

POP88091 — International Conflict B

Module Information	
Module Code	POP88091
Module Title	International Conflict B
Department	Political Science
Module Personnel	Professor Jesse Dillon Savage (dillonsj@tcd.ie)
Academic Year	2025–26
Credit Weighting	10 credits (ECTS)
Semester	Semester 1
Contact Hours	2 hours x11

Module Content	
Module Description	The objective of this postgraduate module is to help students critically evaluate current world affairs using concepts and theories from contemporary international relations research. The international system is a complex environment. Multiple actors, interests, and institutions interact to produce outcomes that we read and hear about in the media every day. Students will acquire the necessary theoretical tools which will allow for a clearer understanding of the international system and will facilitate critical and informed evaluation of global events. The causes and consequences of conflicts between nations and within nations, as well as theories of international security. Existing empirical results will also be emphasised, and particular attention will be paid to the relevance of the concepts introduced to contemporary geopolitical issues and conflicts.
Module Learning Aims	1. Develop an analytically grounded understanding of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of conflict between and within nations, and of theories of international security. 2. Engage critically with competing theoretical frameworks on conflict and evaluate them against existing empirical research and contemporary geopolitical events.

Module Content	
	3. Build the skills to assess academic arguments, articulate critiques, and communicate them clearly in both written and oral form. 4. Develop the ability to formulate a meaningful research question and design a systematic (theoretically grounded, empirically testable) approach to answering it.
Learning Outcomes	1. Critically evaluate contemporary world affairs and conflict phenomena using concepts and theories from international relations research. 2. Discuss and debate conflict-related readings in a structured, analytically informed way in seminar. 3. Present and defend an argument about a reading clearly and persuasively in front of an audience. 4. Identify a theoretically grounded research question on a conflict-related topic and outline how it could be investigated (research idea papers). 5. Produce a structured research proposal, including a research question, theoretical framework, hypotheses, and an empirical strategy.
Indicative Reading / Resources	Extensive week-by-week required and suggested reading list across 12 weeks (e.g. Braumoeller 2019; Fearon 1995; Walter 1997; Kalyvas 2006; Kroenig 2013; Chenoweth 2013) — see full module syllabus for complete weekly citations.

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Class discussion / participation — 20% Oral presentation — 10% Two research idea papers — 30% (2 × 15%) Research proposal — 40%
Assessment Details	Class participation in seminar discussion and debate is a core element of the module. Students are expected to have read all required readings and to offer critical, informed input each week; those falling behind in participation may be asked to submit additional response papers. Each student will deliver a short (approx. 5-minute) oral presentation introducing one of the required readings and leading class discussion, emphasising discussion questions rather than summary.

Assessment

Students submit two research idea papers (max. 500 words each) over the semester. Each paper must identify a theoretically and empirically meaningful research question arising from the course readings and outline how it could be investigated. At least one paper must be submitted before the seminar in week 4.

The final assessment is a 2,000-word research proposal (including references, footnotes, and title page) that develops one of these ideas (or an alternative research question) into a coherent research design, situating it in the literature, deriving hypotheses, and outlining an empirical strategy — intended to provide a foundation for the student's dissertation.

Additional Information

Prerequisites

None

Co-requisites

None

Any other information

All written work is submitted via Blackboard (assessments folder); the research proposal deadline in the source syllabus was 6pm, Monday 13 December — confirm the exact date for this academic year. Standard College policy on academic integrity and plagiarism applies (see College Calendar). The lecturer reserves the right to reasonably adjust elements of the syllabus, most commonly the reading list, during the semester.