



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 the visual, embodied, and memorial aspects of war and its resistance. 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 to expect in this module

- A range of perspectives on the phenomenon of war and how it matters in our societies
- 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 mini-lectures, discussions, group work, and case studies
- Transferrable skills: presenting, group work, critical thinking, and independent research

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, technology, 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.





Module outline

1. What is war?
 2. War as (state) policy
 3. War as a social condition
 4. War as a legal issue
 5. War as colonial repression
 6. Writing workshop
 7. War as experience
 8. War as technopolitics
 9. War as memory
 10. War as subject to resistance
 11. Wrap-up session: Essays and Q&A
- (*this module structure is indicative)



Module Assessment

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

- 1000-word article review (20%)
- Group presentation (10%)
- 3500-word essay (70%)

Indicative reading list

- von Clausewitz, C. (2006) *On war*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Owens, P. (2007) *Between war and politics: International relations and the thought of Hannah Arendt*. Oxford: 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.
- Chin, W. (2019) “Technology, War and the State: Past, Present and Future.” *International Affairs*. 95(4): 765-783.
- Edkins, K. (2003) *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rossdale, Chris (2019) *Resisting Militarism: Direct Action and the Politics of Subversion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.