronous video files. The instructor will, however, endeavour, as much as possible, to maintain the structure and format of a conventional course.

Additional materials (e.g., maps, charts, and diagrams associated with individual lectures) will also be posted to **Owl Brightspace** on a regular basis. In most cases, lectures will be posted at a rate faster than would normally be the case with a live, in-person class. Although there is some guidance as to pacing set out in this document, students can best judge for themselves how fast to access this material.

Generative AI

Students are expressly precluded from using generative AI (e.g., systems such as ChatGPT) to create any work submitted for this course. Amongst other things, this includes using AI to compose essay text, test answers, or other course materials. AI may also not be employed as a research source. Use of AI to produce course materials will be treated as an academic offense.

In order to deter the use of this technology, the following requirements are in effect. Students may, at the discretion of the instructor, be required: (i) to pass a brief oral examination on their assignment and/or (ii) provide evidence that they completed the assignment themselves (e.g., show early drafts of their assignment or copies of reference materials used in the preparation of the assignment) before a final grade is assigned.

Copyright

The copyright for the intellectual property created for this Western University course, including, but not limited to, audio, video, and/or written lectures, handouts, exams and tests, assignments, and all other materials created for this course, is held by the instructor. These materials are designed for the personal use of students registered in this course only and may not be recorded or re-transmitted or reproduced or used in any other form or for any other purpose without the express written consent of the instructor. Providing these materials to a third party, including, but not limited to, a third party website or a large language model, constitutes a violation of the instructor's intellectual property rights and/or a violation of the Canadian Copyright Act. Individuals in violation of these intellectual property and/or copyright restrictions will be prosecuted and may be subject to academic and/or civil penalties. By participating in this course, all parties agree to be bound by these conditions as well as by any or all relevant Western University regulations and any or all provisions of the Canadian Copyright Act.

Lectures and Lecture Readings

Below is the list of topics that will be covered this term. It is recommended that students read the associated course readings before they download the associated lecture.

Note that there is no textbook for this course. Instead, most course readings are e-journal articles available from the library website, or they may be downloaded direct from the publisher's website, or (in the case of "fair use" readings) they are available as downloads from the course website.

Please note that except in the case of "fair dealing" readings (i.e., readings that are not otherwise available through the UWO library), **you are expected to search and retrieve course readings yourself** (i.e., this course does not provide "direct links" for course readings). This is a deliberate pedagogical choice on the part of the instructor. Retrieving these materials yourself — instead of having them handed to you on a silver platter — is good "practice" for when it is time for you to research your writing assignments! For those students unfamiliar with the process of accessing e-journal readings, detailed step-by-step instructions will be posted to **Owl Brightspace**. In addition, any reference librarian or the instructor can show you the process.

Lecture Schedule

Lecture 1 — Course Introduction

(No readings)

Lecture 2 — Historical Background

Vladimir Putin, "Article by Vladimir Putin: On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" *Presidential Executive Office* (July 12, 2021) <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>>.

Isaac Chotiner and Serhii Plokhy, "Putin's Revisionist History of Russia and Ukraine," in *David and Goliath: Commentaries on the Russo-Ukrainian War*, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies, No. 83 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2026), pp. 61-66. [\[UWO E-Book\]](#)

Lecture 3 — What Caused the War?

The Russian Perspective

Aleksandr Perendzhiev, "Russia in the Modern World. Main Directions; Socio-Economic, Political and Military-Technical Development of the Country," *Armeiyskiy Sbornik [Army Collection]* (November 2022) rpt. with annotations as

Aleksandr Perendzhiev with a forward by Ray Finch, “A Military Lesson Plan to Justify the Special Military Operation in Ukraine,” trans. Ray Finch, *Military Review* (February 2023), pp. 1-14.

<<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/journals/military-review/online-exclusive/2023-ole/military-lesson-plan/>>

A Critique of the Russian Perspective

James A. Green, Christian Henderson, and Tom Ruys, “Russia’s Attack on Ukraine and the *jus ad bellum*,” *Journal of the Use of Force and International Law*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2022), pp. 4-31.

