

International Conflict

What? POLI725 at the University of South Carolina, Fall 2017.

Who? Tobias Heinrich, heinriect@mailbox.sc.edu, GAMB333. No official office hour. Chat me up or send me an email at any time.

When and where? Wednesdays, 5.50-8.35pm in GAMB335.

Outline

This graduate level course on International Conflict introduces a specific cutting edge of research on international conflict as well as what lead to this specific cutting edge. “Specific”? The course is very much designed to omit huge parts of existing literature; it focuses on what can be loosely clustered as (mostly formal) bargaining-centric and political economy approaches to international conflict.

Further, the course focuses (overwhelmingly) on the theoretical side, in particular on (often) game theoretic models. Therefore, it is essential to spend a lot of time understanding the models, their building blocks, their assumptions, etc. While the numbers of the readings are rather small compared to most graduate courses, it is the expectation that everyone has a firm grasp of the models before coming to class. That means that you ought to spend far more time per article.

If participants immerse themselves in the study of the materials of the course and actively participate, they will learn by the end

- what constitutes a specific cutting edge of scholarship on international conflict;
- to read and critique articles of modern IR scholarship, and treat them in the context of previous and parallel debates in IR;
- a deeper understanding of the processes, troubles, intricacies, and opportunities of carrying out own research on international conflict;
- how to identify and generate cutting edge research (broadly defined), in particular in terms of the puzzles and arguments.

Material

Everything will be available via Google Scholar or Blackboard.

Expectations, Grading, Rules, etc.

There are a few items that will be graded. Foremost, there are two rounds of mock comps exams. The first will take place around Week 5 or 6, and other toward the last week. For each, you will be given two or three questions from which you select one or two and then answer. Exact format and dates are to be determined.

Further, you will have to write a pitch for a paper in a specific format. Find an empirical conflict article that was published within the last three years in one of the top journals for conflict research.¹ Meticulously study the article and then find a flaw in the argument, identify some condition under which the argument would not hold, etc. You have to modify some theoretical aspect of the paper. Write all of this up in up to ten pages. Note that the foundational article has to be approved by the instructor, and it is a very bad idea to not be in communication about this paper throughout the semester. If someone wants to try a second such paper pitch, that's okay too.

Everything will be graded on a 0–100 scale, and the final numerical grade is simply the average of all individual items. I will use the following grading scale to map between percentages and letter grades. A 92-100, B+ 87-91, B 80-86, C+ 77-79, C 70-76, D+ 67-69, D 60-66, and F 0-59. The standard rules of rounding are applied. The University of South Carolina Honor Code applies.

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Office of Student Disability Services: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sasds@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.

Course schedule

This is a rough schedule of the sequence of what will be covered. The instructor will most probably amend things quite a bit. So, always check what will be next.

Week 1: Howdy

Week 2: Setting the stage

What are we talking about?

- John Vasquez and Christopher S. Leskiw, 2001. “The origins and war proneness of interstate rivalries.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Jack S Levy’s syllabus for “Theories of War and Peace.” URL: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/yblqlfa7>.
- Paul D. Senese and John A. Vasquez, 2005. “Assessing the steps to war.” *British Journal of Political Science*.
- John J. Mearsheimer, 2001. *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Chapters that are on Blackboard.

Week 3: Basics of game/ bargaining theory

- Abhinay Muthoo, 2000. “A non-technical introduction to bargaining theory.” *World Economics*.
- Peter C Ordeshook, 1986. *Game theory and political theory*. Chapter that is on Blackboard.

¹ APSR, AJPS, The JOP, IO, and ISQ.

- Make sure you have an idea of the following: preferences, rationality, bounded rationality, backwards induction, game, extensive form game, game tree, Nash equilibrium, players, actions, strategies, Bayesian learning, outside option, continuation payoffs, payoffs, utility, and so on.

Week 4: “Rational Explanations for War”

- James D. Fearon, 1995. “Rational explanations for war.” *International Organization*.

Week 5: Informational Problems

- Re-read Fearon 1995.
- Robert Powell, 2004. “Bargaining and learning while fighting.” *American Journal of Political Science*. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Branislav Slantchev, 2003. “The principle of convergence in wartime negotiations.” *American Political Science Review*.
- William Reed, 2003. “Information, power, and war.” *American Political Science Review*.

Week 6: Commitment Problems

- Re-read Fearon 1995.
- Robert Powell, 2006. “War as a commitment problem.” *International Organization*.
- Scott Wolford, 2012. “Incumbents, successors, and crisis bargaining.” *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Colin Krainin, 2017. “Preventive War as a Result of Long-Term Shifts in Power.” *Political Science and Research Methods*. USC does not have this journal; you’ll find it via Google Scholar.

