

International Conflict: INTL 4220

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11a–12:15p TR 212 Baldwin Hall
Office Hours: W 2p–4p

Course Description: Why do countries go to war with one another? This question has captivated the attention of politicians, philosophers, scholars, and citizens for centuries, and there is therefore no shortage of proposed answers to it. In this course, we examine many of these answers in detail. We begin by grounding ourselves in a research tradition that examines international events through a scientific process – one that builds and evaluates theoretical models and constantly questions and assesses its own purpose. After that, we review conceptual definitions of conflict episodes (e.g., war, militarized conflict, crises, and rivalry), as well as the larger trends in these episodes over time. We next examine the many factors that theoretically might lead to (a lack of) militarized conflict across numerous levels of analysis, including the systemic, dyadic, national, and individual levels.

Our primary goal will be to dissect and analyze these various theoretical explanations. In doing so, we will see that the issues under dispute, the strategic complications that arise during negotiations, the relationships states develop with one another, the shortcomings of human cognition, the structure of the international system, and the domestic institutions of states (among other factors) may all contribute to matters of war and peace. Finally, we will participate in a role-playing exercise that extends our knowledge from war between states to war within states, ultimately trying to discern whether the same factors are at work in both contexts. Throughout each phase of the course, we will consider what conflict scholars do (i.e., theory construction), how they do it (i.e., research design and methods), what problems they face, and what they can do better to understand why states employ militarized conflict to achieve political goals.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the characteristics and trends of different types of conflict.
- Provide many explanations for why international conflict occurs.
- Interpret quantitative and qualitative evidence used to evaluate theories.
- Find a puzzle, build a theoretical model to explain it, and marshal evidence to evaluate that model.

Required Texts:

1. Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin, and John A. Vasquez. 2014. *Conflict, War, and Peace: An Introduction to Scientific Research*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

2. Quackenbush, Stephen L. 2015. *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
3. Clark, Nancy L., and William H. Worger. 2011. *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. 2nd edition.
4. Baglione, Lisa A. 2015. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Washington, D.C. CQ Press.

Course Policies:

• Format

- The class will follow a seminar (discussion) rather than lecture format, though I will lecture when appropriate. Each class will involve a discussion or activity based on the assigned readings for that day.
- This is a seminar so a significant portion of your grade will come from your participation and contribution during discussion, simulation, and other activities. To get a high grade, you must make a positive contribution to the class—this includes comments that meaningfully criticize, challenge, request clarification of, extend, or react to assigned readings. You will earn a low grade if you fail to contribute to discussions or are unprepared when called upon.
- During discussions, I prefer a voluntary participation system and will generally allow any volunteers to contribute first. (When necessary, I will lightly regulate who speaks to prevent anyone from monopolizing the conversation, halt any filibustering, and make sure anyone who wishes to speak is heard.) If no volunteers are available, I will randomly call on you to contribute, and you are expected to be prepared to do so.

• Reading

- You are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and ready to participate.
- You can use Twitter to communicate relevant news and other information with the class. We will decide on a hastag on the first class meeting and I will give you my Twitter handle.

• Exams

- There will be two “midterm” exams, week 8 and week 13, for a total of 30% of your final grade. Questions on these exams will be a combination of multiple choice, identification, and/or essays.
- Exams are closed book, closed notes. Make-ups will only be given if you have a documented, acceptable excuse.

• Research Paper

- Students will come up with a political science research question related to international conflict and will develop a research paper over the course of the semester. The paper is worth 30% of your final grade (10% incremental progress, 20% final product).

- The paper will be 12-15 pages and there are several deadlines associated with the paper throughout the semester. We will spend time discussing what a good political science research paper looks like, but I *highly* recommend students purchase Lisa Baglione’s *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*.
 - * **Week 3:** Selection of topic. Students will propose a research question on Tuesday; this question can evolve over time.
 - * **Week 6:** Annotated bibliography. On Tuesday students will bring a list of works (books and journal/news articles, not websites) that they have read and determined should be included in the paper, along with a few sentences on each for why it is relevant and how it might be used.
 - * **Week 9:** Draft of theoretical argument. On Tuesday students will bring an outline (1-2 pages) in which they sketch the structure of their theoretical argument (the “model”). The literature review need not appear in this document.
 - * **Week 11:** Draft of research design (3 copies). Students will bring a complete draft of their research design on Thursday.
 - * **Week 16:** Short Presentation. Students will present their findings to the class.
 - * **Final Papers:** Due on the day final exams are scheduled for this course. Students will turn in a hard copy to me.
- Late papers will *not* be accepted, in the same way that final exams cannot be taken late.

