War is the single most destructive social act in which humanity engages: while precise numbers are impossible to get, by many estimates in the twentieth century over 100 million people died as a direct result of war. And while there have been no wars between the great powers of the international system in over fifty years, violence continues in many other forms: almost five million people died as a result of the 1998-2003 Congo War, and fighting continues not just in Iraq and Afghanistan but in dozens of places around the world. Why do these wars happen? What (if anything) can be done to prevent them? What can we do to bring ongoing wars to an end and to consolidate peace in their aftermath?

This course addresses these questions, focusing on a variety of popular and scholarly explanations for war and peace. We will pair theoretical discussions with examination of historical cases, including both prominent cases such as the World Wars and lesser known conflicts from Africa and elsewhere. By the end of this course, students should have both a good understanding of the merits of different explanations for war as well as significant knowledge about wars through history.

Students will be expected to attend lectures, do assigned readings, and participate regularly in the (required) recitations. Written assignments include a paper (see below for the assignment, 30% of final grade), an in-class midterm (25% of final grade), and an in-class final (3pm on Thursday, December 16, 30% of final grade). The remaining 15% of your final grade is determined by your participation in recitation (including both attendance and the quality of your comments).

How to get an F in this course:

If you attend lecture and recitations, do the readings, and put in the necessary work on the written assignments, you will both learn a lot and receive a good grade in this course. That said, it is possible to worse if you so desire. Students wishing to get an F in this course can achieve that goal
in either of two ways. Your first option is to get caught cheating, which in this course will be easi-
est to do through plagiarism (although other options certainly exist). Plagiarism here consists of
presenting other people’s ideas and especially words as your own: for a discussion of what consti-
tutes plagiarism, see http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/plagiarism_policy.html.
This approach has the downside that I will likely report you to the Office of Student Conduct. If
you have questions about whether a specific action constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask either
me or your TA. Relatedly, if you find that you are unable to complete assigned work by the
due date without resorting to cheating, please contact us: while there are penalties for lateness
(barring documented medical or family emergency), it is better to receive a lower grade on one
assignment than to have a permanent F on your transcript.

The second option is simply not to do the work for the course. Students who in their written
work convince the TA or me that they have learned nothing from this course—even if they are
otherwise smart and familiar with current events—will thereby earn an F. If you attend class
regularly and do the readings, you will have nothing to worry about here; just don’t think that
you can pass this course without actually learning something about the causes of war and peace.

Regrading Policy

We put a lot of time into evaluating and providing feedback on your work. That said, if comments
on your work are unclear or you are uncertain why you received the grade that you did, you
should always feel free to ask. When it comes to regrading, most students who request regrades
in fact did not merit a higher grade than the one that they initially received. If, however, you
sincerely believe that your work deserved a higher grade, there is a set procedure for reevaluating
your work. Specifically, no sooner than 48 hours after you have received your grade, you may
submit a written request for a regrade to your TA in which you clearly and specifically articulate
your thoughts as to why you deserve a higher grade. If you remain unsatisfied with the TA’s
regrade, you may then submit your request directly to me. Bear in mind that at all stages of
the review phase your grade may go either up or down, and that if it goes down it will replace
the original grade.

Paper Assignment (6-8 pages, double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman, one-inch mar-
gins, due in my box in 217 Stiteler by noon on Friday, November 19). For this assignment, you
will be required to read Rethinking the Korean War by William Stueck. The Korean War killed
more than a million people over three years while bringing about only a trivial change from the
pre-war status quo. How can we explain this incredibly destructive war? In other words, which
of the theories that we have discussed in this class can best account for way in which the war
developed?

In this paper, you must first identify the one theory from part II of the course (choosing among
overoptimism, shifting power/commitment problems/preventive war, domestic politics/diversionary
war, indivisible issues, accidental war, and psychological bias) that you believe does the best job
of explaining the outbreak of violence. Using both the logic of that theory and evidence from
the assigned documents, explain why you believe that this theory provides the strongest expla-
nation.* Having advanced that argument, you then must choose another theoretical perspective

*Multiple theories could make a claim here, but it is not acceptable simply to argue that the case was the
result of a hodgepodge of different factors. The point of this exercise is for you to advance a clear and interesting
and explain how an advocate for that theory would attack your argument; at the end, you then must explain why you find this counterargument unconvincing. Thus, for the paper you are required to a) pick one theory b) explain and defend it, including both a theoretical argument and empirical evidence to buttress that argument c) articulate a strong, coherent counterargument, and d) respond to that counterargument.

