

Conflict and War Theory

Political Science 1509
Summer 2008
2087 First Six-Week Term
Tu, Th 6-9:15 p.m.
105 David Lawrence

Instructor: Brian J. Phillips
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4 p.m. in 4432 Posvar and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the research that analyzes armed conflict between political entities. There are no prerequisites for this course. However, it is an upper-level political science course, and therefore assumes a certain degree of interest in the topic and knowledge of political events, including wars. Additionally, it is neither a history course nor a policy course; the course examines scholarly research into questions about *war in general*.

Much of the course explores violence between states, also referred to as war or interstate war. Other types of violence, civil war and terrorism, will be discussed as well. A substantial portion of the course deals with factors that contribute to the onset of war, as most of the research in the field has examined this question.

By the end of the course each student should be able to:

- Identify the two dominant theories of international relations, and describe how each school of thought explains war and peace.
- Identify factors theorized to contribute to the onset of interstate war, civil war, and terrorism; understand *how* effect occurs.
- Identify factors theorized to contribute to conflict duration and termination; understand *how* effect occurs.

Required Reading

Betts, Richard K., ed. 2007. *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*. 3rd edition. New York: Longman.
(This is referred to below simply as "Betts")

Additionally: Journal articles as assigned. They are available on the Courseweb page, under "Course Documents."

Recommended Reading

These readings are listed for your benefit, and can be helpful for your short paper or future endeavors. The content of these readings might not be discussed in class.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2006. *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*. 6th edition. New York: Longman.

(This is referred to below simply as "Nye.")

Other journal articles as listed below. These will not be on the Courseweb page, but can usually be accessed at the library or via <http://scholar.google.com> on a university internet connection.

Grading

Grading scale:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-36	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	0-59

Course grade distribution:

Participation and Attendance: 10%

Reading Quizzes: 10%

Short Paper: 20%

Midterm: 30%

Final: 30%

Participation is a crucial part of this class, and I will take note of both the quantity and quality of comments. I will pass around an **attendance sheet** during each class meeting, and it is each student's responsibility to sign it. An absence will be excused only with a formal written excuse (official doctor's note, with phone number, regarding illness, etc.), and attendance is important to understanding the topics of the course. Lecture slides *will not* be distributed to students, regardless of whether the absence is excused. Ask another student for his or her notes.

Short **reading quizzes** will frequently be given. They should be easy for anyone who has done the reading. Students who miss a quiz due to being late or leaving early *will not* get a chance to make up the quiz. Each student's lowest reading quiz will be dropped.

A **short paper** will be assigned May 20, and due June 12. See me the first week of June with an outline of your paper. Emailed outlines are due Wednesday, June 4, but can be submitted before that date.

The **midterm** and **final** are in-class, and will include multiple choice questions and short answer questions. The final is not cumulative; it covers only material learned after the midterm.

Academic Integrity

Cheating will not be tolerated. Cheating is roughly defined as passing another person's work off as your own, but a more complete explanation is available at the university's Academic Integrity page: <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>. A student caught cheating will fail the assignment or exam, and possibly the entire course. Do not cheat; you will be caught.

Special Considerations

If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please inform me. Additionally, if you have not yet done so, contact Disability Resources Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY).

Course Schedule and Readings

IMPORTANT DATES:

Thursday, May 29 Midterm
Wednesday, June 4 Short paper outline due (meet with me this week)
Thursday, June 12 Short paper due
Thursday, June 19 Final

SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, May 13 Course overview: What is war? What is science?

Recommended:

Bremer, Stuart A. 2000. "Who Fights Whom, When, Where, and Why?" in John A. Vasquez (ed.) *What Do We Know About War?* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "The Science in Social Science," in *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Roselle, Laura, and Sharon Spray. 2008. *Research and Writing in International Relations*. New York: Longman.

SECTION ONE: WHAT EXPLAINS INTERSTATE WAR AND PEACE? (THE STATE AS A UNITARY ACTOR)

Thursday, May 15 Theories: Realism

Betts, 18-33 (Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War")

Betts, 87-93 (Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory")

Recommended

Mearsheimer 1994/5

Nye, 3-8, 36-38, 108-110, 129-130

Theories: Liberal Institutionalism

Betts, 161-168 (Keohane and Nye, "Power and Independence")

Recommended

Nye, 3-8, 43-49

Oneal, John R., and Bruce Russett (1999). "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations". *World Politics* 52(1): 1-37.

Tuesday, May 20

Strategy: Offense vs. Defense

Betts, 412-427 (Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma")

Recommended

Betts, 428-439 (Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology")

Bargaining Models

Fearon, James. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49: 379-414.

Recommended

Jervis, Robert. 1988. "War and Misperception." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18(4), 675-700.

Powell, Robert. 2006. "War as Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60(1): 169-203.

