PO 8051
International Conflict B

Michaelmas Term
Fridays 10–12
Room 2043 (Arts Building)

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. All written assignments (and presentation slides) must be submitted via Blackboard (‘Assignments’).

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.

1The Syllabus was designed by Prof Thomas Chadeaux and adopted with minor changes.
Presentation (10%)

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 (30%)

Students are required to submit three response papers (max 500 words each) throughout the semester (each worth 10% of your final mark). A fourth one may optionally be submitted, in which case the best three 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. This means finding a gap in the literature.
2. Describe how you would answer that question. Note that what you propose can be ambitious but the project 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 by Thursday 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.

Note that the first of these three papers must be submitted before October 8th, 2021.

Research Paper (40%)

The research paper (max 2,200 words, bibliography, abstract and title page matter excluded) will be due at the latest on December 19, 23:59, which is the end of assessment week. 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 (link).

**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 Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/)
• The Financial Times (e.g., http://www.ft.com/intl/comment/columnists/gideonrachman)

Blogs

In addition, a few academic blogs (in no particular order) which might be of interest to some of you.

• **The Monkey Cage**. The Monkey Cage’s mission is to connect political scientists and the political conversation by creating a compelling forum, developing publicly focused scholars, and building an informed audience. Using the discipline’s research, we help make sense of the circus that is politics. At TMC, political scientists draw on their expertise and the discipline’s research to provide in-depth analysis, illuminate the news, and inform civic discussion. We want the political conversation to include timely, accessible, and sound knowledge from a publicly oriented political science discipline, and to be less dominated by evidence-free arguments.

• **Political Violence @ A Glance**. An award-winning online magazine directed by Erica Chenoweth, Christian Davenport, Barbara Walter, and Joe Young, that answers questions on the causes and consequences of violence and protest in the world’s conflict zones. Analysis comes from distinguished experts who are doing the most rigorous, most interesting, and most policy relevant research. Our goal is to offer simple, straight-forward analysis. No jargon. No lingo. Just insightful content, and a bit of fun.

• **Lawfare**. A blog devoted to that nebulous zone in which actions taken or contemplated to protect the nation interact with the nation’s laws and legal institutions.

• **War on the Rocks**. A platform for analysis, commentary, debate and multimedia content on foreign policy and national security issues through a realist lens. It features articles and podcasts produced by an array of writers with deep experience in these matters: top notch scholars who study war, those who have served or worked in war zones, and more than a few who have done it all.

• **Peace Science Digest**. A publication to create awareness about the contributions peace research can make to prevent war and violence. We link the work of academics to peacebuilders, peace advocates, educators, the media, elected officials, and others who can benefit from the research. Our analyses can transform thinking, change narratives, strengthen peace work and advocacy, and improve policy-making. Presenting current peace research without academic
jargon, with key talking points, practical implications, further reading, and contemporary relevance, we advance useful knowledge.

- **PRIO Blogs**: Blog from the Peace Research Institute Oslo.

### Podcasts

I want to mention some podcasts (in no particular order) which are generally worth following and might be of interest to some of you.

- **Off the Page**: A podcast by the *International Security* journal. Each episode is based on a recent publication in the journal and features the author(s) and 1-2 guests from the broader policy community to discuss the piece.
- **PRIO’s Peace in a Pod**: Podcast by the Peace Research Institute Oslo which features talks with their in-house experts on current events and/or research at the institute.
- **Researching Peace**: A podcast from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University. Features discussions about the development and current state of empirical conflict research and more specific topics of interest.
- **Berlin Security Beat**: A podcast from the Centre for International Security at the Hertie School in Berlin. Features political scientists discussing international security issues which made the news to combine research findings with current events.
- **War & Peace**: A podcast from the International Crisis Group which features interviews with experts about all things Europe and its neighbourhood.
- **Whiskey & International Relations Theory**: A podcast by Drs. Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, Daniel Nexon in which they discuss some of the more important international relations theory writings and debates in depth.
- **Paul Poast Podcast**: A podcast with Prof. Paul Poast from the University of Chicago in which he discusses international relations and foreign affairs. Also worth following on Twitter, he regularly tweets great threads in which he links current events to empirical findings and theory or more recently a series on threads on realist theory.
Course Outline

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  A. Combat Outcomes
  B. The Duration of Peace
Schedule

Week 1. Introductory Session: The End of War?

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:

- Bear Braumoeller. Is war disappearing? In *APSA Chicago 2013 Meeting*, 2013. 28 pages

Week 2. Is War in our Genes?

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:

• Robert M Axelrod. *The evolution of cooperation*. Basic books, 2006. 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:**


**Suggested Readings:**


Presentations:

• South Sudan
• Kashmir

Week 4. Bargaining and Conflict

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


Presentations:

• North Korea’s nuclear programme
• Iran’s nuclear programme
Week 5. Forecasting Conflict

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


Presentations:

- Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran
- Gaza
Week 6. Weapons of mass destruction

Required Readings:


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:


Presentations:
• ISIS: origins
• ISIS: current geopolitical state
• ISIS: current funding and finances

**Week 9. Civil Wars I**

**Required Readings:**

• Daniel N Posner. The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(04):529–545, 2004

**Suggested Readings:**

• Charles Tilly. *The politics of collective violence*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, 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:


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

* B. The Duration of Peace

**Suggested Readings:**


Presentations:

• The Libyan Crisis
• The Yemeni crisis