

POL 4410: Politics and War

University of Missouri

Summer 2023

Online, asynchronous (June 5 - July 28)

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Office Hours (Zoom only): W 1:00 - 3:00 PM (CDT); R 1:00 - 2:00 PM (CDT), or by appointment
(Meeting ID: 936 6054 8865; Pass: 4410)

Overview

Why do countries go to war? Do alliances make countries more or less war-prone? Are democracies more peaceful than other regime types? Does deterrence work? Why do countries fail to reach a bargain over contentious issues prior to conflict? This course focuses on questions like these and delves into the social scientific study of interstate war. We will focus on explanations for the determinants of conflict and war, the processes underlying dispute escalation, the evolution and duration of war, and the aftermath of war. After this class, students will achieve the following learning objectives:

- Students will be able to describe and define forms of interstate hostilities, including disputes, conflicts, wars, and crises
- Students will be able to compare, contrast, and critique seminal theories used in political science to explain war onset, escalation, evolution, outcome, and aftermath
- Students will strengthen their analytical skills by applying political science theories to a case study
- Students will learn more about certain historical and contemporary conflicts and wars

While this class references historic and current events, this is not a history course. As political scientists, we will focus on the factors and theories that drive conflict behavior as understood by published, scholarly research.

In this 8-week course, we will cover 7 modules. We will start the class with an overview of the social scientific study of war before discussing the causes of interstate conflict and war. Afterwards, we will cover deterrence, signaling, and other hostile interstate interactions. The last half of the course will cover escalation, the conduct and evolution of war, the termination and outcome of war, and the aftermath of war.

There are a number of ways for how students can receive assistance, get feedback, or contact me in case of emergency:

- Email me (see in syllabus heading)
- Attend office hours (email or send a message in Canvas to set up a time)
- Post a question on the “Ask Your Instructor” discussion board on Canvas
- Send me a message in Canvas

Guide to Online Class

Students should first watch the “POL 4410: Course Introduction” video on Canvas. Every week, students will **1) watch the week’s recorded lectures, 2) read the assigned readings, and 3) complete 3 tasks: a quiz, a discussion post, and a short assignment or exam.** The type of 3 tasks assigned for each week vary (see course schedule on page 6).

While this is an asynchronous course, there are deadlines students must meet. **Students may complete weekly assignments at any time during the week assigned, but assignments still have weekly deadlines** (see section below). Thus, students are expected to watch all of the week’s lectures and complete all of the week’s assigned readings and assignments before the next week begins.

Grading

Final grades will be calculated from the following (all deadlines in CDT):

- Exam 1 (Due in Week 4: **June 26 - July 2**, no later than 8:00 AM on July 3) (20%)
- Exam 2 (Due in Week 8: **July 24 - July 30**, no later than 8:00 AM on July 30) (20%)
- Case Study Paper (Due by 8:00 AM on **July 29**) (25%)
- Quizzes (**Weeks 1-7**, due by 8:00 AM on the next week’s Monday, 7 total) (10%)
- Discussion Posts (same as above) (15%)
- Short Assignments (**Weeks 1-3, 5-7**, due by 8:00 AM on the next week’s Monday, 6 total) (10%)

Students should **not** utilize the final grade column(s) automatically created by Canvas to assess their final grade. Rather, students should calculate their own final grade (with estimated or actual grades from various assignments) or contact me via email. When all assignments are graded, I will produce a “FINAL GRADE” column in Canvas. To calculate final grades, students should use the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} FinalGrade = & (Exam1\% \times 20\%) + \\ & (Exam2\% \times 20\%) + \\ & (CaseStudyPaper\% \times 25\%) + \\ & (QuizGrades\% \times 10\%) + \\ & (DiscussionPostGrades\% \times 15\%) + \\ & (ShortAssignmentsGrades\% \times 10\%) \end{aligned}$$

Grading Scale

Final grades will be calculated with the following grading scale:

A+ = 97.0 - 100	C = 73.0 - 76.99
A = 93.0 - 96.99	C- = 70.0 - 72.99
A- = 90.0 - 92.99	D+ = 67.0 - 69.99
B+ = 87.0 - 89.99	D = 63.0 - 66.99
B = 83.0 - 86.99	D- = 60.0 - 62.99
B- = 80.0 - 82.99	F = 0 - 59.99
C+ = 77.0 - 79.99	

