

PS 644: Theories of Interstate Conflict
Prof. Douglas M. Gibler
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Class time: R, 2-4:30am, 308 Manly Hall
Office Hours: 1:00-2:00pm, Tuesdays, or by appointment

Theories of Interstate Conflict

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.

REQUIREMENTS:

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 be PowerPoint or Beamer and 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.

Each student will also complete two (5-page, typed, double-spaced) literature reviews during the course of the semester. We will assign topics at the second class meeting, and the literature review itself is due on the day the class discusses each particular topic. Note that you should not present on the day a literature review is due. Literature reviews should adequately cover the readings assigned for the discussion but should also go well beyond these readings and discuss other pertinent articles and books.

A third requirement of the course is an empirical research paper, of quality comparable to a conference paper or journal article. The papers should explore an original topic and provide evidence testing a hypothesis developed from the literature on conflict as covered in the class. These papers are due at the last meeting of the course.

The requirements of the course are as follows with relative weight assigned in parentheses:

- Discussion (15%)
- Bi-weekly presentations (15%)
- Two literature reviews (30%)
- Research Paper (40%)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this course, each student should:

- Be able to interpret scientific findings
- Be able to apply scientific findings to explain historic events
- Be able to construct a theory
- Be able to develop a research design to test a scientific theory
- Be able to understand difficulties in measurement and testing of IR theories

In addition to the course material on original research in International Relations, 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
- Be able to understand the scientific method and evaluate scientific findings
- Be familiar with scholarly and research methods

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

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, examine the UA policies (see below), or better still, take this tutorial on plagiarism that was developed by UA's libraries: [Play-it-safe](#).

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.

Remember- the following require the use of a citation:

- Any material directly quoted from another's work
- Any information that is summarized or paraphrased
- Any idea derived from a known source
- Any fact or data not common knowledge and borrowed from another's work

Material that is common or general knowledge does not have to be footnoted, unless the wording is taken directly from a particular source. A general rule is that if a fact can be found in five or more sources, it is considered to be common knowledge and does not have to be documented.

GRADING POLICY:

There is no official grading policy at UA, so I thought students might like to know the general outline I use for assignments:

A (90s) Excellent: Students have mastered the material, exams or papers have no serious mistakes and display creativity, thoughtfulness, or insight beyond points made in the readings.

B (80s) Solid: there may be a couple of mistakes on exams, or weaknesses in written work, but the basic ideas and comprehension of the material are correct. B is a very good grade in my classes.

C (70s) Average: there are some basic misunderstandings of the material because the student has not put enough effort into the work.

D (60s) Deficient: there are serious misunderstandings in the work and/or little evidence of any hard work.

F (50s or less) Failure to even try.

DISABILITY ACCESS:

To request disability accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 348-4285. After consultation with that office, contact your professor. However, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for the accommodations on a timely basis. Special arrangements for exams must be made at least one week prior to the exam date or your instructor is not required to provide requested accommodations. Any request for special arrangements made less than one week prior to an exam date may not be able to be honored.

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, in the notes, or on the class blog. Last, if you have a question regarding lectures, discussions or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, come visit 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 instructor and to fellow students, even if the phone is only used for texting. You should **TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF!** before entering the classroom.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Students are responsible for ALL articles listed on the syllabus. Those works listed in bold are to be covered by student-led presentations.

August 23rd – Conceptualizing War

Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapter 2.

Jones, Daniel, Stuart Bremer, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, 2 (1996): 163-213.

Levy, Jack, "Analytic Problems in the Identification of War." *International Interactions* 14, 2 (1988): 181-86.

Sarkees, Meredith, Frank Wayman and J. David Singer. "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at their Distribution over Time, 1816-1997." *International Studies Quarterly*, 2003, Vol. 47: 49-70.

Singer, J. David, Stuart Bremer, and John Stuckey, "Capability Distribution, Uncertainty and Major Power War, 1820-1965," in B. Russett, ed., *Peace, War, and Numbers*, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1971: 19-48.

August 30th—No Class, APSA Meeting in New Orleans

September 6th – Territorial Issues

Vasquez, John, "Why Do Neighbors Fight?: Proximity, Interaction, or Territory." *Journal of Peace Research* 32, 3 (1995): 277-293.

Owsiak, Andrew, 2012. "Signing Up for Peace: International Boundary Agreements, Democracy, and Militarized Interstate Conflict." 2012. *International Studies Quarterly*.

Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapters 4 and 10.

Paul F. Diehl (1992). "What are they Fighting for? The Importance of Issues in International Conflict Research." *Journal of Peace Research* 29(3): 333-344.

M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2008), Chapters 1 and 4.

September 13th – Alliances

Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapters 5 and 11.

James D. Morrow, "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3 (2000): 63-83

James D. Morrow, "Arms versus Allies: Tradeoffs in the Search for Security." *International Organization* 47 (Spring 1993): 207-34.

Smith, Alastair, "Alliance Formation and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 39, 4 (1995): 405-425.

Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes. *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 427-439.

Benson, Brett, et al., Forthcoming. Unpacking Alliances: Deterrent and Compellent Alliances and Their Relationship with Conflict, 1816-2000. *Journal of Politics*

Gibler, Douglas M. 2008. The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol 52: 3 (June), pp. 426-454.

September 20th – Arms Races

Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapters 5 and 11.

- Wallace, Michael, "Armaments and Escalation: Two Competing Hypotheses." *International Studies Quarterly* 26, 2 (1982): 37-56.**
- Diehl, Paul, "Arms Races and Escalation: A Closer Look." *Journal of Peace Research* 20, 3 (1983): 205-12.**
- Sample, Susan, "Arms Races and Dispute Escalation: Resolving the Debate." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Feb 1998), pp. 122-126.**
- Diehl, Paul F. and Mark Crescenzi, "Reconfiguring the Arms Race-War Debate." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Feb. 1998), pp. 111-118.
- Andrew Kydd. Game Theory and the Spiral Model. *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (April 1997)
- Andrew Kydd. Arms Races and Arms Control: Modeling the Hawk Perspective. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April 2000)
- Gibler, Douglas M., Toby Rider, and Marc Hutchison (2005). Taking Arms Against a Sea of Troubles: Interdependent Racing and the Likelihood of Conflict in Rival States *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 42 (2): 131-147**
- September 27th – Deterrence, Bargaining, and Crisis Escalation*
Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapter 5.
- Leng, Russell J., "When Will They Ever Learn? Coercive Bargaining in Recurrent Crises." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27, 3 (1983): 379-419.
- Colaresi, Michael and William R. Thompson (2002) "Hot Spots or Hot Hands? Serial Crisis Behavior, Escalating Risks, and Rivalry." *Journal of Politics* 64: 1175-98.**
- Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Stein (1990). "Deterrence: the Elusive Dependent Variable." *World Politics* 42, 3: 336-369.**
- Huth, P. and B. Russett. 1990. "Testing deterrence theory: Rigor makes a difference." *World Politics* 42(4):466{501.**
- Fearon, J. 2002. "Selection effects and deterrence." *International Interactions* 28(1):5-29.**
- Fearon, James, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88, 3 (1994): 577-92.

Schultz, Kenneth A. 2001. Looking for Audience Costs. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (1):32-60.

October 4th—No Class, Fall Break

October 11th– Rivalries

Colaresi, Michael and William Thompson, 2005. Alliances, Arms Buildups and Recurrent Conflict: Testing A Steps-to-War Model. *Journal of Politics*, Volume 67(2).

Diehl, Paul and Gary Goertz, “The Empirical Importance of Enduring Rivalries.” *International Interactions* 18, 1992: 151-63.

William Thompson, “Identifying Rivals and Rivalries in World Politics.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 45, 4 (2001): 557-586.

Bennett, D. Scott. 1998. Integrating and Testing Models of Rivalry Termination. *American Journal of Political Science* 42:1200-1232.

Reed, William and Doug Lemke. 2001. War and Rivalry among Great Powers. *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (2):457-469.

Goertz, Gary, and Paul F. Diehl. 1995. The Initiation and Termination of Enduring Rivalries: The Impact of Political Shocks. *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1):30-52.

October 18th—No Class

October 25th—No Class, Peace Science Society Meeting in New Orleans, LA

November 1st– War Expansion

Vasquez, John, The War Puzzle Revisited. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009: Chapter 7.

Wayman, Frank, “Bipolarity and War: The Role of Capability Concentration and Alliance Patterns Among Major Powers, 1816-1965.” *Journal of Peace Research* 21, 1 (1984): 61-78.

Midlarsky, Manus, “Preventing Systemic War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28, 4 (1984): 563-84.

Siverson, Randolph and Harvey Starr, “Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War, 1816-1965.” *American Political Science Review* 84, 1 (1990): 47-67.

Kegley, Charles and Gregory Raymond, “Alliance Norms and War: A New Piece in an Old Puzzle.” *International Studies Quarterly* 26, 4 (1982): 572-95.

Gaddis, John, “The Long Peace.” *International Security* 10, 2 (1986): 99-142.

November 8th – The Democratic Peace

Oneal, John, and Bruce Russett, The Kantian peace: The pacific benefits of democracy, interdependence, and international organizations, 1885-1992, *World Politics* 52.1 (1999) 1-37

Oneal, John and Bruce Russett, The Classical Liberals Were Right: Democracy, Interdependence, and Conflict, 1950–1985. *International Studies Quarterly* (1997) 41, 267–294

Schultz, Kenneth. “Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform?: Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War,” *International Organization* 52 (Spring 1999), pp. 233-66.

Green, Donald P., Soo Yeon H. Kim, and David Yoon. 2001. Dirty Pool. *International Organization* 55 (2):441-468.

Oneal, John R., and Bruce Russett. 2001. Clear and Clean: The Fixed Effects of the Liberal Peace. *International Organization* 55 (2):469-485.

King, Gary. 2001. Proper Nouns and Methodological Propriety: Pool Dyads in International Relations Data. *International Organization* 55 (2):497-507.

November 15th – Other Findings Associated with the Democratic Peace

Dixon, William J. 1994. Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict. *American Political Science Review* 86:638-646.

Lake, David. 1992. Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War. *American Political Science Review* 86 (1):24-37.

Reiter, Dan, and Allan Stam. 1998. Democracy, War Initiation, and Victory. *American Political Science Review* 92:377-389.

Michael Desch, “Democracy and Victory” *International Security* 27,2 (2002):5-47.

Alexander Downes, "How Smart and Tough are Democracies?" *International Security* 33,4 (2009):9-51.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace. *American Political Science Review* 93 (4):791-808.

November 22nd—No Class, Thanksgiving

November 29th – Democratic Peace, Diffusion, and Territorial Issues

Mitchell, Sara M. and Brandon Prins, 1999. "Beyond Territorial Contiguity: An Examination of the Issues Underlying Democratic Interstate Disputes." *International Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 169-183.

Kadera, Kelly M., Mark J.C. Crescenzi, and Megan L. Shannon. 2003. Democratic Survival, Peace, and War in the International System. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2)

Desch, Michael C. 1996. War and Strong States, Peace and Weak States? *International Organization* 50 (2):237-68.

Thompson, William. 1996. Democracy and Peace: Putting the Cart Before the Horse? *International Organization* 50 (1):1996.

Douglas M. Gibler and Scott Wolford. 2006. Alliances, then Democracy: An Examination of the Relationship between Regime Type and Alliance Formation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. February.

December 6th – An Alternative View of the Democratic Peace

Douglas M. Gibler. 2012. The Territorial Peace: Borders, State Development and International Conflict, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 3—required for all

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapters 8 and 9

Douglas M. Gibler and Jaroslav Tir. 2010. Settled Borders and Regime Type: Democratic Transitions as Consequences of Peaceful Territorial Transfers. *American Journal of Political Science*. 54 (October): 951-968.