Death in war is not always unavoidable. It is often intentional, a tactical and legal objective of large scale organized violence. Killing in war, however, cannot occur in any which way. It is governed by laws and norms that define how others can be acceptably killed and/or injured. This course explores how such norms of acceptable killing and injury are defined and developed in warfare. In particular, it explores the relationship of these norms to the development of conventional weapons, technologies of violence that states are authorized to use. Specifically, the course will study the introduction of the infantry rifle. Blamed for more war-related deaths and injury than any other currently available weapon, rifles are considered the “real” weapons of mass destruction. If considered to have such lethal effects, why is the rifle a legitimate weapon? In this course, we will address this question by exploring how the rifle was ‘calibrated’ – that is, how and why it was designed to kill in ethical ways. Student research into this area will revolve around two questions: 1) what was the role of medical testing and field surgery reports – wound ballistics – in defining ‘militarily acceptable wounds’; and 2) what kinds of decisions led to the standardization of rifle design, particularly its bullet. To explore these questions, a unique feature of this course will be conducting archival research at the Canadian War Museum and various online databases. Overall, where existing work has considered the parameters of why and when killing in warfare might be permissible, this course will introduce students to processes that how it occurs as a legitimate practice. Considering why it is that death in warfare is designed in particular ways, this course allows students will engage in cutting edge interdisciplinary research that interrogates how weapons become ethical infrastructures of warfare. It will provide students with new ways to think about relationships between the technical design of weaponry with emerging norms and laws about international warfare. Students interested in learning more about international politics, international law and ethics, and science and technology studies are encouraged to apply.

1. **Conducting a scholarly literature review on wound ballistics.** What research on the topic exists? What fields of study are involved in exploring this topic? What key methodologies do they use and why? What contributions have been made? What questions remain to be answered?

2. **Developing a research plan.** Based on the two questions being addressed in this course (see above), students will work with the professor to identify a particular area that requires data
collection. After identifying these areas, a plan of research will be developed by identifying key sources of information. This task will familiarize student to the process of developing a research methodology for data collection and analysis.

3. **Conducting archival research at the Canadian War Museum (data collection).** Students will work with the professor and Museum staff to identify and collect documents located in the Museum’s library. Online databases will also be identified, and explored for data collection.

4. **Data analysis.** Students will work with the professor to try to understand how we ‘read’ information. What does ‘data’ tell us? What does it not tell us? Answering these questions, students will be familiarized with the process of how information is assessed.

5. **Dissemination of results.** Students will aid the professor in devising a (mock) conference presentation. Communicating results to a scholarly audience is a key activity in the research process. Student will be familiarized with how results are organized and how it is transmitted to a broader audience of experts.