By June 19th, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Lecture 4 — The Course of the War (I)

Richard Stojar, The Russian Invasion and Its Failure in the First Days,” *Defense & Security Analysis*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2023), pp. 296-311.

By June 26th, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Midterm No. 1

Saturday June 27th

2:00 to 4:00 pm (London ON time)

The final exam will be held between 2:00 and 4:00 pm — although the total duration of the test may be shorter than this window of time.

A detailed template (covering the exact format of the examination) will be posted to OWL Brightspace approximately a week before the date of the scheduled test date.

Lecture 5 — The Course of the War (II)

Huw Dylan and Elena Grossfeld, “Unveiling Russian Intelligence Failures in the Ukraine Conflict: A Strategic Culture Perspective,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 40, No. 5 (August 2025), pp. 926-950.

Lecture 6 — Who is on What Side...and Why

Yasin Çağlar Kaya and Yunus Emre Aydin, “Authoritarian Strategic Alignments in the Ukraine War: Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China,” *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Art. 2 (2025), pp. 19-37.

Note: There is a pagination error in this document.

Jan Dutkiewicz and Dominik Stecula, “Why America’s Far Right and Far Left Have Aligned Against Helping Ukraine: The Discourse Surrounding Russia’s War on Ukraine has Created Strange Bedfellows,” *ForeignPolicy.com* (July 2, 2022), pp. 1-9.

[Available in the “Fair Dealing” folder of the course website]

By July 3rd, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Lecture 7 — Foreign Weapons and Foreign Fighters

James A. Green, “The Provision of Weapons and Logistical Support to Ukraine and the *jus ad bellum*,” *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2023), pp. 3-16.

Tyler Wentzell, “The Canadians Fighting in Ukraine,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer 2022), pp. 33-38.

[Go to <<https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/430525/publication.html>> and browse to the relevant issue.]

Lectures 8 — Economic Sanctions

Alexander Libman, “The Surprising Resilience of the Russian War Economy,” *Current History*, Vol. 123, No. 855 (October 2024), pp. 243-248.

Amy Mackinnon, “Russia’s War Machine Runs on Western Parts: Despite Sanctions, Moscow is Still Importing Critical Weapon Components from the US and Europe,” *ForeignPolicy.com* (February 22, 2024), pp. 1-10.

[Available in the “Fair Dealing” folder of the course website]

Agathe Demaris, “Russia Can’t Keep Spending Like This,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 255 (Winter 2025), pp. 15-16.

Daniel W. Drezner, “My Theory Says Sanctions on Russia Won’t Work. So Why Do I Want Them Anyway? The Inventor of the Sanctions Paradox Stress-Tests It 25 Years On,” *ForeignPolicy.com* (September 10, 2025), pp. 1-5 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/09/10/sanctions-paradox-russia-united-states/?tpcc=editors_picks#cookie_message_anchor>.

[Available in the “Fair Dealing” folder of the course website]

Lecture 9 — The Nuclear Dimension

Rose Gottemoeller, “Putin is Playing a Nuclear Mind Game,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 253 (Summer 2024), pp. 27-29.

Steven Pifer, Polina Sinovets, Robin E. Möser, and Mariana Budjeryn, “The Disintegration of the USSR and the Fate of the Soviet Nuclear Arsenal: Assessing Ukraine’s Relinquishment of Nuclear Weapons Left on Its Territory,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*,

Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter 2025), pp. 129-148.

By July 10th, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Midterm No. 2

Saturday July 11th

2:00 to 4:00 pm (London ON time)

The final exam will be held between 2:00 and 4:00 pm — although the total duration of the test may be shorter than this window of time.

A detailed template (covering the exact format of the examination) will be posted to OWL Brightspace approximately a week before the date of the scheduled test date.

Lecture 10 — War Crimes

Nataliya Gumenyuk, "Putin's Ukraine: The End of the War and the Price of Russian Occupation," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (March/April 2025), pp. 62-75.

