
Political Science 255

The Causes of War and Peace

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MW: 3-4pm
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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 easiest 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 constitutes 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 margins, 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 explanation.* 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:

- Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*.
- Hein Goemans, *War and Punishment: War Termination and the First World War*.
- Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*.
- John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, eleventh edition.
- 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)
- J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Ted Robert Gurr, “Peace and Conflict 2010: Executive Summary,” summaries for chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 1-19). Available online at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/executive_summary/pc_es_20070613.pdf. (19)
- Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Blimes, “The \$3 Trillion War,” *Vanity Fair*, available online at <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/stiglitz200804?printable=true¤tPage=all>. (6)

September 15: **War and Morality**

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

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

- Fearon, James D. 1995. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” *International Organization* 49:379-414. (36)

September 22: **Theorizing about War Termination**

- Goemans, Hein E. *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*. pp. 1-13, 22-36. (28)
- Stoessinger, ch. 1: “The Iron Dice: World War I.” (24)

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**

- Powell, Robert. 2006. “War as a Commitment Problem.” *International Organization* 60(1): 169-203. (35)
- Copeland, Dale C. 2000. *The Origins of Major War*, Introduction, ch. 3-4. (72)

Supplemental Readings

- Sagan, Scott D., "The Origins of the Pacific War," in Robert I. Rotbert and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 323-352.
- Norrim M. Ripsman and Jack S. Levy, "The Preventive War that Never Happened: Britain, France, and the Rise of Germany in the 1930s," *Security Studies* 16:1 (2007), 32-67.
- Barbara Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51:3 (1997), 335-364.

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

- Oakes, Amy. 2006. *Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands*. *Security Studies* 15:3 (431-463). (33)
- Goemans, Hein, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*, pp. 36-52, 72-121. (67)

Supplemental Readings

- Levy, Jack S. 1989. *The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique*. In *Handbook of War Studies*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky. Boston: Unwin Hyman, pp. 259-288.
- Bator, Francis M. 2008. "No Good Choices: LBJ and the Vietnam/Great Society Connection," *Diplomatic History* 32:3, 309-340.
- Blainey, Geoffrey. 1988. *The Causes of War*, ch. 5. (19)

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

- Gagnon, V.P. 1994/1995. "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia." *International Security* 19:3, 130-166. (37)
- Stoessinger, ch. 5, "From Sarejevo to Kosovo." (37)

Supplemental Readings

- Jack Snyder and Ed Mansfield, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20: (1995) 5-38.

October 20: **Indivisible Issues**

- Hassner, Ron. 2003. "To Halve and to Hold: Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility." *Security Studies* 12(4):2-33. (33)

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.

- Robert Jervis. “War and Misperception.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18:4 (1988), 675-700.

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)
- George Kennen, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947. (12)
- Stoessinger, ch. 2, “Barbarossa: Hitler’s Attack on Russia.” (28)

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

- Walter, Barbara. 2006. “Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 313-330. (18)
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):22-49. (28)
- 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**

- Lenin, V. I. “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism”, excerpted in Richard K. Betts, *Conflict after the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, 188-195. (8)

Supplemental Readings

- Kirshner, Jonathan. *Appeasing Bankers: Financial Caution on the Road to War*, ch. 1-2.

November 15: **Natural Resources**

- “Africa’s Great War: A Report from Congo.” *The Economist*. June 6, 2002. (4)
- Ross, Michael L. 2004. “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases.” *International Organization* 58(1):35-67. (33)

Supplemental Readings

- Rubin, Barney. 2000. "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan." *World Development* 28(10): 1789-1803. (15)

November 17: **Evil**

- Randall Schweller, "Bandwagoning For Profit: Bringing The Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19:1 (1994), 72-107. (36)

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)
- John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett, "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885-1992," *World Politics* 52:1 (1999), 1-37. (37)
- Stephen G. Brooks, "The Globalization of Production and the Changing Benefits of Conquest," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43:5 (1999), 646-670. (25)
- 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.
- William R. Thompson, "Democracy and Peace: Putting the Cart before the Horse?" *International Organization* 50:1 (1996), 141-174.
- Håvard Hegre et al., "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992," *American Political Science Review* 95:1 (2001), 33-48.

November 29: **Nuclear Weapons**

- Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, ch. 1-2. (85)

Part V: Making, Keeping, and Building Peace

December 1: **Mediation and Post-Conflict Justice**

- Gary Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*, 284-310. (27)

- Jack L. Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri, “Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice,” *International Security* 28:3 (2003/2004), 5-44. (40)
(You can skim from pages 7 to 18.)

Supplemental Readings

- Henry Kissinger, “The Pitfalls of Universal Jurisdiction,” *Foreign Affairs* 80:4 (2001), 86-96. (11)
- Kenneth Roth, “The Case for Universal Jurisdiction,” *Foreign Affairs* 80:5 (2001), 150-154. (5)

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**

- Chaim Kaufmann, “When All Else Fails: Ethnic Partitions and Population Transfers in the Twentieth Century,” *International Security* 23:2 (1998), 120-156. (37)
- Radha Kumar, “The Troubled History of Partition,” *Foreign Affairs* 76:1 (1997), 22-34. (13)

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