

# **Political Science 380A: Theories of International Conflict**

Winter Session 2017 Binghamton University Instructor: Jeremy Berkowitz  
Office: LNG 77 E-mail Address: jberkow5@binghamton.edu

## **Course Description**

Armed conflict between states has the potential to result in tremendous loss of life, disrupt trade and economies, and change the social and political structure of the international system. This course offers students a short introduction to understanding international conflict. Students will be exposed to a variety of theories explaining trends and patterns in international conflict, how these theories have changed over time, and new threats to international security. These theories will be reinforced by introducing key case studies and examples from a wide range of locations and time periods.

**This Course Satisfies the G(Global Interdependencies), N (Social Sciences) and W (Writing) General Education Requirements, as well as the Upper-level Requirement for the International Relations Concentration.**

## **Assignments**

All readings covered in the class will be posted on Mycourses by Noon (EDT) the day before they are assigned. You will also be able to find the majority of these readings through the library.binghamton.edu journals tab. You are strongly encouraged to complete all readings, and a thorough understanding of these readings will be required for participation credit and crafting appropriate response papers.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of this class, you will be expected to be able to:

1. Discuss theories of international conflict with fellow students.
2. Read and analyze academic works on international conflict.
3. Critically respond in written form to specific questions about international conflict.

## **Course Requirements**

Your grade will be evaluated based on the quality of your participation in daily class discussion via the Mycourses website, as well as your ability to respond to the materials through formal written assignments.

If you have not utilized Mycourses (previously referred to as Blackboard) in a previous class, please complete the BONLINE online orientation, found in the Mycourses organizations section. You are encouraged to have a reasonable familiarity with current events, as they may be relevant in discussion forums and will assist you in formal assignments, but it is not required. You will be required to have access to the internet and mycourses.binghamton.edu on a daily basis, as well as the ability to write digital papers and upload them to Mycourses in Microsoft Word or PDF format. You are strongly encouraged to review Binghamton University's academic standards if you are not familiar with them. You are encouraged to communicate with me through e-mail if you have questions regarding course material and requirements. If it is of paramount importance to meet face-to-face, you can schedule through e-mail an in-person meeting with me at Binghamton University or a Skype conversation.

## Course Components

### 1) Blackboard Discussion

You will be required to participate in class discussions via Blackboard on a daily basis. These discussions will be in separate discussion threads for each day of class, and will begin with a prompt consisting of questions and comments I have written on the day's readings. You will be required to participate in **Four out of Five days** each week to receive full participation credit for that week. To qualify as a participant, you must contribute to discussion by **posting one comment and responding to one comment OR responding to three comments**. Comments and responses are expected to demonstrate you have read and substantively contribute to the class, or full credit will not be given. Your posts are also expected to be professional in language/content and utilize correct grammar/spelling. At the beginning of each week, I will write you a private e-mail commenting upon your performance in discussion during the previous week, and offer comments/advice on your status in the class.

**Please Note:** Due to the often-times sensitive content of a class on terrorism, I strongly encourage students to be aware of each other's personal experiences and opinions on the subject, and either inform the discussion or send me a private message if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the direction of the discussion. Any statements or actions that occur in discussion that violate the Student Conduct Code will result in the appropriate response from myself and the University.

### 2) Written Assignments

You will be required to turn in a total of three (3) four to five page writing assignments (at least 11 point font, double-spaced) over the course of the class. Each of these papers will require you to respond to one of three questions related to the readings assigned over the week, as well as demonstrate awareness of the various topics covered throughout the week and earlier in the class. I will post the questions on Mycourses each Thursday at Midnight, and the resultant papers will be due Saturday at Midnight. **You are required to turn these papers in via the relevant Turn-it-in assignment on Mycourses, as well as E-mail me a copy in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.** Your answers should not be exclusively summaries of the readings or descriptions of their content, but should instead provide analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of discussed readings and how they relate to the question you choose to answer. I will return comments on these papers via private e-mail Monday of the next week.

## Grading

The percentage breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

Final Grade Breakdown (out of 100 percent):

1) Blackboard Discussion: 25% of final grade

2) Assignment One: 25% of final grade

3) Assignment Two: 25% of final grade

4) Assignment Three: 25% of final grade

Percentage Total: 25% + 25% + 25% + 25% = 100 percent

Note: All elements of this class must be completed in order to receive a final grade higher than an F in this course.