Exams (40%)

The first exam is due during **Week 4, by 8:00 AM on July 3** at the latest. The second exam is due in **Week 8, by 8:00 AM on July 30**. Both exams will be timed at 1 hour and 15 minutes. Exam 1 will cover material from weeks 1-4 while exam 2 will cover material from weeks 5-8. Thus, exam 1 should be taken **after** students watch week 4's lectures and read week 4's readings, and exam 2 should be taken **after** students watch week 8's lecture and read week 8's readings.

The exams will be open-book and open-note and will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions that will test students' understanding of the social science research on conflict and war. The final exam will not be cumulative.

Case Study Paper (25%)

In addition to examining theories of conflict and war, students will apply their knowledge of the literature to analyze an interstate war. Detailed instructions on this paper are posted on Canvas. In the paper, students will explain which factors contributed to the war's onset and/or escalation, evolution, outcome, and aftermath using concepts and theories discussed in class and in readings. Students will also evaluate whether current political science research adequately explains their selected interstate war. Students should work on this paper throughout the summer, and the final paper is **due by 8:00 AM on July 29**.

To help students pick a topic, there is a list of interstate wars on Canvas. If students are interested in analyzing an interstate war not on the list, they can select that war so long as it **is an interstate war (between at least two countries) and has ended**. Students should contact me if they have questions about a potential case. Paper topics (the interstate war selected for the paper) are **due by the end of Week 1**.

While I cannot proofread or provide edits to draft papers prior to the final deadline, I encourage students to contact me if they have questions surrounding their specific case or surrounding the course material. I encourage students to make an appointment with the MU Writing Center if they want assistance with the writing of the paper.

Quizzes (10%)

To ensure students are following course content, students will complete a short quiz every week in weeks 1-7. The quizzes will comprise of a few big-picture questions **from the assigned readings** for that week. Thus, students should read all of the weekly assigned readings **before** taking the quiz. Quizzes are open-book and open-note, but they are timed at 12 minutes.

Discussion Posts (15%)

To allow for student participation in this virtual class, students will post one discussion question every week **or** post one reply to someone else's question every week during weeks 1-7. Discussion questions should be a reaction to that week's assigned readings or lectures. For full credit, a good-faith effort must be evident and evidence of reading the assigned material (or watching the assigned material) must be present. Ideas on types of questions and replies to post are provided on Canvas.

No prior or outside knowledge of international relations, conflict studies, or history is required for discussion, and I welcome questions, comments, or examples from students as long as they are relevant to the discussion at hand, represent a good-faith effort, and show evidence that the student read the assigned readings or watched the assigned lectures.

Additional Guidelines for Online Discussion:

- When communicating in this course (including over email, in Canvas messages, and in discussion boards), students need to use language that is professional
- In all course communications (including email, Canvas messages, and discussion boards), students need to be respectful and considerate of others
- Due to discussion being online, students should be careful when using humor or sarcasm as tone and intent could be misunderstood by others

Short Assignments (10%)

During weeks 1-3 and weeks 5-7 (non-exam weeks), students will complete a short assignment. The type of short assignment varies (see course schedule on page 6), and instructions for all assignments are provided on Canvas.

Readings

There is one assigned book for this course (see below). In addition to the MU bookstore and external book-sellers, this required book is available for free in a digital format through Ellis library (library.missouri.edu). Additional assigned readings are posted on Canvas.

Quackenbush, Stephen L. 2015. *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Canvas

We will use Canvas for lectures, discussion, quizzes, exams, grades, readings, assignment instructions, and announcements. All assignments must be submitted on Canvas by the assigned date. Each student should ensure that they have access to all materials on Canvas and are able to receive notifications via their student account. **Please note that I am unable to accept or respond to any emails that come from non-University of Missouri addresses.**

Late Work

Late work will be deducted 5% for each day late. **I strongly encourage students to turn in assignments late rather than not at all.** A grade of 0 can be fatal to the final grade.

If you miss a deadline due to illness or emergency, send me an email. I cannot schedule a make-up exam or assignment for students without a reason to excuse the late work. I will excuse late work on a case by case basis.

