

PSC542 International Conflict

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Spring 2016

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Class Hours: 1:00-3:30pm, Tuesdays
Classroom: 306 Lloyd Hall

Course Description

This seminar is designed to familiarize the student with the theoretical and empirical literature on the onset, expansion, and consequences of war as well as the conditions for peace. Among the theories reviewed will be the balance of power, power transition, formal theories on war, the territorial explanation of war, and the democratic peace. Emphasized will be the role of alliances, arms races, and crisis escalation in generating conflict processes, and the impact of norms, regimes, and institutions on building peace. The goal of this seminar is the development of critical thinking, analysis, and application.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, each student should be able to:

- Discuss and analyze various theories of the causes of international conflict
- Craft a political science research design to test the theory, including the derivation of hypotheses, conceptualization and measurement, sampling, various types of data collection, and statistical inference
- Identify weaknesses in existing published studies
- Suggest ways of correcting errors in previous research

In addition to learning the course material on international conflict, after successful completion of the activities in this course, students should also be able to

- Critically discriminate between reliable and less reliable information in their decision-making
- Understand the scientific method and critically evaluate scientific information

- Develop effective written communication skills.
- And develop skills in working together in team activities.

Required Readings

- see weekly schedule below

Course Requirements

The requirements of the course are as follows with relative weight noted:

- 20% Attendance and Discussion
- 20% Biweekly presentations
- 30% Replications (two–15% each)
- 30% Research design

I require attendance. The class meets only once per week, so please make arrangements to be in class and prepared for every single meeting. If you must miss more than one class meeting, then please drop the course immediately. Missing two or more classes without an approved excuse may be grounds for a failing grade in the course.

The main task each week will be a discussion of the readings. We will begin with a brief overview of the subject area followed by student-led discussions of specified topics. Critical analyses of the readings are expected; discussions should outline both the flaws and relative merits of the readings as well as possible extensions and connections to other areas of the field.

Each student will be responsible for presenting a required reading on a rotating basis, most likely once every other week. These presentations can use PowerPoint or Beamer for support but do not need to do so. Each presentation should address the (1) main points of the article, (2) the research design, (3) the results, and (4) the importance of the article as it relates to the field.

The first week of readings includes a paper that addresses suggested changes in the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) project [Gibler et al., 2015]. Students are to pick TWO empirical papers from the literature on international conflict and apply the new dataset to the papers. The replication should be two or three pages discussing the procedures used for replication and an analysis of the findings, including statistical output. One replication should be completed by the end of February. Both replications are due by the first week of April.

A fourth requirement of the course is the development of a research design on a topic related to the course and of quality comparable to the start of a conference paper. The papers should explore an original topic and outline the appropriate testing of a hypothesis developed from the literature on conflict as covered in the class. These papers are due during finals week.

Email Policy

Email is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and student outside of class. Students should take advantage of this opportunity but should also do so in a professional manner. I will not reply to emails that do not include a salutation (“Dear Prof...” or “Hello

Dr.."). I will not reply to emails that are hastily written and filled with grammatical errors and misspellings. I will also not respond to emails that ask for answers to questions that can easily be found on the syllabus or the class blog. Last, if you have a question regarding lectures or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, come to me during office hours, or post a question on the blog for other students to answer. Email is best for 1-2 sentence responses, and conceptual questions do not lend themselves well to email.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are a distraction to both the professor and to fellow students, even if the phone is only used for texting. You should **TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF!** before entering the classroom.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

I take academic integrity very seriously and will not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. There are very serious penalties for cheating at UA that could have consequences far beyond your college career. Cheating of any form is a really stupid thing to do so don't try, and, if you have any doubts about what cheating is, ask me or examine the UA policies (see below).

The Code of Academic Conduct in the University of Alabama Undergraduate Catalog defines plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty as follows:

- Plagiarism: representing the words, data, works, ideas, computer programs or output, or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own
- Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information
- Fabrication: presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material
- Misrepresentation: falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts.

Disabilities Policy

Federal law mandates the provision of services at the university-level to qualified students with disabilities. Please inform the instructor immediately if special circumstances need to be discussed.

