

# PL SC 437: War in World Politics

## **Course Information:**

**Classroom:** 370 Willard Building

**Class Hours:** MTWRF: 10:15-12:15

**Office Hours:** TR: 2-3:30 and by appointment

## **Contact Information:**

**Instructor:** Michael Kenwick

**Email:**mrk245@psu.edu

**Instructor Office:** 209 Pond Lab

## **Course Description**

This is an upper-level International Relations course that will evaluate the causes and consequences of war in the modern international system. Though we will evaluate specific wars and crises, this course is not primarily a description of the historical record. Instead, we will focus on the theoretical issues that are relevant for understanding war as a general political phenomenon. We will therefore cover a variety of topics central to contemporary international relations theory and analysis including: bargaining models of war; alliance politics and extended deterrence; the domestic determinants of foreign policy behavior; and civil-military relations. These topics will be evaluated with respect to both civil and interstate conflict processes. We will draw upon recent quantitative and qualitative research from political science and related fields.

## **Course Objectives**

This course aims to help you develop a scientific understanding of conflict processes. You should be able to evaluate events in contemporary international relations to assess factors that may be driving state and non-state actors to armed conflict and the possible means of redressing these issues. In addition, the training in this course should allow students to:

1. Understand current quantitative research being used to examine patterns and relationships in armed conflict
2. Evaluate competing theories and predictions regarding peace and war and their applicability to different conflict environments in the modern world
3. Identify why and when the following factors become associated with peace and war at the civil and international level
  - (a) Bargaining processes and negotiating tactics
  - (b) Military alliances and deterrence inducing mechanisms
  - (c) Domestic political institutions
  - (d) The relationship between civilian and military elites in both democracies and autocracies
4. Communicate these ideas and concepts both verbally and in writing

## Grades and Evaluation

Your final course grade is a weighted average of the following five categories.

1. **Quizzes (20%):** Four quizzes will be given on the dates specified below. The three quizzes with the highest scores will count toward your final grade (5% each), and the lowest will be dropped. These quizzes will relate to both the materials discussed in class and the readings completed outside of class.
2. **In-class debate (15%):** Students will be divided into two groups and asked to engage about a current event as it relates to the theories discussed in class. For this particular course, you will be debating the potential merits of admitting Ukraine into NATO. More information on this assignment is listed at the end of this syllabus.
3. **Presentation (15%):** Each student will be required to present on an supplemental reading that was not required assignment for a given session. These supplemental readings are colored in blue text in the course calendar below. These presentations should offer a brief summary of the theoretical contribution of the article as well as a critique of the piece. For applicable articles, students should provide an evaluation of the means by which the author(s) test their theoretical propositions. The presenter will also field questions on these articles from their colleagues and the instructor. You are encouraged to meet with the instructor in the process of preparing these presentations.
4. **Participation (20%):** Students will be evaluated on their participation in class. This includes attendance (recorded daily), contributions to the classroom discussions. You are encouraged to volunteer questions and observations; please note that I may call on students at random with questions. A tendency on your part to demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the readings or other material under discussion will have a negative effect on your participation grade. If you miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student.
5. **Research Paper (30%):** Each student is required to write a 7-10 page research paper that uses multiple of the theoretical frameworks we assess in class to analyze the onset of the First World War. The prompt for this essay is listed at the end of this syllabus. The assignment will be due on **Wednesday, June 8 by 12PM. Late assignments will not be accepted without a note from the emergency dean.**

### Letter Grade Distribution

93-100	A	73 - 76.9	C
90 - 92.9	A-	70 - 72.9	C-
87 - 89.9	B+	67 - 69.9	D+
83 - 86.9	B	60 - 66.9	D
80 - 82.9	B-	< 60	F
77 - 79.9	C+		

## **Readings**

You should come to class having completed the required readings listed for each session. As stated above, the questions and observations you volunteer factors into your participation grade. The majority of readings come from academic journals and will be posted on Canvas. There is one text that students are required to purchase or rent:

Williamson, Samuel R. and Russel Van Wyk. 2003. *July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War: A Brief Documentary History (First Edition)*

## **Office Hours**

Each week, I will be in my office at the times listed at the top of this syllabus. I have set this time aside for students to come in and discuss any of the materials or concepts relating to this course. Office hours visits are always welcomed. If my office hours conflict with your academic schedule, please do not hesitate to contact me in order to schedule a supplemental meeting.

## **News**

I encourage you to read national and international news papers through out this course, paying particular attention to the events surrounding now or ongoing political conflicts, both internationally and subnationally. As the course progresses, we will frequently discuss how existing theories of war can be used to better understand or analyze current events.

## **Disabilities**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site (<http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to

any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at:

<http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/student-services/academic-integrity>

## Course Schedule

This schedule should be treated as tentative and flexible. Should a particular topic require more time than is allotted below, I may adjust the schedule accordingly. These changes will be announced in class and/or via-email.