- **Simulation**

- We will run a multi-week, role-playing simulation in the second half of the course. This will count for 20% of your final grade (see below for weighting). The simulation will be based on South African politics around the end of Apartheid. The game is intended to be an immersive learning experience in which students leverage the political science knowledge they have accrued and apply theoretical concepts to perform well in the game. Students will be expected to:
 - * Contribute actively to the exercise (participation). I will assess this by my personal observation as well as solicited feedback from game participants (to address contributions outside the classroom and/or within teams).
 - * Complete a short (1-3 page) position paper (10%). You will submit a hard copy of this to me during the game.
 - * Complete a reflection paper (10%). After the game ends, students will reflect upon their experience, guided by questions distributed by the instructor. This reflection involves the submission of a paper (3-4 pages) on Tuesday of week 14 (at class beginning) that a) addresses the reflection question(s) given, and b) integrates the student’s experience with the course readings.

- **Attendance and Participation**

- Students may miss up to 2 class periods for any reason; excuses are not required. Each additional absence will result in a penalty of one point off the final grade.
- Participation is drawn from student engagement in lecture and participations. A high participation score will be impossible without regular attendance.

Grade Distribution:

Simulation	20%
Participation	20%
Midterm Exam 1	15%
Midterm Exam 2	15%
Research Paper	30%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Academic Honesty Policy Summary:

In addition to skills and knowledge, COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard.

Tentative Course Outline:

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. This syllabus can change as often as needed, but I will give you plenty of advance notice and issue an updated syllabus when any changes are made.

Week	Content
Week 1	<p>Thursday: What is War/Conflict? A First Cut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clausewitz. <i>On War</i>. Excerpts on online learning system. – Baglione chapter 1
Week 2	<p>Tuesday: Scientific Study of International Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 1 – King, Keohane, and Verba chapter 3 (online learning system) – <i>Suggested</i>: Mitchell & Vasquez introduction <p>Thursday: Theoretical Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tilly 1992. “How War made States, and Vice Versa” (online learning system). – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 12
Week 3	<p>Tuesday: Finding Puzzles and Completing Annotated Bibliographies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bring first attempt at a research question to class (2 copies). – Baglione chapters 2-3 – Review Baglione chapter 1 <p>Thursday: Conflict Definitions and Trends: A Second Cut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Read Prof. Paul Poast's Twitter thread about measuring democracy. – Quackenbush chapter 2 – Review Clausewitz's <i>On War</i> excerpt from week 1.
Week 4	<p>Tuesday: Foundations: Rational Choice Theory and its Limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 3 – Fearon, James. 1995. “A Rationalist Explanation for War.” <i>International Organization</i> 49(3): 379-414. <p>Thursday: Workshop Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We will workshop papers for volunteers during class.

Week	Content
Week 5	<p>Tuesday: Correlational Analyses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 2 – Geller & Singer chapter 7, “On Iran/Iraq War.” (online learning system) <p>Thursday: Defensive Realism & Balance of Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 5 – Schroeder, Paul. 1994. ”Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory.” <i>International Security</i> 19(1): 108-148.
Week 6	<p>Tuesday: How to write Literature Reviews and Theoretical Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bring annotated bibliography to class (3 copies). – Baglione chapters 4-5 <p>Thursday: Offensive Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mearsheimer chapter 5 (online learning system). – Van Evera, Stephen. 2013. <i>Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict</i> chapter 6 (online learning system).
Week 7	<p>Tuesday: Issue-Based Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 4 – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 3 <p>Thursday: Interstate Rivalry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 13 – Rider, Toby J., and Andrew P. Owsiak. 2015. “Border Settlement, Commitment Problems, and the Causes of Contiguous Rivalry.” <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 52(4): 508-521.
Week 8	<p>Tuesday: Midterm Exam 1</p> <p>Thursday: Alliances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 6 – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 4

Week	Content
Week 9	<p>Tuesday: Revisions and Research Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bring draft of theoretical argument to class (3 copies). – Baglione chapters 6-7 <p>Thursday: Escalation to War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 9 – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 11 – <i>Suggested:</i> Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 6
Week 10	<p>Tuesday: Steps to War Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 7 <p>Thursday: Liberal Institutions: Peace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quackenbush chapter 7 – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 15 – <i>Suggested:</i> Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 9
Week 11	<p>Tuesday: Liberal Institutions: Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mitchell & Vasquez chapter 10 – Gartzke, Erik. 2007. “The Capitalist Peace.” <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 51(1): 166-191. <p>Thursday: Analysis, Introductions, and Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bring draft of research design to class (3 copies). – Baglione chapters 8-9
Week 12	<p>Tuesday: Simulation: Preparation & Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Read gamebook pp. 8-50 <p>Thursday: Simulation Round 1: All Party Talks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clark & Worger (all) – Gamebook: roles, documents, and supplementary reading provided in handouts

Week	Content
Week 13	Tuesday: Simulation Round 2: Determine Working Groups/Draft Thursday: Simulation Round 3: Draft Constitution in Committees
Week 14	Tuesday: Simulation Round 4: Debate Committee A/B Drafts Thursday: Simulation Round 5: Debate Committee C/D Drafts
Week 15	Tuesday: Simulation Debrief Thursday: Midterm Exam 2
Week 16	Tuesday: Short Presentations – Research question, theoretical model, and main finding should be part of presentation Thursday: Short Presentations – Research question, theoretical model, and main finding should be part of presentation
Final	Tuesday: Final Papers due TBA in my office (hard copy)