Letter Grades will be determined as follows:

A = 93 and above

B = 83-86

C = 73-76

F = 59.9 and below

A- = 90-92.9

B- = 80-82.9

C- = 70-72.9

B+ = 87-89.9

C+ = 77 – 79.9

D = 60-69.9

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity and will be held to the code of conduct established in the Binghamton University Rules of Conduct and Academic Honesty Policy. Ignorance of the relevant rules pertaining to academic honesty is not a justifiable excuse. If you have not, please review these rules through Binghamton.edu if you have any questions, and complete the library's tutorial on Academic Honesty that is available through the Library tab on your Mycourses home page.

### **Disability Related Equal Access Accommodation Statement**

Students wishing to request academic accommodations to ensure their equitable access and participation in this course should notify the instructor by the second week of class. Authorizations from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are generally required. We encourage you to contact SSD at (607) 777-2686 to schedule an appointment with the Director or Learning Disabilities Specialist. Their website ([www.binghamton.edu/ssd](http://www.binghamton.edu/ssd)) includes information regarding their Disability Documentation Guidelines. The office is located in UU – 119.

## **Assignments**

### **Week 1: Interstate Conflict**

Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>: **FIRST DAY OF CLASSES**

1. Review Syllabus on Blackboard
2. Participate in Introduction Discussion Forum

Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>: A Brief History of International Conflict

1. Bean, Richard. 1973. "War and the Birth of the State." *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 33 (1); 203-221.

Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>: Rationalist Explanations for War

1. Fearon, James. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization*, Vol. 49 (3): 379-414.
2. Powell, R. 2006. "War as a commitment problem." *International Organization*, Vol. 60 (1):169-203.

Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>: Non-Rationalist Explanations for War

1. Chiozza, G. and Goemans, H. E. 2004. "International conflict and the tenure of leaders: Is war still ex post inefficient?" *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48 (3):604-619.
2. Kaufmann, Chaim. 2004. "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security*, Vol. 29, (1): pp. 5-48.

Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>: The Democratic Peace

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

2. Rosato, Sebastian. 2003. "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97 (4): 585-602.

Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>: **ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE**

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>: Winter Break Begins**

**Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>: Winter Break Ends**

### **Week 2: Domestic Politics and Intrastate Conflict**

Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>: Domestic Politics and War

1. Leeds, Brett and David Davis. 1997. "Domestic Political Vulnerability and International Disputes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41 (6):814-834.
2. Fordham, Benjamin. 1998. "Partisanship, Macroeconomic Policy, and U.S. Uses of Force, 1949-1994." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 42 (4): 418-439.

Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>: Diversionary War

1. Ostrom, Charles and Brian Job. 1986. "The President and the Political Use of Force." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80 (2): 541-566
2. Pickering, Jeffrey and Emizet Kisangani. 2010. "Diversionary Despots? Comparing Autocracies' Propensities to Use and to Benefit from Military Force." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 54 (2): 477-493.

Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>: Intra-State Conflict

1. Collier, Paul and Anne Hoeffler, 2004. "Greed and grievance in civil war." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563-595.
2. Humpreys, Macartan , Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. "Who fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil Wars." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 52 (2): 436-455.

Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>: Counter Insurgency

1. Lyall, Jason and Isaiah Wilson III. 2009. "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars." *International Organization*, Vol. 63 (1): 67-106.
2. Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. 2001. "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 24 (1): pp. 93-128.

Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>: **ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE**

### **Week 3: International Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>: Economic Methods of Conflict

1. Drezner, Daniel. 2003. "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion." *International Organization*, Vol. 57 (3): 643-659.
2. Fariss, C. 2010. "The Strategic Substitution of United States Foreign Aid." *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 6 (2):107-131.

Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>: Terrorism as a Strategy of Conflict

1. Kydd, Andrew and Barbara Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security*, Vol. 31 (1): 49-80.
2. Byman, Daniel and Sarah Kreps. 2010. "Agents of Destruction? Applying Principal-Agent Analysis to State-Sponsored Terrorism." *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 11 (1): 1-18.

Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>: Low-Violence Conflict

1. Stephan, Maria and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Political Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1: 7-44.
2. Williams, Tim. 2011. "The Curious Tale of Preah Vihear: The Process and Value of World Heritage Sites." *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, Vol. 13 (1): 1-7.

Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>: Human and Environmental Costs of Conflict

1. Gleditsch, Nils. 1998. "Armed Conflict and the Environment: A Critique of the Literature." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35 (3): 381-400.
2. Hazem, Adam Ghobarah, Paul Huth, and Bruce Russett. 2003. "Civil Wars Kill and Maim People—Long After the Shooting Stops," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97 (2): 189-202.

Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>: **LAST DAY OF CLASSES**

1. Participate in Conclusion Discussion Forum

Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>: **ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE**