

Political Science 378
International Conflict

Spring semester 2008

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MWF 10-11.50
JKB 1012

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Course description

Conflict, particularly armed conflict and organised violence, seems to be an integral part of relations between states, nations and groups. National and international news is often full of reports of wars and rumours of wars. This class seeks to further students understanding of the causes and nature of conflict, at a variety of levels and with a variety of weaponry. Questions of strategy, military technology and the evolution of warfare will be discussed.

In an attempt to move away from an academic and dispassionate study of conflict, students will research a conflict and write a paper that focuses on the meaning of, and attitudes to conflict. We will also look at personal experiences of warfare and conflict.

The format for this class will be a mix of lecture and class discussion. The discussion is facilitated by your reading of the assignments prior to class. Think about the subject before class - informed discussion based on the readings and thoughtful consideration of the issues is encouraged. You are encouraged to interact; in fact, I'd much rather discuss your questions than stand there lecturing!

The particular objectives for this class are to inform students about the nature of violent conflict, so prevalent in current events and in relations between states and peoples. Furthermore, the research paper aims to develop specific interpersonal, as well as academic skills. By studying the ideas and information presented through the class, students can gain both a better understanding of the world around them and a greater capacity to affect the world for good. Furthermore, students should see the course not just as a means to acquire specialised knowledge, but also as an opportunity to develop important academic and life skills, including critical thinking and communication.

For more information on the learning outcome objectives of the Political Science department, visit <http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu>.

Reading

There are three required texts for this class:

Strategy in the contemporary world, 2nd Edition, edited by John Baylis et al.

War, edited by Lawrence Freedman

Peace and war: armed conflicts and international order 1648-1989, by Kalevi J. Holsti.

The first two are the primary content, while the third provides additional material, with particular focus on the research paper.

Assessment

There are several assignments and methods of assessment for this class:

1. Research paper **50%**

The research paper assignment for this class will be done in groups of three students, working together to research and write a collaborative paper on a given conflict.

You can choose which conflict you'd like to research from the list provided on the discussion board on Blackboard, and organise yourselves into groups. Reply to the thread in which your chosen conflict occurs. Other students will thus be able to see which conflicts are chosen. Preferably you should orient yourself to conflicts that may have other students (short of 3).

In making your selection you should consider the amount of available information. In particular, the paper will address four aspects of the conflict:

1. An historical description of the conflict (what happened, where, and to whom?);
2. The issues and stakes involved (what were they fighting over/for?);
3. The meaning of the conflict to the belligerents;
4. The nature of the peace (end of the conflict).

In your research, you will need to have access to the necessary material in order to address these aspects. Some of the wars may be more difficult to research due to the lack of sources. Do not assume that older conflicts have few sources, or that more recent conflicts have an abundance of reference material. So choose wisely. If you want more information about a conflict, I suggest [Wikipedia](#) for a brief overview.

The 50% grade is composed of the following elements:

- 35 % for the paper:
 - 10% for the first part;
 - 15% for the second part;
 - 10% for the third part;
- 15 % group evaluation. You will each grade each other's performance in the group. A form will be provided for you to do this.

Further details are available below.

2. Final exam **20%**

W 18 June, 9-10.50pm.

The final exam is comprehensive. There is no early exam.

3. Reading quiz **3 x 10%**

Three reading quizzes will be given during the semester. These are all based on the chapters in the Baylis text. The format of the quiz is multiple choice questions. The quiz will be given in class.

- Quiz #1 - W 14 May - Chapters 1-4 - 20 questions (5 per chapter);
- Quiz #2 - F 30 May - Chapters 5-9 - 20 questions (4 per chapter);
- Quiz #3 - W 11 June - Chapters 10-13, 15 - 20 questions (4 per chapter);

Each question is worth a ½ point, totalling 10 point for each quiz.

Grades are not curved. The score of 94 and above is an A. Any score between a 90 and a 93 is an A-. The score of 87 and above is a B+, 83-86 is a B, and 80 to 82 is a B-. The same system is used for C's and D's. I will happily discuss your grades with you, but make a practice not to amend the grade once given. There is no extra credit. I don't want more work - just better work.

To avoid disappointment at the end of the semester, if you have any questions about what I expect for a particular grade or assignment, or for feedback, please contact me. I would much rather that you ask before hand rather than complain after the grade.

Expectations

You're all adults; you've paid for this class. As much as I will try to provide value for money and time, you will get out as much as you put into this class. I expect you to attend class. I expect you to have read some of the assigned reading prior to each class, and to be able to comment on it upon request. I do not intend this to be a formal lecture series – ask questions! If we take the whole class answering your questions about the topic for that day, and have an engaging class discussion, that's fine by me! I expect you to participate in class.

Honour code:

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honour Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Always provide references to the sources of your ideas and data, and never reprint large pieces of published material without using appropriate punctuation marks (quotation marks or, for more than a few lines of cited text, indentation). This applies to material you find on the Web as well as traditional published material. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation that each student will abide by all Honour Code standards. Please call the Honour Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honour Code Office (4440).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

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Research paper assignment

The research paper assignment for this class will be done in groups of **three** students, working together to research and write a collaborative paper on a given conflict.

- The assignment is to write a 30-40 page paper. This includes all notes and references.
- The paper should be double spaced.
- The notes are to be footnotes at the bottom of the page.
- Pages are to be numbered.
- A cover sheet should state the title of the paper, the conflict with dates, and the members of the group.
- The paper is to use a formal citation style. I do not care which style you use, so long as it is there and is consistently applied.

There are three specific elements to this assignment. Note that the paper will be evaluated on its success in addressing these questions. A "generic" paper that does not answer some of these questions, no matter how well researched and written, will receive a proportionally low grade.

In terms of the amount to write for each section, I suggest a 25% - 50% - 25% distribution.

Part 1: An historical description of the war

Due: F 16 May

This is a simple historical narrative of the chosen conflict. Essentially what is required is the nuts and bolts of the conflict: who was fighting, where, when and how?

Address significant and decisive battles

How was the war fought?

Who were the key figures involved?

Part 2: Issues and attitudes

Due: F 6 June

Here we begin to use Holsti, by looking at the first two questions he poses on p. 6: i) what are the issues that initially generate international conflict? What do men fight about? And ii) what is the 'meaning' of war to those who resort to it?

This part of the paper needs to address four particular items:

1. Causes: what was the cause of the war? (Man, state interests, systemic variables, or combinations of the three). What decisions were taken to move from conflict to war?
2. Issues: what were the belligerents fighting over? How important were these issues, and how did they fit into the wider scheme of state interests?
3. Stakes: what were the stakes involved for the belligerents?
4. Meaning: what did the conflict mean to the parties, and what were the attitudes to the use of force?

We will raise these items in the first few weeks of the semester. In addition you should refer to Holsti for further explanation of these items. Some of the material required to answer these questions will occur in your general research about the conflict. However, the section on meanings and attitudes will require more specific research.

In order to assess how the war was viewed at the time, you will need to reference archived newspaper material. Your sources for the journalistic coverage could be the *Times of London* or the *New York Times*, both of which are accessible via the HBLL website or any other comparable daily or weekly contemporary journalistic source. I don't expect you to do an exhaustive historical study but at least look through the newspapers for a month or so before the start of the war, and through its progress. Be sure to completely footnote these sources (date, section and page).

Part 3: The peace

Due: M 16 June

This section addresses Holsti's third question: in what ways do the arrangements of peace serve as a source of future international conflict?

Specifically, you should address how the war ended; what was the nature of the peace? What was the wider impact of the end of the war, for the belligerents and for the system as a whole? Did the peace provide a 'learning moment' or not?

For the group assessment grade, the following criteria will be used. You should use them as a guide for your participation and contribution to your group's work.