**Week 1, Day 1:** Introduction and Foundations of Political Science Research

**Week 1, Day 2:** Bargaining Models of War

Required Readings:

- Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–414

**Week 1, Day 3:** Audience Costs

- Fearon, J. D. (1997). Signaling foreign policy interests: Tying hands versus sinking costs. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41:68–90

Supplemental Readings:

- Schultz, K. A. (1998). Domestic opposition and signaling in international crises. *American Political Science Review*, 92:829–844

**Week 1, Day 4:** Deterrence Theory I

- Leeds, B. A. (2003). Do alliances deter aggression? the influence of military alliances on the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57:427–439
- Kenwick, M. R., Vasquez, J. A., and Powers, M. (2015). Do alliances really deter? *Journal of Politics*, 77(4):943–954

Supplemental Readings:

- Achen, C. H. and Snidal, D. (1989). Rational deterrence theory and comparative case studies. *World Politics*, 41(2):143–169

## Week 1, Day 5: Deterrence Theory II

### Quiz 1

- Kenwick, M. R. and Vasquez, J. A. (2016). Defense pacts and deterrence: Caveot emptor. *Journal of Politics*
- Leeds, B. A. and Johnson, J. C. (2016). Theory, data, and deterrence: A response to kenwick, vasquez, and powers. *Journal of Politics*
- Morrow, J. D. (2016). When do defensive alliances provoke rather than deter. *Journal of Politics*

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Johnson, J. C. and Leeds, B. A. (2011). Defense pacts: A prescription for peace? *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7(1):45–65

## Week 2, Day 1: Domestic Politics and Interstate Conflict I: Democracies

- Maoz, Z. and Russett, B. (1993). Normative and structural causes of democratic peace. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3):624–638

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Reiter, D. and Stam, A. C. (1998). Democracy, war initiation, and victory. *American Political Science Review*, 92(2):377–389
- Rosato, S. (2003). The flawed logic of democratic peace theory. *American Political Science Review*, 97:585–602

## Week 2, Day 2: Debate

## Week 2, Day 3: Domestic Politics and Interstate Conflict II: Selectorate Theory

- Bueno de Mesquita, B., Smith, A., Siverson, R. M., and Morrow, J. D. (2004). Testing novel implications from the selectorate theory of war. *World Politics*, 56(3):363–388

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Clarke, K. A. and Stone, R. W. (2008). Democracy and the logic of political survival. *American Political Science Review*, 102(3):387–392

## Week 2, Day 4: Domestic Politics and Interstate Conflict III: Autocracies

- Weeks, J. (2012). Strongmen and straw men: Authoritarian regimes and the initiation of international conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 106(2):326–347

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Weeks, J. (2008). Autocratic audience costs: Regime type and signaling resolve. *International Organization*, 62(1)

## **Week 2, Day 5: Territorial Conflict**

### **Quiz 2**

- Vasquez, J. A. (1995). Why do neighbors fight? proximity, interaction, or territoriality. *Journal of Peace Research*, 32(3):277–293

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Gibler, D. M. (2010). Outside-in: The effects of external threat on state centralization. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(4):519–542

## **Week 3, Day 1: World War I, Part 1 (Serbia)**

- Williamson, Chapters 1 and 2

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Vasquez, J. A., Diehl, P. F., Flint, C., Scheffran, J., Chi, S.-H., and Rider, T. J. (2011). The conflict-space of cataclysm: The international system and the spread of war 1914-1917. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 8:143–168

## **Week 3, Day 2: World War I, Part 2 (Austria-Hungary and Germany)**

- Williamson, Chapters 3-4

## **Week 3, Day 3: World War I, Part 3 (Russia and Italy)**

- Williamson, Chapters 5 and 6

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Gartzke, E. and Lupu, Y. (2012). Trading on preconceptions: Why world war i was not a failure of economic interdependence. *International Security*, 36(4):115–150

## **Week 3, Day 4: World War I, Part 4 (France and Great Britain)**

- Williamson, Chapters 7 and 8

#### Supplemental Readings:

- Williamson, S. R. (2011). German perceptions of the triple entente after 1911: Their mounting apprehensions reconsidered. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7(205-214)

## **Week 3, Day 5: Civil-Military Relations I**

### **Quiz 3**

- Sechser, T. S. (2004). Are soldiers less war-prone than statesmen? *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(5):746–774
- Feaver, P. D. and Gelpi, C. (2003). *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 2

Supplemental Readings:

- Feaver, P. D. and Gelpi, C. (2003). *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 3

**Week 4, Day 1: Civil-Military Relations II**

- Brooks, R. A. (2008). *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 2

Supplemental Readings:

- Nordlinger, E. A. (1977). *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*. Prentice-Hall Inc, Chapters 1 and 3
- Scobell, A. (2005). China's evolving civil-military relations: Creeping guojiahua. *Armed Forces and Society*, 31(2):227–244

**Week 4, Day 2: Civil-Military Relations III**

- Staniland, P. (2008). Explaining civil-military relations in complex political environments: India and Pakistan in comparative perspective. *Security Studies*, 17:322–362

Supplemental Readings:

