This course is designed to introduce students to current topics and debates in the study of international relations, focusing primarily on international security. It thus is intended to complement PSCI 600, the IR field seminar, which is designed to introduce students to foundational works in international relations but which generally does not cover current debates in any depth. Although PSCI 600 is not a formal prerequisite for this course, reading assignments and discussions will generally assume that students are already familiar with that material; thus, students who have not taken 600 will be at a significant disadvantage.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to come to class each week ready to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, for two weeks of the course you will be responsible for writing and circulating a short (2-4 page) memo that briefly outlines the key questions and arguments in the week, presents questions for discussion, and suggests ways in which outstanding questions might be answered (e.g. novel hypotheses for testing, potential new data sources, or ways to apply existing data in novel ways to distinguish among competing arguments).

Each week, one student will also be responsible for a short (no more than 10 minute) presentation on an existing dataset in international relations. See below for details.

The final assignment for the course is a substantial publishable-quality research paper. You are welcome to use this paper as an opportunity to explore a potential dissertation topic, or you may write a paper that you envision as a stand-alone journal article. Papers should be 25-35 pages in length, and should include both theoretical and empirical analysis. The empirical analysis may be either qualitative or quantitative, and you should feel free to consult with me to determine what sorts of analysis would be appropriate for your question. You will be required to submit a short memo on February 25 in which you discuss your proposed research question and potential hypotheses. You will need to submit a 2-4 page report on your progress on April 8. The final paper is due Monday, May 10 by 5pm.

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows: 50% final paper, 10% for each course
memo, 10% dataset presentations, and 20% general course participation.

A Note on Readings

This syllabus is more loosely structured than most syllabi to allow for a certain degree of flexibility in the topics covered. On the first meeting, we will discuss which topics students are interested in covering. As part of this discussion, I will welcome suggestions of additional topics and questions, although I cannot guarantee that we will cover all topics of interest to students. I will circulate an updated syllabus on the second week of the course that has topics to be covered arranged in chronological order.

Dataset Presentations

The goal of the dataset presentations is twofold: to introduce you to the advantages and disadvantages of the common datasets used in international relations, and to give you experience with academic presentation. The goal of these presentations is not for you to identify every possible comment with respect to the dataset but to give a general sense of the utility and quality of the data and of key issues that we should be aware of when considering using this data or when reading a study that has made use of the data. In line with this goal, you will be strictly limited to ten minutes for your presentation.

When you are preparing for your presentation, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- How useful is this dataset conceptually (are the concepts that variables are intended to capture substantively important)?
- How transparent are the coding processes? Are the coding rules available? Do coders indicate what sources have been provided and provide explanations for specific coding decisions? How easy would it be to replicate the codings yourself?
- Do the coding procedures produce variables that reasonably capture the concepts they are intended to capture? If there is a gap between the concept and the variable, would it have been possible to do a better job?
- Are the scope conditions for the dataset (e.g. beginning and end years, countries or actors included, etc.) reasonable?
- How has the dataset been used in international relations? Are there opportunities to use it in new or innovative ways? If there are competing data projects, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this specific dataset?

The datasets to be presented are listed below; if you would prefer to present on a dataset not listed here, feel free to consult with me:

- Correlates of War (COW) dataset of interstate wars
- COW datasets of civil and extrasystemic wars
- COW dataset of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs)
- PRIO/Uppsala dataset of armed conflicts
Course Materials

Because the syllabus for this course is not set in advance, I am not ordering books for this course; I would encourage you, however, to purchase (from Amazon or another source) those books that you think will likely be useful for your own research. All books that we will be discussing will also be available from Van Pelt Library reserve, and I am posting scanned copies of assigned chapters for at least some books. Below is a list of books from which multiple chapters are assigned in specific weeks:

- Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, Democracies at War.
- Robert Powell, In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics.
- Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention.
- Hein Goemans, War and Punishment: War Termination and the First World War.
- Jonathan Mercer, Reputation and International Politics.
- Robert Gilpin, War and Change in International Politics.
- Christopher Gelpi, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler, Paying the Human Costs of War: American Public Opinion and Casualties in Military Conflicts.