- A. Rate each person's **attendance** at meetings.
 - 0=Student did not come to meetings.
 - 1=Student came to some meetings.
 - 2=Student came to all but one meeting.
 - 3=Student came to all meetings.
- B. Rate each person's **quantity** of work on this project.
 - 0=Student made no contribution.
 - 1=Student made a small contribution to this project.
 - 2=Student made a medium contribution to this project, but other students carried the main load.
 - 3=Student made a large contribution to this project.
- C. Rate each person's **quality** of work on this project.
 - 1=Contribution was of such low quality that it had to be rewritten substantially. Student contributed few ideas and made little impact on final product.
 - 2=Contribution was of medium quality and some had to be rewritten. Student contributed some ideas and made a medium impact on final product.
 - 3=Contribution was of high quality, and person helped with rewriting. Student contributed many good ideas and made a substantive impact on final product.
- D. Rate the person's **interpersonal skills**.
 - 1=Student caused unnecessary personal or procedural conflict that negatively impacted the group.
 - 2=Student had little impact on interpersonal relationships.
 - 3=Student cultivated supportive, respectful relationships.
- E. Rate the person's **conduct** in the group process.
 - 1=Student did not become actively engaged in collaborating with the group as a whole.
 - 2=Student took over the group and made this more of a solo effort rather than a group effort.
 - 3=Student allowed and encouraged all members to participate. Student encouraged an exchange of ideas.

Schedule:

#	DATE	SUBJECT
1	W 30 APR	Power, influence and conflict - Schelling, chapter 1 (on Blackboard).
2	F 2 MAY	Causes of war - Baylis, chapter 1; - Freedman, chapter B.
3	M 5 MAY	The use of force - Holsti, chapter 1; - Freedman, chapter B.
4	W 7 MAY	Attitudes to warfare - Holsti, chapters 7, 9, 11 and 12.
5	F 9 MAY	Evolution of modern warfare - Baylis, chapter 2; - Freedman, chapter E.
6	M 12 MAY	Strategic theory - Baylis, chapter 3; - Freedman, chapter E.
7	W 14 MAY	Strategic culture - Baylis, chapter 4; - Freedman, chapter C.
8	F 16 MAY	Law, politics and the use of force - Baylis, chapter 5; - Freedman, chapter D.
9	M 19 MAY	Geography and strategy - Baylis, chapter 6; - Boland, ' <i>Geography and Strategy</i> ,' (Blackboard); - Freedman, chapter E.
10	W 21 MAY	Technology and warfare - Baylis, chapter 7; - Folrini, ' <i>The opening skies</i> ,' (Blackboard).
11	F 23 MAY	Irregular warfare - Baylis, chapter 8; - Freedman, chapter G.

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| 12 | W 28 MAY | <p>Combating terrorism and transnational crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 9 |
| 13 | F 30 MAY | <p>Nuclear weapons in the 21st century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 10. |
| 14 | M 2 JUNE | <p>Controlling weapons of mass destruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 11. |
| 15 | W 4 JUNE | <p>Conventional power and contemporary warfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 12; - Freedman, chapter G. |
| 16 | F 6 JUNE | <p>Iraq, Afghanistan and American military transformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 13. |
| 17 | M 9 JUNE | <p>Humanitarian intervention and Peace Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 15. - Doyle, <i>'War making and peace making: The United Nations' post-Cold War record'</i>, (Blackboard); - Anderson, <i>'Humanitarian NGOs in conflict intervention'</i>, (Blackboard). |
| 18 | W 11 JUNE | <p>Conflict prevention and crisis management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kriendler, <i>'NATO Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention'</i>, (Blackboard); - Ekeus, <i>'New challenges for the United Nations'</i>, (Blackboard); - Peck, <i>'The role of regional organizations in preventing and resolving conflict'</i>, (Blackboard). |
| 19 | F 13 JUNE | <p>Peace?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holsti, chapters 8, 10 and 13. |
| 20 | M 16 JUNE | <p>A new strategic agenda?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baylis, chapter 16. |