Stephen Deakin, "Naked Soldiers and the Principle of Discrimination," *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 2014), pp. 320-330.

By July 17th, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Lecture 11 — Innovations in Conventional and Unconventional War

Martijn van der Vorm & Gijs Tuinman, "Lessons from Ukraine: Benchmark or Significant Exception?" in *Reflections on the Russia-Ukraine War*, eds. Maarten Rothman, Lonneke Peperkamp, and Sebastiaan Rietjens (Leiden, Neth.: Leiden University Press, 2024), pp. 475-494.

Lecture 12 — Miscellany / Final Thoughts

Peter Harris, "The Agony of Peace: Russia's Occupation of Eastern Ukraine," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (December 2025), pp. 674-682.

Seth G. Jones and Riley McCabe, "Russia's Grinding War in Ukraine: Massive Losses and Tiny Gains for a Declining Power," *CSIS* [Centre for Strategic & International Studies] *Briefs* (January 27, 2026), pp. 1-16.

[Available at <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-grinding-war-ukraine>>.]

By July 24th, you should reach this point in the schedule.

Final Exam
Saturday July 25th
2:00 to 4:00 pm (London ON time)

The final exam will be held between 2:00 and 4:00 pm — although the total duration of the test may be shorter than this window of time.

A detailed template (covering the exact format of the examination) will be posted to OWL Brightspace approximately a week before the date of the scheduled test date.

Important Notices

Students must complete all course requirements. Failure to do so (e.g., missing an examination without cause) will subject the student to the relevant Departmental and University regulations (e.g., possibly failing the course.)

Except in the case of serious medical (or similar) problems, substitute examinations will normally not be given.

Plagiarism

Students must also note that it is a serious academic offense to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses or to pass off another person's work as their own (i.e., plagiarism). The University of Western Ontario “Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy” defines plagiarism as follows:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required: (i) to pass a brief oral examination on their assignment before a final grade is assigned and/or (ii) provide an electronic copy of their assignment so that their work can be checked using plagiarism-checking software (e.g., Turnitin.com). As stated in the University of Western Ontario “Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy:”

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

If students have any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, there are various resources available to them including (but not limited to) the Student Development Centre and the instructor (e.g., during office hours). If in doubt — ASK!!!

As a general guide consider the following. When you make a direct quote — Yes, you need a footnote. When you closely paraphrase ideas (e.g., following a text that someone else wrote while changing a small number of words) — Yes, you need a footnote.

What about basic facts and dates? Do you still need a footnote? Say, for example, you are asked to write a paper on the Franco-Prussian War and you have never heard about that particular conflict. And then you write in your paper that the war started in 1870 and that France was led by Louis Napoleon. Would you need a footnote for that sort of information? No. Generally, basic facts and dates are covered by the “Common Knowledge Exception.” If you picked up any general history of that conflict, they would all relate how the war started in 1870 and that France that led by Louis Napoleon. (Another way to think of the “Common Knowledge Exception” is to call it the “Rule of Three” — if a basic fact is reported in three separate general academic sources, you need not provide a footnote.)

At the same time, if one general source was particularly influential in helping you write a section of your paper (even if you did not need to footnote specific passages from it directly), you can add a footnote like the following.¹

¹ The following paragraph is based on Paul Jones, *History of the Franco-Prussian War* (Toronto: Penguin Press, 1999), pp. 20-25.

And what about material covered in class (e.g., basic facts and dates). Generally this material falls under the “Common Knowledge Exception” (i.e., no footnote needed), HOWEVER if students really want to use material from the lectures they should go back to original sources whenever possible — especially where specific facts or data are presented or if the words of individual theorists or other experts are presented. For example, imagine the instructor states in class that “some historians consider Louis Napoleon’s strategy during the war to be similar to that used by Alexander the Great.” If you wanted to use that idea in your lecture, you should ask the instructor “which historians said this” and “where did that idea come from” BEFORE you use it in your paper. In other words, you always want to go back to the original source rather than rely solely on the material covered in class. For one thing, as a conscientious academic, you want to make sure that your professor has not made a mistake!