Week 7: Putting it together

- Scott Wolford, Dani Reiter, and Cliff Carrubba, 2011. “Information, commitment, and war.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Scott Wolford, 2014. “Showing Restraint, Signaling Resolve: Coalitions, Cooperation, and Crisis Bargaining.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, 2014. “Known unknowns: power shifts, uncertainty, and war.” *International Organization*.
- James D Fearon, 2018. “Cooperation, Conflict, and the Costs of Anarchy.” *International Organization*.²

² Available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ybq34h5d>.

Week 8: (Domestic) Politics and war, Part I

- Branislav Slantchev, 2012. “Borrowed power: debt finance and the resort to arms.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Philip Arena, 2014. “Crisis bargaining, domestic opposition, and tragic wars.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*.
- James D. Fearon, 2011. “A simple political economy of relations among democracies and autocracies.” Working paper.

Week 9: (Domestic) Politics and war, Part II

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, 1999. “An institutionalist explanation of the Democratic Peace.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, 2009. “A political economy of foreign aid.” *International Organization*. (This is a nice simplification of the basic model.)

Week 10: (Domestic) Politics and war, Part III

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs, 2006. “Intervention and democracy.” *International Organization*.
- Songying Fang, 2008. “The informational role of international institutions and domestic politics.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Terrence L Chapman and Scott Wolford, 2010. “International Organizations, Strategy, and Crisis Bargaining.” *The Journal of Politics*.
- Bahar Leventoğlu and Ahmer Tarar, 2005. “Prenegotiation Public Commitments in Domestic and International Bargaining.” *American Political Science Review*.

Week 11: Civil Wars

- Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, 2010. “Civil war.” *Journal of Economic Literature*. Skim-read this.
- Lars-Erik Cederman and Manuel Vogt, 2017. “Dynamics and Logics of Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Daron Acemoglu, Davide Ticchi, and Andrea Vindigni, 2010. “Persistence of civil wars.” *Journal of the European Economic Association*.
- Ernesto Dal Bó and Pedro Dal Bó, 2011. “Workers, warriors, and criminals.” *Journal of the European Economic Association*.

Week 12: Terrorism

- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, 2005. “The quality of terror.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita and Eric S Dickson, 2007. “The Propaganda of the Deed: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Mobilization.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Todd Sandler, 2014. “The analytical study of terrorism – Taking stock.” *Journal of Peace Research*.

Week 13: Counter-terrorism

- Tiberiu Dragu, 2011. “Is there a trade-off between security and liberty?” *American Political Science Review*.
- Tiberiu Dragu, 2013. “The rule of Law in the fight against terrorism.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Livio Di Lonardo, 2017. “The Partisan Politics of Counterterrorism: Reputations, Policy Transparency, and Electoral Outcomes.” *Political Science and Research Methods*.³

Week 14: After conflict

- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, 2006. “Economic backwardness in political perspective.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Zaryab Iqbal and Christopher Zorn, 2010. “Violent Conflict and the Spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa.” *The Journal of Politics*.
- Timothy Besley and Marta Reynal-Querol, 2014. “The Legacy of Historical Conflict: Evidence from Africa.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Tiffany C Davenport, 2015. “Policy-Induced Risk and Responsive Participation: The Effect of a Son’s Conscription Risk on the Voting Behavior of His Parents.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth, 2013. “Gifts of Mars: Warfare and Europe’s Early Rise to Riches.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- Volha Charnysh and Evgeny Finkel, 2017. “The Death Camp Eldorado: Political and Economic Effects of Mass Violence.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Eric Neumayer, Thomas Plümper, Mariaelisa Epifanio, 2014. “The ‘Peer-effect’ in Counterterrorist Policies.” *International Organization*.

³ Also available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybccsgck>.

Week 15: What's new and next?

- Håvard Hegre, Joakim Karlsen, Håvard Mokliev Nygård, Håvard Strand, and Henrik Urdal, 2013. "Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050." *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Peter K. Hatemi and Rose McDermott, "A neurobiological approach to foreign policy analysis: identifying individual differences in political violence." *Foreign Policy Analysis*.
- Thomas Chadeaux, 2014. "Early warning signals for war in the news." *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Kristian S. Gleditsch and Nils B. Weidman, 2012. "Richardson in the information age." *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Eric D Gould and Esteban F Klor, 2016. "The Long-run Effect of 9/11: Terrorism, Backlash, and the Assimilation of Muslim Immigrants in the West". *The Economic Journal*.
- Michael Colaresi, 2012. "A boom with review. how retrospective oversight increases the foreign policy ability of democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, 2017. "Dangerous bargains with the devil? Incorporating new approaches in peace science for the study of war." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.