Course Syllabus

Course Description

Conflict, particularly armed conflict and organized violence, has been an endemic part of international relations, nation-states and intrastate dynamics since history began. War, as defined by Carl Von Clausewitz, “is the continuation of policies (politics) by other means.” The objective of this class is to further the student’s understanding of the causes and nature of war, typologies and strategies of war, and the evolution of warfare and arms/weapons. We will discuss the rationale for international bodies and individual nation’s intervention in international warfare, the causes and consequences of civil conflict and, the nature of intrastate organized violence.

The nature of warfare has evolved rapidly in the last century. From armed conflict with limited means between nation-states, the nature of conflict has evolved principally into intrastate and asymmetric warfare. With the advent of nuclear weapons and sophisticated biological and chemical weapons, other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the international system has relied on a deterrent capacity for large-scale international wars. At the same time, we have withheld their use, viewing them as a last resort only to be used when our survival is at stake. Simultaneously, the UN and nation-states have engaged in intervention in sovereign states (Iraq and Afghanistan), peacekeeping missions, and restoration of legitimate governments in failed states.

With the world emerging from the bipolar structure of the Cold War, the causes for war have evolved as well. Our most likely conflicts appear to be against enemies or terrorists that are fighting a total war- ethnic, religious or ideological violence fought by zealous people with unlimited means. Finally, technology has unalterably advanced the nature of warfare. Proliferation of WMD in rouge states has threatened international security with the possibility of sub national ethnic or terrorist groups acquiring such weapons which present a clear threat to both national and international states.
This course seeks to identify these evolutions and understand their implications for nation-states. Equally as important, we will analyze the theoretical causes of war by examining war as an outcome of the international system, state failure, and as a product of human nature.

The class is expected to be primarily interactive discussions of the readings, which means that students should come to class fully prepared. Five reading issues papers will be assigned throughout the course to get your perspective on the course material. The purpose of the class is not only designed to enable you to acquire specialized knowledge but critical thinking, analytical and writing skills.

For more information on the learning outcome objectives of the Political Science department, visit https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/Political_Science.

BYU Student Policies

**Plagiarism:** While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://honorcode.byu.edu/content/academic-honesty-details. Students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult me prior to turning in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

**Sex Discrimination:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to me or contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

**Disabilities** Brigham Young University is also strongly committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767).
**Course Requirements**

Course requirements will entail active and frequent participation in class, five reading issues papers, a midterm and final, and two research papers (group and individual).

Thirty percent of your grade will come from class participation. Although the class is scheduled to have approximately 40 students and large for a discussion group, I expect every student to come to class fully prepared and be actively involved in the discussion. Students should read the required readings in advance of class. Over the course, there will be five reading issues papers required out of a possible ten topics. The reading issues papers are designed to enable you to provide your perspective on the readings. Reading issues papers should be no more than 3 pages in length, demonstrate knowledge of the readings cited for that week, and present the student perspective on the topic.

In lieu of two reading issues papers, students may elect to participate in a classroom debate with their colleagues on a selected topic from the course syllabus.

Thirty percent of the grade will come from the exams. Exams will test the understanding of concepts and theories presented and discussed in class. Use of books or classroom materials will not be permitted during the exam periods. Exams will be done in the testing center through Blackboard, so it is important that you can access and use the functions of Blackboard. There will be one mid-term and a final, which may have a take home essay component.

The final forty percent of the grade will come from the writing assignments- a research paper, which will be started as a group project paper, a classroom presentation, and an individual paper as the final assignment. The group paper should be no more than 10-15 pages in length, and the individual paper should not exceed 20 pages.

**Research Paper**— During the semester, students will be expected to research one conflict in depth. This will first be accomplished through a group project where students will be organized into small groups to focus on a single conflict selected from the list below. The Group Project will write a paper analyzing its antecedents and causes, the course of the conflict, and evaluate the decisions made by national and military leaders affecting the conduct of the war. Finally, the papers will examine the nature of the peace agreement and the durability of the “peace”, as well as potential for future conflict. The Group Paper will be no more than 10-15 pages in length and follow the guidelines in Kate Turabian’s *Manual for Writers* cited below. The groups will present their papers in class in two class periods in April. You should be creative and interesting with your presentation. Use handouts, Power-points, or visual aids to illustrate your points. This should be a group project, with everyone involved in all aspects of the research, writing, and presentation, although how you divide the work is up to you.
The Group Project will lay the foundation for your individual policy paper which should be based on the same conflict. You can evaluate a decision of a country in the conflict or analyze the actions of an individual leader. The individual paper is a more finite analysis of a period, country, leader, policy or decision during the conflict. The paper should be no more than 10-20 pages and present a cogent and well-articulated argument for your topic.

**Deadlines for Policy Paper- TBD**

February 14- Small groups formed and professor notified by e-mail.

February 28- Group papers due by 5:00 pm.

March 28/30 - Group presentations.

April 4- Individual papers due electronically by 5:00 pm.

