

International Conflict

Political Science 378 Section 2
Winter semester 2008

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MWF 3-3.50
MARB 346

Office hours: MTF 10-12

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. There are assigned discussion questions for each thematic section. Think about the questions 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 40%

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 lists 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.

Further details will be made available.

2. Midterm 10%

M 25 February. Two essay questions.

3. Final exam 24%

M 21 April, 2.30-5.30pm.

The format for the final is three essay questions. The final exam is comprehensive. There is no early exam.

4. Participation 20%

The subject matter and readings for this class are organised thematically. Each theme has questions that will be used to generate class discussion. These discussions will allow you to express your opinions on the subject matter, and engage in what can be a lively and engaging discussion.

Your participation in these discussions is graded. Please read the assigned material and come prepared to contribute. Contributions can of course be made voluntarily, or I will ask you for your comment.

5. Kennedy lecture 4%

Attend any Kennedy Centre lecture this semester and type up a two-page (double-spaced) summary of the lecture and your reactions to it. This is due before the last day of class. Details of the Kennedy lectures are available at <http://kennedy.byu.edu>

6. Online evaluation 2%

You are encouraged to evaluate the course using the online evaluations system. It is usually accessible in the last week or so of class, but before finals.

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.

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! In fact, I'd prefer that to me talking for 50 minutes. 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.

Schedule:

#	DATE	SUBJECT
1	M 7 JAN	Introduction to the class
2	W 9 JAN	Power, influence and conflict - Schelling, chapter 1 (on Blackboard).
3	F 11 JAN	Research paper - Holsti, chapter 1.
4-6	M 14 JAN W 16 JAN F 18 JAN	Causes of war - Baylis, chapter 1; - Freedman, chapter B.
7	W 23 JAN	Issues that generate wars, 1815-1945 - Holsti, chapters 7 and 9.
8, 9	F 25 JAN M 28 JAN	Evolution of modern warfare - Baylis, chapter 2; - Freedman, chapter E.
10	W 30 JAN	Attitudes to warfare, 1815-1945 - Holsti, chapters 7 and 9.
11, 12	F 1 FEB M 4 FEB	Strategic theory - Baylis, chapter 3; - Freedman, chapter E.
13, 14	W 6 FEB F 8 FEB	Strategic culture - Baylis, chapter 4; - Freedman, chapter C.
15	M 11 FEB	Issues that generate wars, 1945-present - Holsti, chapters 11 and 12.
16, 17	W 13 FEB F 15 FEB	Law, politics and the use of force - Baylis, chapter 5; - Freedman, chapter D.
18-20	T (M) 19 FEB W 20 FEB F 22 FEB	Geography and strategy - Baylis, chapter 6; - Freedman, chapter E.
21	M 25 FEB	Midterm

22, 23	W 27 FEB F 29 FEB	Technology and warfare - Baylis, chapter 7.
24-26	M 3 MAR W 5 MAR F 7 MAR	Irregular warfare: terrorism and insurgency - Baylis, chapters 8 and 9; - Freedman, chapter G.
27, 28	M 10 MAR W 11 MAR	Conventional power and contemporary warfare - Baylis, chapter 12; - Freedman, chapter G.
29	F 13 MAR	Attitudes to warfare, 1945-present - Holsti, chapters 11 and 12.
30-32	M 17 MAR W 19 MAR F 21 MAR	Iraq, Afghanistan and American military transformation - Baylis, chapters 13-14.
33-35	M 24 MAR W 26 MAR F 28 MAR	Nuclear weapons and other WMDs - Baylis, chapters 10 and 11.
36-38	M 31 MAR W 2 APR F 4 APR	Humanitarian intervention and Peace Operations - 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);
39	M 7 APR	Conflict prevention - Readings to be assigned.
40	W 9 APR	Crisis management - Readings to be assigned.
41	F 11 APR	Post-conflict reconstruction - Readings to be assigned.
42	M 14 APR	Last class: Review