



What is War

Dr Lydia Cole

About me!

- My name is **Lydia Cole**; I am a Lecturer in International Relations.
- My research has centred on war, peace, and activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the United Kingdom. I am particularly interested in aspects of memory, war experience and resistance to violence. I hope to bring these interests into the classroom in the context of a much broader exploration of the various ways that war has been understood, researched, practiced, and experienced.
- You can find out more about my research [here](#).
- Please feel free to contact me on: lydia.cole@sussex.ac.uk with any questions about this module.



What is War

In this module, you will gain an advanced understanding of the place of war in the political world. What is war and how, if at all, is it different from other forms of violence? What is the relationship between war and politics? We will ask what war is and then investigate its relation to the fields of law, ethics, gender, media, memory, and anti-war activism. You will use this knowledge to investigate specific forms of warfare in different case studies. You will be provided with advanced knowledge and analytical skills that will help you to think, talk, and write in an informed and critical manner about war.



What to expect in this module

- **What *is* war? What distinguishes war from violence? How does war shape our societies?**
- A range of perspectives on the phenomenon of war and how it matters in our societies,
- And different theoretical approaches, concepts, and lenses to examine the question of ‘what is war’?
- A strong focus on independent and critical thinking
- Taught through a mix of lectures, discussions, group work, and case studies
- Transferrable skills: presenting, group work, critical thinking, and doing independent research



Module outline



1. What is war?
 2. War and its changing character
 3. War and the law
 4. War and global policing
 5. War and gendered experience
 6. Consolidation week
 7. War and technology
 8. War, media and the image
 9. War, memory and trauma
 10. War, nonviolence and pacifism
 11. Assessment preparation workshop
- (*topics and module structure are indicative)

Module Assessment

If you take this module, you will be assessed through:

- A 1000-word essay (20%)
- A group presentation (10%)
- A 3500-word essay (70%)



Indicative reading list

- von Clausewitz, C. (2006) *On war*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kaldor, M. (2009) *New & Old Wars*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hathaway, O & Shapiro, S. (2019) “International law and its transformation through the outlawry of war.” *International Affairs*. 95(1): 45-62.
- Barkawi, T. (2016) “Decolonising war.” *European Journal of International Security*. 1(2): 199-214.
- Sylvester, C. (2012) “War Experiences/War Practices/War Theory.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. 40(3): 483-503.
- Carruthers, S. (2011) *The Media at War*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Edkins, J. (2003) *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchings, K. “Pacifism is dirty: towards an ethico-political defence.” *Critical Studies on Security*. 6(2): 176-192.