- Dix, R. H. (1994). Military coups and military rule in Latin America. *Armed Forces and Society*, 20(3):439–456
- Perlmutter, A. and LeoGrande, W. M. (1982). The party in uniform: Toward a theory of civil-military relations in communist political systems. *The American Political Science Review*, 76(4):778–789

**Week 4, Day 3: Civil-Military Relations IV**

- Desch, M. C. (1999). *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Chapters 2 and 6

Supplemental Readings:

- Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu (1997). The anatomy of the Turkish military's political autonomy. *Comparative Politics*, 29(2):151–166
- Avant, D. D. (1993). The institutional sources of military doctrine: Hegemons in peripheral wars. *International Studies Quarterly*, 37:409–430

**Week 4, Day 4: Civil War I**

- Walter, B. (1997). The critical barrier to civil war settlement. *International Organization.*, 51(3)

Supplemental Readings:

- Fearon, J. D. and Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 97(1):75–90

**Week 4, Day 5 Civil War II**

**Quiz 4**

- Humphreys, M. and Weinstein, J. M. (2008). Who fights? the determinants of participation in civil war. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2):436–455

Supplemental Readings:

- Kalyvas, S. N. and Kocher, M. A. (2007). How “free” is free riding in civil wars? violence, insurgency, and the collective action problem. *World Politics*, 59:177–216

**Final paper due Wednesday, June 8 by 12 PM**

## **In-Class Debate Instructions**

As we will have covered in class, there is an ongoing debate in the scholarly literature about whether and when defensive alliances will incite or deter international conflict. Members of NATO have long debated the utility of expanding membership to include additional European and post-Soviet States. Given the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, these questions have become increasingly salient in international affairs.

For this assignment, the class will be divided into two groups and take part in a debate about whether NATO members should admit Ukraine. In answering this question, students should consider whether doing so will be advantageous both in terms of procuring a favorable settlement in the ongoing crisis and in terms of NATO-Russian relations more broadly.

The debate will take place in four phases that will address the questions listed below. Each phase will consist of two parts: (1) initial statement - a member (or members) from each team will make a statement to address the question at hand; (2) rebuttal - a member (or members) from each team will provide a response to counter the claims made by the opposing side in the initial statement. The initial statement should be roughly five minutes, and the rebuttal should be roughly three minutes. As moderator, I will ask questions throughout this process.

1. Should Ukraine be admitted to NATO? What effect will this have on the ongoing crisis and why? Will it deter or will it incite future conflict?
2. Ignoring, for a moment, Russia's response, will admitting Ukraine be beneficial for NATO? Will it make it a more or less impactful or cohesive alliance?
3. What effect (if any) will admitting Ukraine have on domestic politics in Russia?
4. Excluding Ukraine, should NATO consider admitting new members to NATO at all?

In order to speak intelligently about these matters, students are expected to conduct independent research on the topic. Students might, for example, incorporate information they uncovered by reading news stories about the crisis and NATO membership. Some academic/analytic publications that might also be helpful include: *The Economist*; *Security Studies*; *International Affairs*; *International Security*; and *Foreign Affairs*. Finally, students are also expected to engage with the readings covered earlier in this course, when relevant.

Students will be graded on their ability to convey a clear, logically consistent argument that engages with both the course materials and information gathered from outside sources. While working with your team is necessary students will be evaluated primarily on their individual statements and contributions to the debate.

To get you started, I have posted news articles that provide an overview of the Ukrainian crisis on the course website.

## Research Paper Prompt

The onset of the First World War has been used as an empirical testing ground for virtually every major theory of international war. For this assignment, your task is to apply and evaluate the comparative merits of three different theories or frameworks as explanations for why European leaders were not able to resolve their disputes peacefully in the summer of 1914. To do so, you are to choose three from the following list:

- Information asymmetries
- Commitment problems
- Audience costs and international signaling
- Deterrence theory and alliance politics
- Democratic peace theory
- Selectorate theory
- The civil-military relations framework

Your essay should address the following issues: (1) Who or what does each approach identify as the primary actors driving Europe toward war, and what were the fundamental causes war (2) which areas of the conflict are these theories ill-equipped to explain (i.e. what important factors do these theories overlook or ignore) (3) which theory has the most explanatory leverage in explaining the onset of this particular war and why? You are expected to justify these arguments using both the theoretical and empirical research we covered in class, as well as primary historical documents from the July crisis (Williamson and Van Wyk).

Note that the First World War is one of the most widely studied and analyzed events in modern history and scholars have applied an array of explanations (including those listed above) to this case. It is not enough to simply summarize what has already been written – the task at hand is to critically evaluate where and why these arguments succeed and fail. A good essay will therefore address each of the three questions outlined above through an original argument that directly engages with the historical record.

The final paper should be **8-10 pages** (not including citations), double-spaced, 12 point font, written in Times New Roman. Citations should be listed on a separate page. The paper is due Wednesday, June 8 by 12 PM. **Late assignments will not be accepted without a note from the Emergency Dean.**