Other Considerations

- Out of respect for fellow students and the instructor, everyone will refrain from making offensive or discriminatory remarks and engaging in other disruptive behavior online. While this is an asynchronous, virtual classroom, students need to ensure that their language and interactions online are appropriate and considerate of others.
- Students may not redistribute audio or video recordings of statements, comments, or material from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students whose statements, comments, or material are recorded.

- The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing or cheating in any manner will receive an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment.**
- If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary, establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center (disabilitycenter.missouri.edu) at 573-882-4696. Afterward, notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Student Support

- If you are in need, the MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health care and can help you find the best approach to treatment based on your needs (wellbeing.missouri.edu/how-we-support-your-mental-health). Call to make an individual appointment or a group counseling appointment at 573-882-6601. Any student in crisis or with urgent concerns can also contact the Counseling Center 24/7 at 573-882-6601.
- If you seek information or support on LGBTQ resources on campus, please contact MU's LGBTQ Resource Center (lgbtq.missouri.edu) at 573-884-7750. In addition to the MU Counseling Center, students in need can use any of the crisis hotlines provided by the LGBTQ Resource Center (lgbtq.missouri.edu/crisis)
- The Writing Center (writingcenter.missouri.edu) offers writing support to all students at the University of Missouri. Although tutors are not editors and therefore will not “fix” a student’s writing, they will provide feedback and revision options for any writing project at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, submit your work to the Online Writery via their website. To learn more about the Writing Center, call 573-884-8725 or 573-882-6853.

Course Schedule

See the course schedule on the next page. In the next 8 weeks, we will cover 7 main modules. With the exception of one module, modules will last one week. Each module contains 3-4 lectures that should be watched during that week. Full references for each reading are listed following the course schedule.

Please note the following important dates for Mizzou’s 2023 summer session:

- Last date to drop with no grade: **June 21**
- Last date to withdraw (W on transcript): **July 26**
- Mizzou’s 2023 summer refund schedule:
 - 100% refund through **June 7**
 - 50% refund through **June 21**
 - 25% refund through **July 3**
- Holidays observed in Mizzou’s 2023 summer session:
 - Juneteenth: **July 19**
 - Independence Day: **July 4**

POL 4410: Summer 2023 Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Due	Required Reading(s)*
1	6/5 - 6/11	Module: Scientific Study of War 1: Social Scientific Approach to IR 2: War Processes 3: Rationality and Bargaining Model of War 4: Operationalizing War, Conflict, and Crises	Paper Topic, Discussion Post #1, worksheet 1, Quiz #1 (all by 8:00 AM 6/12)	Quackenbush (2015) 1 Quackenbush (2015) 1 (continued) Quackenbush (2015) 3 Quackenbush (2015) 2 (first half)
2	6/12 - 6/18	Module: Causes of Interstate War and MIDs I 1: Power and Polarity 2: Contiguity and Territory 3: Issues 4: Alliances	Discussion Post #2, worksheet 2, Quiz #2 (all by 8:00 AM 6/19)	Mehta and Whitlark (2017) Schmidt, Lee, and Mitchell (2021) Schmidt, Lee, and Mitchell (2021) (continued) Quackenbush (2015) 6
3	6/19 - 6/25	Module: Causes of Interstate War and MIDs II 1: Economic Interdependence 2: International Organizations 3: Democracy 4: Diversionary Theories of War	Discussion Post #3, worksheet 3, Quiz #3 (all by 8:00 AM 6/26)	Quackenbush (2015) 7 Donno, Metzger, and Russett (2015) Quackenbush (2015) 7 (continued) Williams, Brulé, and Koch (2010)
4	6/26 - 7/2	Module: Deterrence, Signaling, and Hostile Interactions 1: Deterrence 2: Audience Costs 3: The Gray Zone: Overview 4: The Gray Zone: Application to Russia and Ukraine	Exam 1, Discussion Post #4, Quiz #4 (all due by 8:00 AM 7/3)	Quackenbush (2015) 8 Weiss and Dafoe (2019) Belo (2020) Belo (2020) (continued)
5	7/3 - 7/9	Module: Escalation to War 1: Steps to War 2: Effects of Terrorism 3: From Civil Conflict to Interstate War	Discussion Post #5, Article Notes, Quiz #5 (all due by 8:00 AM 7/10)	Quackenbush (2015) 9 Bapat (2014) Reeder (2014)
6	7/10 - 7/16	Module: Conduct of Fighting 1: Military Strategy and Doctrine 2: War Expansion 3: Third-Party Mediation 4: War Duration	Discussion Post #6, Article Notes, Quiz #6 (all due by 8:00 AM 7/17)	Gray (2012) 7 Quackenbush (2015) 11 Melin (2013) Quackenbush (2015) 11 (continued)
7	7/17 - 7/23	Module: Conclusion of War 1: War Outcomes 2: War Termination 3: Electoral Consequences of War 4: From Interstate War to Civil Conflict	Discussion Post #7, Article Notes, Quiz #7 (all due 8:00 AM by 7/24)	Quackenbush (2015) 11 (continued) Quackenbush (2015) 12 Getmansky and Weiss (2023) Kopp, Reeder, Wright
8	7/24 - 7/30	Module: Recurrent Conflict and Additional Topics 1: Interstate Rivalries 2: Recurrent Conflict 3: Additional Topics	Case Study Paper (by 8:00 AM 7/29) Exam 2 (by 8:00 AM 7/30)	Quackenbush (2015) 13 Quackenbush (2015) 13 (continued)

