

University of Florida Honors Program  
IDH2930 Section 1G56, Fall 2017  
Drones and the Future of Armed Conflict  
Ethical, Legal, and Strategic Implications

### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: CPT Christopher A. Vallandingham, JA  
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### **Class Meetings**

Mondays, period 3 (9:35 am - 10:25 am)  
Little 119

### **Course Overview and Objectives**

Principles regarding the use of force have developed over many centuries of armed conflict. However, these principles have not kept pace with advances in military technology and the shift from traditional battlefields to asymmetric warfare. Though unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have been used for decades for reconnaissance purposes, their use to launch weapons and conduct targeted killings of individuals are relatively recent developments. What are the implications of using UAVs to attack individuals or other targets?

The goal of the course is to provide an overview of the various issues that impact the current discussion of the use of UAVs in armed conflict. By the end of this course, you will have a basic understanding of:

- The basic principles of the law of armed conflict;
- The legal constraints on the use of drones to target individuals;
- The ethical dilemmas posed by using drones to target individuals;
- The strategic implications of relying on drones rather than traditional methods of warfare.

### **Required Text**

*Drones and the Future of Armed Conflict: Ethical, Legal, and Strategic Implications*, David Cortright et al., eds (2015, University of Chicago Press)

## Course Page

The page for this course is found on Canvas at <http://elearning.ufl.edu>. Details about the course, including reading assignments and due dates for homework assignments and the final paper, will be placed on this page.

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments (Details on the Course Canvas Page)

### A. Introduction

August 21 (Class 1)	Introduction to Course
August 28 (Class 2)	The Law of Armed Conflict: Basic Principles
September 4 (No Class)	Labor Day
September 11 (Class 3)	The Law of Armed Conflict: When Does It Apply?

### B. The Legality of Using Drones in Armed Conflict

September 18 (Class 4)	<i>International Law and Drone Attacks beyond Armed Conflict Zones</i>
September 25 (Class 5)	<i>Drone Strikes and the Law: From Bush-era Detention to Obama-era Targeted Killing</i>
October 2 (Class 6)	<i>Justifying the Right to Kill: The Problems of Law, Transparency, and Accountability</i>
October 9 (Class 7)	In-Class Targeting Exercise

### C. The Ethics of Using Drones in Armed Conflict

October 16 (Class 8)	<i>The Morality of "Drone Warfare"</i>
October 23 (Class 9)	<i>Drone Warfare and Military Ethics</i>

### D. The Strategic Implications of Using Drones in Armed Conflict

October 30 (Class 10)	<i>The Strategic Implications of Targeted Drone Strikes for US Global Counterterrorism</i>
November 6 (Class 11)	<i>Security Implications of Drones in Warfare</i>

November 13 (Class 12)	<i>Targeted Killings and Secret Law: Drones and the Atrophy of Political Restraints on the War Power</i>
November 20 (Class 13)	<i>The Myth of Precision: Human Rights, Drones, and the Case of Pakistan</i>
November 27 (Class 14)	In-Class Targeting Exercise #2
December 4 (Class 15)	Drafting Rules for the Use of Drones in Armed Conflict

## Course Requirements

The course grade is based on the following:

1. Homework Assignments (40%)  
For each reading assignment, there will be an accompanying homework assignment. This homework assignment will consist of questions based on the assigned reading. These questions will help identify key facts and ideas in the reading that I want you to know prior to the class discussion based on the reading. Assignments are due by the date indicated on the course Canvas page and must be uploaded to this page. **Late assignments are not accepted.**
2. Final Paper (45%)  
A final paper (between 1,250 and 1,500 words) based on a targeting scenario chosen in consultation with the instructor is required. Late submissions will result in a 10% reduction in the final paper grade per day the paper is late. **After 72 hours of the due date, no final papers will be accepted.**
3. Class participation (15%)  
This course is based on in-class discussions, rather than on lectures. Participation in these discussions is mandatory. The participation grade is earned during each class. Failure to participate in a discussion will result in zero points for the participation grade for that class.

Final grades are calculated according the grading policy found in the UF Undergraduate Catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

## Attendance and Late Policy

Students are expected to attend all the classes. Missing class will negatively impact the class participation grade. Two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of the final grade by one half-grade (for instance B to B-). Each additional unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by one full letter (for example, A to B).

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If a student is late for class, he or she must sign the class roll after class. Coming to class late will negatively impact the student's participation grade and will lower the participation grade for that class by 50%.

## **Excused Absences**

The excused absence policy is in accordance with the attendance policies in the UF Undergraduate Category at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. With the exception of unforeseen events, students must notify the instructor as far in advance as possible of an absence and provide the reason for the absence. If the absence fits the criteria for excused absences, then the instructor will work out a schedule with the student for making up missed assignments and in-class work. Making up missed discussions will require that the student meet with the instructor in person. Failure to do so will result in a reduction in the class participation grade. If the absence does not fit the criteria for an excused absence, then the student is bound by the due date for assignments and will receive no credit for class participation for the missed class.

## **Laptop use**

Students are encouraged to bring laptops or tablets to class in order to access the course Canvas page and other materials referenced during class. Use of laptops and tablets during class to access social media, check e-mail, or access websites unrelated to the class discussion is prohibited. Violating this policy will result in a 50% reduction in your participation grade for that class.

## **Cellphone and smartphone use**

Cellphones and smartphones must be placed in the silent mode during class. Except in emergency situations, using cellphones or smartphones in class will result in a 50% reduction in your participation grade for that class.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who request an accommodation should request an accommodation letter from the Disability Resource Center at [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc). Once a student receives an accommodation letter, the student must present a copy of the letter to the instructor. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## **Academic Honesty**

Unless permitted by the instructor for a specific assignment, students are required to do their own work and may not share answers or work together on assignments. Failure to abide by this policy may result in zero credit for a specific assignment or disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Conduct & Honor Code at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.