This assignment is difficult. The path by which the war escalated was relatively complicated, including the North Korean decision to invade, the American/UN decision to respond with force and then subsequently to carry the war back across the 38th parallel, the Chinese decision to intervene, and the subsequent difficulty that the participants had identifying an acceptable political settlement. The best papers are distinguished in part by their ability to identify which events are most salient for the author’s central argument, and by contrast which ones are less important and hence can be ignored or dispensed with quickly. In writing the paper, you should assume that the reader is already familiar with the main events from the conflict (meaning that it is not necessary to include a section that summarizes the history). There is no need to do external research for this assignment. I will talk more about the assignment in class as the due date approaches.

Course Materials

Most course material will be available on Blackboard. In addition, the following books can be purchased at the Penn Bookstore at 36th and Walnut:

- William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History*

For students who prefer to buy used copies of books, any edition of all books except for the Stoessinger text will work. For Stoessinger, we will be making use of material added to the book in more recent editions, so you should avoid editions prior to the tenth. Unfortunately, the Stoessinger text available in the bookstore is quite expensive ($71); it is slightly cheaper on Amazon, however. If you do not wish to purchase particular texts, all these books will also be available on Rosengarten Reserves at Van Pelt Library. You do not need to actually read the readings listed as supplemental, but interested students may find them useful, and I will often discuss these readings in lecture.

Readings

**Part I: Perspectives on War**

argument, even if you think that reality was a bit more nuanced. Remember that I am not requiring that you argue that one theory explains everything, only that one theory has more explanatory power than any other.
September 8: **Introduction**

September 13: **What Is War?**

- Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, book 1, chapter 1 (“What is War?”). (15)

September 15: **War and Morality**

- Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, ch. 4-6. (58)

September 20: **The Bargaining Model of War**


September 22: **Theorizing about War Termination**


**Part II: Causes of War**

September 27-29: **Optimism**

- Blainey, Geoffrey. *The Causes of War*. Ch. 1, 3. (37)
- Stoessinger, ch. 3: The Temptations of Victory: Korea. (34)

October 4-6: **Shifting Power, Commitment Problems, and Preventive War**


**Supplemental Readings**

October 13: Domestic Politics I: Diversionary War in the Interstate Context

• Goemans, Hein, War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War, pp. 36-52, 72-121. (67)

Supplemental Readings
• Blainey, Geoffrey. 1988. The Causes of War, ch. 5. (19)

October 18: Domestic Politics II: Diversionary War in the Internal Context

• Stoessinger, ch. 5, “From Sarejevo to Kosovo.” (37)

Supplemental Readings

October 20: Indivisible Issues


October 25: Accidents and Insanity

• Scott Sagan, “Accidental War in Theory and Practice,” unpublished manuscript. (47)
• Marc Trachtenberg, “The ‘Accidental War’ Question,” unpublished manuscript. (21)

Supplemental Readings
• Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence, ch. 3.
• Blainey, The Causes of War, ch. 9.

October 27: MIDTERM EXAM

Part III: That Which Makes War More Likely

November 1: Ideology and Ideologues

- Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book 2, ch. 14 (“Eastern Orientation or Eastern Policy?”). (27)
- Stoessinger, ch. 2, “Barbarossa: Hitler’s Attack on Russia.” (28)

November 3-8: More Ideas: Honor, Reputation, Culture, Nationalism, and Religion

- Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the Mind of God, 19-30, 70-84, 219-232. (41)
- Stoessinger, ch. 4: A Greek Tragedy in Five Acts: Vietnam. (30)
- Stoessinger, ch. 5: The Forty Years’ War in the Holy Land: Israel and the Arabs, pp. 111-155. (45)

November 10: Naughty Capitalists


Supplemental Readings

November 15: Natural Resources


Supplemental Readings
November 17: Evil


Paper due on at noon on November 19!!!

Part IV: That Which Makes War Less Likely

November 22-24: The Liberal Peace

- Emmanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace.” (11)
- Blainey, The Causes of War, ch. 2. (15)

Supplemental Readings

- Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” in Michael E. Brown et al., eds., Debating the Democratic Peace, 3-57.

November 29: Nuclear Weapons


Part V: Making, Keeping, and Building Peace

December 1: Mediation and Post-Conflict Justice

(You can skim from pages 7 to 18.)

Supplemental Readings


December 6: **Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement**

• Fortna, Virginia Page, Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents’ Choices after Civil War, ch. 1 (pp. 1-8), 4. (36)

December 8: **Partition**


December 16: **Final Exam: 3:00-5:00**