Thursday, May 22

Alliance Membership

Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3): 427-439.

Recommended

Bearce, David H., Kristen M. Flanagan, and Katharine M. Floros. 2006. "Alliances, Internal Information, and Military Conflict Among Member States." *International Organization* 60(3): 595-625.

Mearsheimer, John J. 1994/1995. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19/5: 5-49.

Nye, 41, 65, 69

Ashley Leeds's website with alliance data: <http://atop.rice.edu/>

Territory

Hensel, Paul R. 2001. "Contentious Issues and World Politics: The Management of Territorial Claims in the Americas, 1816-1992." *International Studies Quarterly* 45: 81-109.

Recommended

Hensel, Paul, and Sarah McLaughlin Mitchell. 2005. "Issue Indivisibility and Territorial Claims in the Americas." *GeoJournal* 64(4): 275-285.

Tuesday, May 27

Trade

Barbieri, Katherine. 1996. "Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict?" *Journal of Peace Research* 33(1): 29-49.

Recommended

Gartzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of*

Political Science 51(1): 166-191.

Nye, Chapter 7

Oneal, John R., and Bruce Russett. 1999. "Assessing the Liberal Peace with Alternative Specifications: Trade Still Reduces Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 36/4 (423-442).

Midterm review

Thursday, May 29 Midterm

**SECTION TWO: HOW DOES DOMESTIC POLITICS EXPLAIN INTERSTATE WAR?
(LOOKING INSIDE THE STATE)**

Tuesday, June 3 Domestic Politics and Peace

Maoz, Zeev, and Bruce Russett. 1993. "Normative and Structural Causes of the Democratic Peace, 1946-1986." *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 624-638.

Recommended

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alistair Smith. 2004. "Testing Novel Implications from the Selectorate Theory of War." *World Politics* 56(2): 363-388.

Nye, 36, 47-49

Russett, Bruce. 1993. "Why Democratic Peace?" (Chapter 2, 24-42) in *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Domestic Politics and War

Betts, 347-359 (Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and War")

Gaubatz, Kurt Taylor. 1991. "Election Cycles and War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35(2): 212-244.

Recommended

Leeds, Brett Ashley and David R. Davis. 1997. "Domestic Political Vulnerability and International Disputes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41(6): 814-834.

Nye, 36, 48-49, 103

Wednesday, June 4: Email short paper outline to instructor by this day. Meet with instructor this week.

SECTION THREE: WHAT EXPLAINS CIVIL WAR?

Thursday, June 5 Civil War Onset

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563-595.

Recommended

Fearon, James, and David A. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity,

Insurgency, and Civil War.” *American Political Science Review*. 97(1): 15-29.

Humphreys, Maccartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436-455.

Nye, 2, 157-169

Civil War Duration

Balch-Lindsay, Dylan, and Andrew Enterline. 2000. “Killing Time: The World Politics of Civil War Duration, 1820-1992.” *International Studies Quarterly* 44: 615-642.

Recommended

Cunningham, David. 2006. “Veto Players and Civil War Duration.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 875-892.

SECTION FOUR: WHEN WAR STOPS... HOW IS PEACE KEPT?

Tuesday, June 10 Peacekeeping

Fortna, Virginia Page. 2004. “Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War.” *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (48): 269-292.

Recommended

Bennett, D. Scott, and Allan C. Stam III. 1996. “The Duration of Interstate Wars, 1816-1985.” *American Political Science Review* 90(2): 239-257.

Fortna, Virginia Page. 2004. “Interstate Peacekeeping: Causal Mechanisms and Empirical Effects.” *World Politics* 56(4): 481-519. (Explanation of mechanisms is good.)

Partition

Betts, 378-386 (Kumar, “The Troubled History of Partition”)

Recommended

Betts, 360-377 (Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars”)

Nye, 167-169

SECTION FIVE: WHAT’S HAPPENING TODAY?

Thursday, June 12 SHORT PAPERS DUE

Terrorism

Betts, 511-524 -skim this - (Crenshaw, “The Strategic Logic of Terrorism”)

Li, Quan. 2005. “Does Democracy Promote or Reduce

Transnational Terrorist Incidents?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49: 278-297.

Recommended:

Merari, Ariel. 1993. "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5(4): 213-251.

Nye, 247-250

Environmental Issues

Betts, 607-622 (Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict")

Recommended

Betts, 596-606 (Cooley, "The War Over Water")

Betts, 580-595 (Weiner, "Security, Stability, and Migration")

Nye, 204-207

Tuesday, June 17

The Future

Betts, 34-51 (Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?")

Betts, 224-233 (Mueller, "The Obsolescence of Major War")

Recommended

Betts, 6-17, Part XI

Nye, Chapter 9

Final Exam Review

Thursday, June 19

Final Exam