
PO 8051
International Conflict

Michaelmas Term
Thursdays 10–13

Contact Information

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Description

This graduate course is about the causes and consequences of conflicts between and within nations, as well as theories of international security. Existing empirical results will also be emphasized and particular attention will be paid to the relevance of the concepts introduced to contemporary geopolitical issues and conflicts.

Requirements and grading

Each week we will discuss a particular topic using the readings as a basis. We will also debate current international security affairs as they unfold in the world, and as they relate to the theories and concepts in this class. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation (20%)

Participation and attendance are essential. You should come to class ready to a. summarize each paper's main findings; b. explain the method used in each paper; and c. have thought about possible improvements to the paper or feasible extensions.

Presentation (8%)

Students are required to make one presentation on one of the topics listed at the end of each week's reading list. The allocation of topics will be based on stated

preferences (or random draw if more than one student expresses the same preference). The presentations should last no more than 5 minutes and be based on a *single* slide (animated slides are fine, but do not overdo it), ideally a *map*. Grading will be based mainly on *clarity of exposition* and the quality of the content. Less is more, i.e., do not try to cram every detail into the presentation, Presenters are also expected to be able to respond to questions from the audience (incl. myself).

Research Idea Papers (32%)

Students are required to submit four response papers (max 500 words each) throughout the semester (each worth 8% of your final mark). A fifth one may *optionally* be submitted, in which case the best four marks will be counted. At least one of these papers must be submitted before the seminar of week 4. In these papers, students are required to:

1. Identify a research question
2. Describe how you would answer that question. Note that what you propose can be ambitious but should be feasible (ideally by you).

The idea is for you to try out ideas for future research projects, the research paper for this seminar, or even your dissertation. I will try to grade papers submitted before Wed. noon before class the next day. Either way, you must submit the paper before the beginning of class. I may ask you to present your idea if relevant to the class.

Research Paper (40%)

The research paper (max 2,200 words, bibliography excluded) will be due at the latest on Dec. 9, 23:59. It should outline a research design for a larger project (possibly a first step towards your dissertation). The paper needs to follow a clear structure:

1. What is your motivating question? Avoid questions that start with 'How'.
2. How does your project relate to existing work?
3. What are your hypotheses?
4. What relevant data are available, or could *feasibly* be collected?
5. What method would you use to test your hypotheses? This may include any combination of comparative case studies, interviews, statistical analysis, computer simulation, mathematical modeling, etc.
6. How do you expect the results would support or falsify the hypotheses?

For both the response and researcher papers I am looking for *creativity*, with feasibility and theoretical or empirical fruitfulness as your only constraints. *Concise and clear* writing is also essential. Papers merely reviewing existing work or listing historical facts will not receive a passing grade.

Turnitin

Please submit *all* your written work, including response papers, through Turnitin via Blackboard (mymodule.tcd.ie).

Plagiarism

Please follow the standard of academic honesty set forth in the College Calendar (<http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/calendar>) and online: <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>. You should also complete the online tutorial on avoiding plagiarism <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write>.

Readings

There is no textbook for this class. Instead, three types of readings are required: (1) scholarly articles and (2) policy-oriented pieces are listed in this syllabus. Students must read *all* readings listed in the 'required' section for each class and be ready to discuss each of them in class. The required readings are either on Blackboard or on reserve in the library. Some weeks (3, 5 & 6) require a large amount of reading, so I advise you to plan ahead (on average 145 pages per week). Finally, students are also expected to have read (3) the news and relevant sources of information such as:

- Council on Foreign Relations (<http://www.cfr.org/>)
- Foreign Affairs (<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>)
- Foreign Policy (<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>)
- The Economist (<http://www.economist.com/>)
- The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/index.html>)
- The Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/>)
- The Financial Times (e.g., <http://www.ft.com/intl/comment/columnists/gideonrachman>)

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A. Combat Outcomes	
B. The Duration of Peace	

Schedule

Week 1. Introductory Session: The End of War?

Required Readings:

- . Chapter 5: “The Long Peace”. 80 pages
- Joshua S Goldstein. War Really Is Going Out of Style. *The New York Times*. December 17, 2011. 3 pages

Suggested Readings:

- .
- . 28 pages
- Walter R Mead. The Return of Geopolitics. *Foreign Affairs*. 17 Apr. 2014. 7 pages
- John G Ikenberry. The Illusion of Geopolitics. *Foreign Affairs*. 17 Apr. 2014. 7 pages

Week 2. Is War in our Genes?

Required Readings:

- . ch. 1–3, 6,7 (pp. 3–55, 114–145).
- .
- .

Suggested Readings:

- . Introduction, pp. 3–39.
- . Ch. 2 (‘The First Image’, pp. 16–41).
- .
- . ch. 1&2, pp. 3-54
- .
- .

Presentations:

- The Sykes-Picot agreement and its ramifications.
- The Senkaku Islands
- The South China Sea

Week 3. War and SocietyRequired Readings:

-
- .
- . pp. 6–44.

Suggested Readings:

- pp. 67–95
- . Ch. 3, pp. 29–46
- . Ch. 8
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

Presentations:

- South Sudan
- Kashmir

Week 4. Bargaining and ConflictRequired Readings :

- . (Read carefully)
- . (Difficult. Read until you get the gist)
- . (Somewhat technical. Read carefully)

Suggested Readings:

- , ch. 12 (pp. 299–338).
- . Ch. 3, pp. 82–114 (technical reading)
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

Presentations:

- North Korea's nuclear programme
- Iran's nuclear programme

Week 5. Forecasting ConflictRequired Readings:

- , ch. 4–7 (pp. 47–123)
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- , ch. 3–4, pp. 46–104

Suggested Readings:

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Presentations:

- Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran
- Gaza

Week 6. Weapons of mass destructionRequired Readings:

- Schelling, Thomas. 2005. Nobel Prize Lecture (video):
<http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=626>
- James Conca. A Nuclear Primer – What Is An Atomic Bomb?
<https://goo.gl/h88gJu>

- Sagan, Scott D. 1996/7. *Why do States Build Nuclear Weapons?* International Security, 21/3: 54-86.
- Price, Richard. 1995. A Genealogy of the Chemical Weapons Taboo. International Organization 49/01: 73-103.

Suggested Readings:

- Cirincione, Joseph. Bomb Scare: The History & Future of Nuclear Weapons. Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Gavin, Francis J. Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America's Atomic Age. Cornell University Press, 2015.
- Sagan, Scott D., and Kenneth N. Waltz. The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate. 3rd edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 2012
- Trachtenberg, Marc. History & Strategy. Princeton University Press, 1991.

Presentations:

- The role of Jordan in the Middle East
- The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Week 7. Reading Week: no seminar

Week 8. Terrorism

Required Readings:

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-
-
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Presentations:

- ISIS: origins
- ISIS: current geopolitical state
- ISIS: current funding and finances

Week 9. Civil Wars IRequired Readings:

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-
-

Suggested Readings:

- , Ch. 1 and 2, pp. 1-54

Presentations:

- The Boko Haram Insurgency
- The Kurds
- Ethnic relations in Iraq today

Week 10. Civil Wars IIRequired Readings:

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-

Suggested Readings:

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-

Presentations:

- The Columbian peace process
- The Somalian civil war

Week 11. Economic Interdependence and International Conflict

Required Readings:

- . Part I (pp. 31–59, 89–147).
- Marina Ottaway, David Ottaway. How the Kurds Got Their Way. *Foreign Affairs*. 17 Apr. 2014. (Skim)
- .

Suggested Readings:

- .
- .
- .
- .

Presentations:

- The geopolitical impact of Russian Gas
- Ethnic violence in South Sudan
- The War in Donbass (Ukraine)

Week 12. Conflict Outcomes

Required Readings:

A. Combat Outcomes

- . pp. 28–77.
- .
- Stephen Biddle. Ending the War in Afghanistan. *Foreign Affairs*. 12 Aug. 2013.

B. The Duration of Peace

- .

Suggested Readings:

- .
- .
- . pp. 10–38.
- US Army Counter-insurgency handbook, chapter 2.
<http://usacac.army.mil/cac/repository/materials/coin-fm3-24.pdf>

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Presentations:

- The Libyan Crisis
- The Yemeni crisis