**Topics List**

Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC)

Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)

World War I (1914-1918)

World War II (1939-1945)

Arab- Israeli Conflict (1948-2010)

Sudan (1955-2009)

Vietnam (1955-1975)

Somalia (Horn of Africa) (1960-2010)

Yugoslavia (1989-2008)

Haiti (1986-2010)

Democratic Republic of the Congo (1996-2010)

Iraq (1980-2010)
Stephen Van Evera’s Guide to Methods will assist you in how to think critically and analytically about your topic as well as write more clearly. For questions of style, grammar, and format, I suggest that you review Kate Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*.

**Required Reading:**


**Suggested Books:**


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Jan 5</td>
<td>Introduction to Class: FOG OF WAR VIDEO</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Carl Von Clausewitz, OW, Chapt. 1</td>
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<td>Margaret Mead, “Warfare is Only an Invention- Not a Biological Necessity”, COCW, pg 219-223</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 12</td>
<td>Causes of War: Human Nature, the State and International System</td>
<td>Kenneth Waltz, Chpts. 2 – 6, MSW</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 17</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 19</td>
<td>To End All Wars Video</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 24</td>
<td>Causes of War: Human Nature and the State</td>
<td>John Baylis et. al, Chapt. 1, SCW,</td>
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<td>Sigmund Freud, “Why War”, COCW,</td>
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<td>Franco Fonari, “The Psychoanalysis of War”, COCW</td>
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<td>Stanley Milgram, “How Good People Do Bad Things”, COCW</td>
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<td>Wed. Jan. 26</td>
<td>Causes of War: International System</td>
<td>Kenneth Waltz, Chpts. 6-8, MSW</td>
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<td>Mon. Jan. 31</td>
<td>Strategies of War</td>
<td>John Steinbruner; <em>Principles of Global Security</em>, Chpt.6</td>
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Reading Issue Paper

How has globalization affected the US national security threat, strategies and alliances? How will it affect US policy towards China and Russia?

Wed. Feb. 2

War as Coercive Diplomacy

Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Chapter 2


Reading Issues Paper

How were each of the elements of coercive diplomacy successfully used in the Cuban Missile Crisis to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba?

Mon. Feb. 7

War as Coercive Diplomacy- Case Study

The Balkans

Wed. Feb. 9

Causes of War- Balance of Power

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Chapt. 2

Stephen Van Evera *Causes of War*, Chaps. 4 and 5

Reading Issues Paper

Under what conditions do “aggressors” or “initiators” succeed in winning wars? Provide an example and describe the conditions which led to the aggression.

Mon. Feb. 14

Balance of Power Wars: World War I
Gilpin, Robert, Hegemonic War and International Change, COCW pg. 93-104,


Wed. Feb. 16

**Causes of War - Offense- Defense Wars**


Robert Jervis, Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma, COCW, pg 412

**Reading Issues Paper**

According to Stephen Van Evera, Offense-Defense Theory has exceptional explanatory power to understand a broad spectrum of war causes. Do you concur with his assessment of the advantages of aggression when “conquest is easy”?

Mon. Feb. 21

NO CLASS

Wed. Feb. 23

MIDTERM

Mon. Feb. 28

**Causes of War - Economic Theories**


**Reading Issues Paper**

Both Sambanis and Collier present empirical evidence that poverty is positively associated with
the onset of civil violence Do you believe “relative deprivation” is also the cause of civil conflict?

Wed. March 2


Thomas Homer Dixon, TBD

Mon. March 7

Civil Conflict: Failed and Failing States

Nicholas Sambanis,” What is a Civil War?” Journal of Conflict Resolution, VOL 48, No.6 December 2004, pg. 814-858

Stathis N. Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War, Chapters 1 and 4

Wed. March 9

Case Study- Iraq Debate

Larry Diamond, Squandered Victory, 2006, Chaps. 9-11

Mon. March 14

Civil Conflict and Ethnicity


Wed. March 16

Terrorism and the Global War on Terror


Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, Columbia University Press, 2006, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 9
The 9/11 Commission Report, Executive Summary, Chpts. 1, 2, and 12


**Reading Issues Paper**

What distinguishes terrorism as a strategy of war? What are the characteristics of the “successful” use of terrorism?

**Mon. March 21**

**Counterinsurgency**

T. E Lawrence, “Science of Guerrilla Warfare”, pg. 466-474, CACW


**Reading Issues Paper**

If Kilcullen’s hypothesis that the majority of insurgencies are fought by “accidental guerrillas”, what are the implications for US military strategy?

**Wed. March 23**

**Case Studies: Vietnam and Afghanistan (TBD)**

**Mon. March 28**

**Deterrence: Stopping the Spread of Nuclear War**


**Wed. March 30**

Group Presentations

**Mon. April 4**

**Military Intervention: When and Why?**


**Reading Issues Paper**

From Haas’s perspective, what are the challenges to the US’s judicious use of military force in the future? Do you concur with his assessment?
Wed. April 6

Future of War: Post Global War on Terror

Mon. April 11

Course Review