Class Schedule

01/19 (Tuesday): Conceptualizing Conflict

- John A Vasquez. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapter 2
- Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer. Militarized interstate disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, coding rules, and empirical patterns. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 15(2):163–213, 1996
- D. M. Gibler, S. V. Miller, and E. K. Little. A replication and analysis of the militarized interstate dispute (mid) dataset, 1816-2001. Working Paper, 2015. URL <http://dmgibler.people.ua.edu/mid-replication.html>

01/26 (Tuesday): Territorial Issues

- John A Vasquez. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapters 4 and 10
- Douglas M Gibler. *The Territorial Peace: Borders, State Development, and International Conflict*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012, Chapters 2 and 3
- John A Vasquez. Why do neighbors fight? proximity, interaction or territoriality? *Journal of Peace Research*, 32(3):277–293, 1995
- David B Carter and Hein E Goemans. The making of the territorial order: New borders and the emergence of interstate conflict. *International Organization*, 65(02):275–309, 2011

02/02 (Tuesday): Alliances

- John A Vasquez. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapters 5 and 11
- Alastair Smith. Alliance formation and war. *International Studies Quarterly*, pages 405–425, 1995
- Brett Ashley Leeds. Domestic political institutions, credible commitments, and international cooperation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(4):979–1002, 1999
- James D Morrow. Alliances: Why write them down? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3(1):63–83, 2000
- Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G. Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. Reevaluating alliance reliability: Specific threats, specific promises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44(5):686–699, 2000
- Brett Ashley Leeds. Do alliances deter aggression? the influence of military alliances on the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3):427–439, 2003
- Douglas M. Gibler and Scott Wolford. Alliances, then democracy: An examination of the relationship between regime type and alliance formation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50(1):129–153, 2006

02/09 (Tuesday): Arms Races

- John A Vasquez. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapters 5 and 11
- Michael D Wallace. Armaments and escalation: two competing hypotheses. *International Studies Quarterly*, pages 37–56, 1982
- Paul F Diehl. Arms races and escalation: a closer look. *Journal of Peace Research*, 20(3):205–212, 1983
- Susan G Sample. Arms races and dispute escalation: resolving the debate. *Journal of Peace Research*, 34(1):7–22, 1997
- Douglas M Gibler, Toby J Rider, and Marc L Hutchison. Taking arms against a sea of troubles: Conventional arms races during periods of rivalry. *Journal of Peace Research*, 42(2):131–147, 2005
- Toby J Rider, Michael G Findley, and Paul F Diehl. Just part of the game? arms races, rivalry, and war. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(1):85–100, 2011

02/16 (Tuesday): Deterrence and Crisis Escalation

- Paul Huth and Bruce Russett. What makes deterrence work? cases from 1900-1980. *World Politics*, 36(4):496–526, 1984
- Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein. Rational deterrence theory: I think, therefore I deter. *World Politics*, 41(2):208–224, 1989. ISSN 00438871
- Paul Huth and Bruce Russett. Testing deterrence theory: Rigor makes a difference. *World Politics*, 42(4):466–501, 1990
- James D. Fearon. Selection effects and deterrence. *International Interactions*, 28(1):5–29, 2002

02/23 (Tuesday): Rivalries

- Gary Goertz and Paul F Diehl. The empirical importance of enduring rivalries. *International Interactions*, 18(2):151–163, 1992
- Gary Goertz and Paul F Diehl. Enduring rivalries: Theoretical constructs and empirical patterns. *International studies quarterly*, pages 147–171, 1993
- William R Thompson. Identifying rivals and rivalries in world politics. *International Studies Quarterly*, pages 557–586, 2001
- Michael P Colaresi and William R Thompson. Alliances, arms buildups and recurrent conflict: Testing a steps-to-war model. *Journal of Politics*, 67(2):345–364, 2005
- Karen A Rasler and William R Thompson. Contested territory, strategic rivalries, and conflict escalation. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(1):145–168, 2006

03/01 (Tuesday): Bargaining and Conflict

- James D. Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–414, 1995
- Robert Powell. War as a commitment problem. *International organization*, 60(01):169–203, 2006
- William Reed, David H Clark, Timothy Nordstrom, and Wonjae Hwang. War, power, and bargaining. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(04):1203–1216, 2008
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P Monteiro. Known unknowns: power shifts, uncertainty, and war. *International Organization*, 68(01):1–31, 2014
- D. M. Gibler. State development, parity, and international conflict. Working Paper

