PO 8051
International Conflict

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**


**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:

- The Financial Times (e.g., [http://www.ft.com/intl/comment/columnists/gideonrachman](http://www.ft.com/intl/comment/columnists/gideonrachman))
Course Outline

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Schedule

Week 1. Introductory Session: The End of War?

Required Readings:

- Chapter 5: “The Long Peace”. 80 pages

Suggested Readings:

- 28 pages

Week 2. Is War in our Genes?

Required Readings:

- ch. 1–3, 6,7 (pp. 3–55, 114–145).
- Ch. 2 (‘The First Image’, pp. 16–41).

Suggested Readings:

- 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 Society

Required Readings:

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- pp. 6–44.

Suggested Readings:

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

- South Sudan
- Kashmir

Week 4. Bargaining and Conflict

Required 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)
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Presentations:

- North Korea’s nuclear programme
- Iran’s nuclear programme

**Week 5. Forecasting Conflict**

Required Readings:

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

Suggested Readings:

Presentations:

- Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran
- Gaza

**Week 6. Weapons of mass destruction**

Required Readings:

  http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=626
- James Conca. A Nuclear Primer – What Is An Atomic Bomb?
  https://goo.gl/h88gJu


Suggested Readings:


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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Presentations:

• ISIS: origins
• ISIS: current geopolitical state
• ISIS: current funding and finances
Week 9. Civil Wars I

Required Readings:


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 II

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


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).

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.

B. The Duration of Peace

Suggested Readings:

- pp. 10–38.
- US Army Counter-insurgency handbook, chapter 2.
  
Presentations:

- The Libyan Crisis
- The Yemeni crisis