Required Readings (references)*

Week 1: Scientific Study of War

- Quackenbush, Stephen L. 2015. *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, chapters 1-3* (*only first half of chapter 2, before “Defining War”).

Week 2: Causes of Interstate Wars and MIDs I

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 6.
- Mehta, Rupal N., and Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark. 2017. “The Benefits and Burdens of Nuclear Latency.” *International Studies Quarterly* 61: 517-528.
- Schmidt, Cody J., Bomi K. Lee, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. 2021. “Climate Bones of Contention: How Climate Variability Influences Territorial, Maritime, and River Interstate Conflicts.” *Journal of Peace Research* 58(1): 132-150.

Week 3: Causes of Interstate Wars and MIDs II

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 7.
- Donno, Daniela, Shawna K. Metzger, and Bruce Russett. 2015. “Screening Out Risk: IGOs, Member State Selection, and Interstate Conflict, 1951-2000.” *International Studies Quarterly* 59(2): 251-263.
- Williams, Laron K., David J. Brulé, and Michael Koch. 2010. “War Voting: Interstate Disputes, the Economy, and Electoral Outcomes.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 27(5): 442-460.

Week 4: Deterrence, Signaling, and Hostile Interactions

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 8.
- Weiss, Jessica Chen, and Allan Dafoe. 2019. “Authoritarian Audiences, Rhetoric, and Propaganda in International Crises: Evidence from China.” *International Studies Quarterly* 63: 963-973.
- Belo, Dani. 2020. “Conflict in the Absence of War: A Comparative Analysis of China and Russia Engagement in Gray Zone Conflicts.” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 26(1): 73-91.

Week 5: Escalation to War

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 9.
- Bapat, Navin A. 2014. “The Escalation of Terrorism: Microlevel Violence and Interstate Conflict.” *International Interactions* 40(4): 568-578.
- Reeder, Bryce W. 2014. “Civil War and the Severity of Militarized Interstate Disputes.” *Research and Politics* October-December: 1-8.

Week 6: Conduct of Fighting

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 11.
- Gray, Colin S. 2012. *War, Peace, and International Relations*. London: Routledge, chapter 7 “World War I: Modern Warfare.”
- Melin, Molly M. 2013. “When States Mediate.” *Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs* 2(1): 78-90.

Week 7: Conclusion of War

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 12.
- Getmansky, Anna, and Chagai M. Weiss. 2023. "Interstate Conflict Can Reduce Support for Incumbents: Evidence from the Israeli Electorate and the Yom Kippur War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 67(2): 326-348.
- Kopp, Heather M., Bryce W. Reeder, and Thorin M. Wright. 2023. "International Conflict Involvement, Domestic Repression, and the Escalation of Civil Conflict." Working Paper.

Week 8: Recurrent Conflict and Additional Topics

- Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, chapter 13.