03/08 (Tuesday): War Expansion

- John A Vasquez. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Chapter 7
- Frank Whelon Wayman. Bipolarity and war: The role of capability concentration and alliance patterns among major powers, 1816-1965. *Journal of Peace Research*, 21(1):61–78, 1984
- Randolph M Siverson and Harvey Starr. Opportunity, willingness, and the diffusion of war. *American Political Science Review*, 84(01):47–67, 1990
- John Lewis Gaddis. The long peace: Elements of stability in the postwar international system. *International security*, pages 99–142, 1986

03/15 (Tuesday): No class—Spring Break**03/22 (Tuesday): Democratic Peace**

- Immanuel Kant. Toward perpetual peace. *Practical philosophy*, 8:836, 1795
- Michael W. Doyle. Liberalism and world politics. *American Political Science Review*, 80(4):1151–1169, 1986
- Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett. Normative and structural causes of democratic peace, 1946-1986. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3):624–638, 1993
- William J. Dixon. Democracy and the peaceful settlement of international conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 88(1): 14–32, 1994
- John R Oneal and Bruce Russett. The kantian peace: The pacific benefits of democracy, interdependence, and international organizations, 1885–1992. *World Politics*, 52(01):1–37, 1999

03/29 (Tuesday): Criticisms of the Democratic Peace

- Donald P. Green, Soo Yeon Kim, and David H. Yoon. Dirty pool. *International Organization*, 55(2):441–468, 2001
- John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett. Clear and clean: The fixed effects of the liberal peace. *International Organization*, 55(2): 469–485, 2001
- Gary King. Proper nouns and methodological propriety: Pooling dyads in international relations data. *International Organization*, 55(2):497–507, 2001

04/05 (Tuesday): Mechanisms of the Democratic Peace

- James D. Fearon. Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international disputes. *American Political Science Review*, 88(3):577–592, 1994
- Douglas A Van Belle. Press freedom and the democratic peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, pages 405–414, 1997
- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. An institutional explanation of the democratic peace. *American Political Science Review*, 93(4):791–807, 1999
- Kenneth A Schultz. Do democratic institutions constrain or inform? contrasting two institutional perspectives on democracy and war. *International Organization*, 53(02):233–266, 1999
- Michael Colaresi. A boom with review: How retrospective oversight increases the foreign policy ability of democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(3):671–689, 2012

04/12 (Tuesday): Audience Costs

- Kenneth A Schultz. Looking for audience costs. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45(1):32–60, 2001
- Michael Tomz. Domestic audience costs in international relations: An experimental approach. *International Organization*, 61(04):821–840, 2007
- Jack Snyder and Erica D Borghard. The cost of empty threats: A penny, not a pound. *American Political Science Review*, 105(03):437–456, 2011
- Marc Trachtenberg. Audience costs: An historical analysis. *Security Studies*, 21(1):3–42, 2012
- Kenneth A Schultz. Why we needed audience costs and what we need now. *Security Studies*, 21(3):369–375, 2012
- Michael Tomz and Jessica L Weeks. Public opinion and the democratic peace. *American Political Science Review*, 2013
- Douglas M Gibler and Marc L Hutchison. Territorial issues, audience costs, and the democratic peace: The importance of issue salience. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(04):879–893, 2013

04/19 (Tuesday): Alternatives to the Democratic Peace

- Michael Mousseau. Market prosperity, democratic consolidation, and democratic peace. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44(4):472–507, 2000
- Erik Gartzke. The capitalist peace. *American journal of political science*, 51(1):166–191, 2007
- Michael Mousseau. Coming to terms with the capitalist peace. *International Interactions*, 2010
- Allan Dafoe. Statistical critiques of the democratic peace: Caveat emptor. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2):247–262, 2011
- Allan Dafoe, John R Oneal, and Bruce Russett. The democratic peace: Weighing the evidence and cautious inference. *International Studies Quarterly*, 57(1):201–214, 2013

04/26 (Tuesday): Territorial Peace

- Douglas M Gibler. *The Territorial Peace: Borders, State Development, and International Conflict*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012, Chapters 4–9

05/03 (Tuesday): Review