

# International Conflict

**What?** POLI725 at the University of South Carolina, Spring 2015.

**Who?** Tobias Heinrich, [heinric1@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:heinric1@mailbox.sc.edu), GAMB333. No official office hour. Chat me up or email at any time.

**When and where?** Mondays, 2.20-5.05p, hopefully 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 what can be loosely clustered as bargaining-centric and political economy approaches to international conflict.

Further, the course overwhelming focuses 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 very small compared to most graduate courses, it is the expectation that everyone has a firm grasp of the models before coming to class.

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.

## Required material

The following books are required:

- Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, 2010. *Causes of war*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- R. Harrison Wagner, 2007. *War and the State*. University of Michigan Press.

## Expectations, Grading, Rules, etc.

There are a few contributions to the grade, all of which jointly ought to provide the material for a strong paper (that you can write over the summer). Each of these will look somewhat differently than what will end up in a paper, but the elements are designed to provide the basis for a paper. Details for each of these things will be given in time.

- Toward a paper.
  - Write a thorough, somewhat overly long literature review on a topic of choosing. Due: February 16. 15% of grade.
  - Answer numerous questions about an intellectual puzzle that the paper eventually addresses, shortcomings in the literature, alternative explanations, etc. This has to be linked to the topic of the literature review. Due March 16. 30% of grade.
  - Write up the theoretical model that addresses, solves, and flows from the questions that the previous exercise answered. Due April 20. 35% of grade.
- A short (two questions, four hours) mock comps which is given about two weeks before the last class session. 15% of grade.
- For every class session, submit two substantive, non-trivial questions about the readings. The questions have to identify a puzzle! 5% of grade.

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](mailto: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

Welcome and howdy.

- Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, 2010. *Causes of war*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Chapter 1.

## WEEK 2: SETTING THE STAGE

What are we talking about?

- Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, 2010. *Causes of war*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, rest of book.
- Sketch out what “realism” and “neo-realism” are (in the context of international relations).
- John Vasquez and Christopher S. Leskiw, 2001. “The origins and war proneness of interstate rivalries.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Paul D. Senese and John A. Vasquez, 2005. “Assessing the steps to war.” *British Journal of Political Science*.

## WEEK 3: BASICS OF GAME/BARGAINING THEORY

- Abhinay Muthoo, 2000. “A non-technical introduction to bargaining theory.” *World Economics*.
- Review your game theory notes.

## WEEK 4: “RATIONAL EXPLANATIONS FOR WAR”

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

## WEEK 5: INFORMATIONAL PROBLEMS

- Robert Powell, 2004. “Bargaining and learning while fighting.” *American Journal of Political Science*. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Kenneth A. Schultz, 1998. “Domestic opposition and signaling in international crises.” *American Political Science Review*.
- 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

- Robert Powell, 2006. “War as a commitment problem.” *International Organization*.
- Scott Wolford, 2012. “Incumbents, successors, and crisis bargaining.” *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Richard A. Nielsen, Michael G. Findley, Zachary S. Davis, Tara Candland, and Daniel L. Nielson, 2011. “Foreign Aid Shocks as a Cause of Violent Armed Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

## WEEK 7: PURSUIT OF WARS

- Matthew O. Jackson and Massimo Morelli, 2011. "The reasons for wars - an updated survey." Book chapter.
- Scott Wolford, Dani Reiter, and Cliff Carrubba, 2011. "Information, commitment, and war." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Philip Arena and Scott Wolford, 2012. "Arms, intelligence, and war." *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Michael Colaresi, 2012. "A boom with review. how retrospective oversight increases the foreign policy ability of democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*.

## WEEK 8: DOMESTIC POLITICS, AGENCY, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

- James D. Fearon, 2011. "A simple political economy of relations among democracies and autocracies." Working paper.
- 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*.

## WEEK 10 AND WEEK 11: *War and the State*

- R. Harrison Wagner, 2007. *War and the State*. University of Michigan Press.

## WEEK 12: STAYIN' ALIVE

- 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*.
- Philip Arena and Nicholas Nicoletti, 2014. "Selectorate Theory, the Democratic Peace, and Public Goods Provision." *International Theory*.
- 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 13: CIVIL WARS AND TERRORISM

- Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, 2010. "Civil war." *Journal of Economic Literature*. Skim-read this.
- 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*.
- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, 2005. "The quality of terror." *American Journal of Political Science*.

#### WEEK 14: 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*.
- Daina Chiba, Carla Martinez Machain, and William Reed, 2013. "Major powers and militarized conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Kristian S. Gleditsch and Nils B. Weidman, 2012. "Richardson in the information age." *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Rose McDermott, 2004. "The feeling of rationality." *Perspectives on Politics*.