

ADVANCED TOPICS IN GLOBAL POLITICS: AUTOMATION FUTURES

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Class Hours: MW 12:30-1:45

Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“War”, J.F.C Fuller wrote, “which at the bottom is a question of armaments, has been the grand catalytic of history.” It is no question that innovations in armaments, from gun powder to nuclear weapons, have radically reshaped global politics. Today, international institutions, scholars, and activist communities around the world are sounding the alarm that we are once again to witness a new age of war that would have wide, transformative effects on society, economy, and the moral-legal order established since the rise of the United Nations. Robotic technologies are already being tested on populations around the world and in an accelerated manner while military planners are drawing up new doctrines and organizational structures for a world populated by increasingly automated means of destruction and social control.

This semester we will take up the question of global violence in the age of automation and ask what will planetary futures look like when weapons are the main visible actors in the unbounded geographies of war. What does it mean to engage in politics when the sovereign (the artificial man as Hobbes put it) is composed of mechanical parts? Can there be alternatives to violence in the age of automation or is war inevitable when the means to destroy carry no human price except for the societies it targets? To answer these questions, we will engage scholarly works by political theorists and geographers that attempt to map out the contours of global politics and develop concepts that may guide explorations into world orders that might be unprecedented in their character.

ORAL COMMUNICATION DESIGNATION

Oral Communication (O) Focus classes will help you to develop your oral competencies as well as understand course content through structured discussions. UH Manoa undergraduates are required to complete one (1) 3-credit OC course at the 300 or 400 level in order to meet graduation requirements.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation		10%
Class Discussion Lead	Presentations (x3) OLO1-2	30%
Environmental Scanning		25%
	Environmental Scan Reports (x1) 10%	
	Environmental Scan Group Presentation (x1) OLO1-3-4 15%	
Final Presentation	OLO1-2	15%
Final Paper		20%
Total		100%

Grading: 90-100% A | 80-89% B | 70-79% C | 60-69% D | >60 % F

PARTICIPATION [10% of final grade]

Students are expected to arrive on time and participate in all scheduled class sessions. You are expected to read all assigned material and be prepared to take an active role in discussing and analyzing it during class session. Preparation includes posting at least 2 questions about the reading assignment before coming to class.

These are the simplest ways to make meaningful contributions to class. Please notify me if you're finding it hard to participate. We can discuss reasons and alternatives.

CLASS DISCUSSION LEAD [30% of final grade]

Each one of you will be responsible for doing three presentations on three of the readings for this course and leading in-class discussion for that class. Presenters should be able to use effective delivery techniques to map the arguments made in the readings and show critical engagement with concepts. You can choose to prepare visual aids and use media, or an activity to enhance discussion. Presenters must end their presentation with critical questions for class. The schedule for reading presentations will be distributed on the first day of class and presentations will start the following session.

Your grade will take into account the content of your presentation, delivery and discussion facilitation. Individual feedback will be provided via email to presenter.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING EXERCISE [25% of final grade]

Identifying and analyzing emerging issues is regularly done by Futures researchers to explore the impact of new “things” (technologies, policies, ideas, actions etc), which could be marginal and/ or out of mainstream discussion at the moment, but may develop into critical forces shaping society and politics. Since these issues are new, and it could be too soon to show sufficient data that can be assessed, analysis of emerging issues is often speculative. It explores the relations implied, the capacities and possible outcomes of this “thing’s” intensified role in a particular context; i.e. what happens when this emerging issue transforms into a political trend.

Many scholars use environmental scans and emerging issues analysis to explore the political impact of automation on various areas of life. In class, we will discuss in detail how to go about doing an environmental scan and how to present on it in class.

Deliverables:

1. Environmental Scan Reports [10% of final grade]:

For this course, you are expected to work in teams to deliver one environmental scan report in which you identify and analyze an emerging issue in the field of automation that can have significant effects on global politics. Each report will account for 5% of your final grade.

2. Environmental Scan Presentation [15% of final grade]:

As a group, you will present your environmental scan report in class during Week 11 of the semester. Your grade will take into account the content of your presentation and delivery.

Students are expected to demonstrate research abilities, be able to deploy resources to scan for and identify emerging issues, and creatively present their analysis. In your presentation, you should be able to tell us how you did the environmental scan, describe to your audience what the emerging issue is, trace its history and the possible directions it could take. Designing visual aids such as maps, timelines, and diagrams will allow you to achieve your presentation objectives.

Student will receive feedback via email after presentation.

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION [15% of final grade]

Each student will present on their final project to receive creative feedback from colleagues. The more articulated your research question is and the more organized and clear your information and arguments are can allow your colleagues and the instructor to provide useful feedback that can help you develop your project.

FINAL PAPER [20% of final grade]

For your final project, choose a topic from the readings you want to explore further. You are expected to use methodological approaches and conceptual tools you have learned this semester. The paper should be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced. It is due on December 12, submitted via email to amusleh@hawaii.edu.

Prior to starting on your paper, meet with me to discuss your topic.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES**RESOURCES**

For differently abled students that require accommodation, please let me know via email and contact the KOKUA Program at (808) 956 - 7511. For more info: www.hawaii.edu/kokua/

The Writing Center offers free assistance from experienced writers to all UHM students. For more information: <https://sites.google.com/a/hawaii.edu/writingcenter/about>

Counseling and Student Development Center is available to all students. It provides free and confidential support for individuals, couples, and groups dealing with various stressful issues as they pursue their academic life. For more info: www.manoa.hawaii.edu/counseling/

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is considered an Act of Dishonesty according to the Student Conduct Code Policies of the University of Hawai'i System. The policies clarify: the term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. For further information: <http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/>

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to arrive on time and participate in all scheduled class sessions. If I have begun class by the time you enter, you should make sure that I counted you as present by checking with me after class. You can be absent up to 4 times with prior notice without affecting your grade. More than 4 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence.

COMMUNICATION

I'll try to answer all emails within 24 hours except for weekends (I will respond in 48 hours). All emails to faculty and instructors are professional correspondences. Please use proper email etiquette.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Techno-Imaginations

Introduction + Visualizing the Tactical Ground Battlefield in the Year 2050: Workshop Report, US Army Research Laboratory

Week 2: Techno-Imaginations (continued)

Future War, Christopher Coker

Week 3: Enclosing Civilization

Predator Empire, Ian Shaw

Week 4: Rule By Nobody

Predator Empire, Ian Shaw

Week 5: Political Automata

A Theory of the Drone, Grégoire Chamayou

Week 6: Necro-ethics

A Theory of the Drone, Grégoire Chamayou

Week 7: Necro-ethics (continued)

Death Machine, Elke Shwarz

Week 8: Ethics as technics

Death Machine, Elke Shwarz

Week 9: Political Economy

Automating Inequality, Virginia Eubanks

Week 10: Civil and Human Rights

Automating Inequality, Virginia Eubanks

Week 11: Emerging Issues presentations

Week 12: Spring Recess**Week 13: Opening the Future**

Engineering Self, Franco “Bifo” Berardi

After the Future, Franco “Bifo” Berardi

Week 14: Automating our way out of War?

Inventing the Future, Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams

Week 15: Postcapitalism

Inventing the Future, Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams

Week 16: Final Presentations