I trust that you are able to find and print out articles that are available from JSTOR. For more recent articles that are not covered given JSTOR’s moving wall, I will post copies of the article on Blackboard. Readings marked with a star (*) also appear on the syllabus for Political Science 600 and thus likely will be review for most students.
Readings

Reading List A: Topics We Will Discuss

(Why) Is Democracy Associated with Victory?

- Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, Democracies at War, ch. 1-3, 8.

Supplemental Readings: Additional Work on Victory in War

- Stephen Biddle, Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle, ch. 1-3, skim one of the case study chapters.
- Allan C. Stam, Win, Lose, or Draw: Domestic Politics and the Crucible of War, ch. 1, 2, 5.

Why Do (Interstate) Wars Happen?

- Robert Powell, In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics, ch. 1, 3-4.
- *Douglas Lemke, Regions of War and Peace, ch. 2.
**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS**


**Why Do (Civil) Wars Happen?**


**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS**
• Jack Snyder, From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict.
• Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War.

When and Why Do Wars End?

• *Hein Goemans, War and Punishment: War Termination and the First World War, ch. 1-2, skim 3-4.
• Alex Weisiger, From Small Wars to Armageddon: Explaining Interstate War Duration and Severity, book manuscript, ch. 2-3.
• Ann Hironaka, Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War, ch. 1.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

• Fred Charles Ikle, Every War Must End.
• Dan Reiter, How Wars End.
How Can We Promote Peace during War?

- Mark Fey and Kristopher W. Ramsay, “Uncertainty and Incentives in Mediation,” working paper.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, Signals of War: The Falklands Conflict of 1982, part IV (pp. 165-243) (skim). (for mediation)

How Can We Promote Peace after War?

• V. Page Fortna, Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents’ Choices after Civil War, ch. 1, 4-6.
• Philip G. Roeder and Donald Rothchild, eds, Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars, ch. 1.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS


Does Reputation Matter in International Politics?

• Thomas Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict, ch. 2. (Arms and Influence is also pertinent.)
• Andrew Weston and Katherine Yeats, “Reexamining Reputation,” working paper.
SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS


When Do International Institutions Actually Change Behavior?

- Jana von Stein, “Do Treaties Constrain or Screen? Selection Bias and Treaty Compliance.” American Political Science Review 99:4 (2005) 611-622, plus response by Daniel Hopkins and Beth Simmons in the same issue. (This gets quite technical—focus on the substantive argument.)

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Patricia A. Weitsman, Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War, Ch. 1-2.


How Can Actors Communicate Credibly?


SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS


What Are the Determinants of Civilian Victimization in War?


SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Stathys Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War.

Why Does Conflict Cluster in Certain Regions or Certain Dyads?

- Benjamin Miller, States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace, ch. TBA.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- Paul F. Diehl, ed., The Dynamics of Enduring Rivalries.
- Douglas Lemke, Regions of War and Peace.

What Do We Know about Terrorism? (poorly formed question, for a good reason)


SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS


What Are the Determinants of Nuclear Proliferation?

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS


Does the Balance of Power Still Matter in International Politics?

• Richard Little, The Balance of Power in International Relations.

How Is War Changing?

• Peter Liberman, Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies, ch. 1-2.
• Ziad Obermeyer, Christopher J.L. Murray, and Emmanuela Gakidou, “Fifty Years of Violent War Deaths from Vietnam to Bosnia: Analysis of Data from the World Health Survey Programme,” BMJ (British Medical Journal) 336 (2008), 1482-1486.

How Did the Modern State System Emerge?

• Robert Gilpin, War and Change in International Politics, Introduction and ch. 1.
What Is the Relationship between Public Opinion and War?


SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS