Course Description
We begin with basic questions and theories. Why do states adopt certain goals or objectives, and pursue particular foreign military and economic policies? Why do wars start and end? Why are they fought in certain ways? What role is played by objective factors, such as the balance of power, uncertainty, status quo conditions, and the ability to make “credible commitments”? How does the political system or “regime type” affect choices of objectives (“leadership preferences”)? How do leadership preferences and regime type affect the likelihood and strategy of war? We will apply the theories to a series of case studies of major international conflicts—World War I, World War II, and the Cold War.

Backing up a step, the existence of particular states in particular territorial forms should not be taken for granted. Where do states come from? What is a people or nation? How does a nation form and become the nucleus of a state? To the extent that nations are constitutive of states, what are the typical forms of conflicts among nation-states, or between existing nation-states and internal ethnic minorities aspiring to statehood? Why do such conflicts turn violent? Why are they fought in the way they are? Why do they end or persist? What determines whether and how other states intervene in ethnic conflicts—whether independently or through international organizations?

Then, we examine the two most enduring and dangerous international conflicts in East Asia—between South and North Korea, and between China and Taiwan. Both are conflicts involving politically independent parts of a larger ethnic group. The disputes concern both which of the rival regimes is “legitimate,” and whether there ought to be a unified state. We will also discuss China’s rise to superpower status, and how it is affecting international relations on China’s periphery.

Next, we look at the modern Middle East and international terrorism. What are the typical political systems of the modern Middle East? Why have these regimes developed and survived? What is terrorism? Why is international terrorism now so strongly centered in the Middle East and in some other parts of the Islamic World? What was the U.S. response to the September 11 attacks? What are the pros and cons of the various strategies that might be adopted in the struggle against international terrorism?

We conclude by looking at economic and cultural globalization. What are the sources of international trade, international investment, and international migration?
What are the pros and cons of these forms of international economic integration? Why do states impose varying kinds of restrictions on these flows of goods, money, and people? What are the causes of cultural globalization? What are the pros and cons of international cultural influence?

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the best two of three quizzes (12.5% each), one midterm exam (25%), and one final exam (50%). Interested students may choose to write a seven-page research paper on a topic agreed upon with the instructor. In that case, the research paper counts for 25% and the final exam 25% of the grade. There will be no make-up quizzes, although one quiz may be dropped. No make-up exams can be given without a medical excuse. To check your understanding of the material and your preparations for the exams, you should see me or the teaching assistant in office hours at least once before the midterm and once before the final. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Students are responsible for honestly completing and representing their work, for appropriately citing sources, and for respecting others’ academic endeavors.

**Readings**

The following books are available at UWM’s online bookstore:


Other, shorter readings are available on the course D2L site. References are listed in full at the end of the syllabus.

**Course Schedule**

The following schedule is subject to modification. Try to finish each day’s reading *before* class. Do the reading with each week’s debate questions in mind.

Discussion questions: What is the national interest? For example, what is the national interest of the United States or of other countries? How are the national interests of democracies different from those of authoritarian regimes? Why do the national interests of authoritarian regimes vary so much? Does democratization make war less likely? How does leadership fit into these theories? Consider some examples of democracies and authoritarian regimes going to war. How, if at all, do their motivations and methods seem to differ? What are the main sources of conflict that are not likely to be resolved by democratization? Are arms races inevitable? To what extent can arms control agreements eliminate or limit arms races? Consider the treaty banning landmines. What are the arguments that the US should or should not sign such a treaty? What is the nature of the treaty limiting acquisition of nuclear weapons—the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Why doesn’t this treaty ban all nuclear weapons?

Weeks 3-4 (9/21, 9/26): Quiz (9/26). Great power rivalry in history. The origins and consequences of World War I and World War II.


Discussion questions: In what sense were governments of particular countries—say Austria-Hungary, Germany and/or Russia—responsible for the outbreak of World War I? In what sense is the nature of the international system responsible—“trapping” the great powers so that war became unavoidable? What was the purpose of the League of Nations? At the time, what were the arguments why the US should or should not join the League? What could have been done to prevent World War II?

Weeks 4-5 (9/28, 10/3, 10/5): Quiz (10/5). Note: No class on 10/10. The origins of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War. The nuclear arms race during the Cold War.

Nuclear proliferation.


Discussion questions: Was the Soviet Union or the United States, or both, responsible for the outbreak and persistence of the Cold War? Was the Cold War inevitable? Discuss some specific disputes at the time the Cold War broke out, for example, those over Germany, Eastern Europe, Greece, Turkey, Iran, China, or Korea. How and why did the Cold War end? How successful were arms control efforts during the Cold War? Why were they not more successful? How successful is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Choose a country and discuss why it has either acquired or not acquired a nuclear weapons capability.

Weeks 6-8 (10/12, 10/17, 10/19, 10/24, 10/26): Note: No class on 10/10.


Discussion questions: How is one ethnic group distinguished from another? When and why do ethnic groups become national groups? When and why are ethno-national groups able to form states? What are the most common causes of ethnic conflict? When and why do ethnic conflicts turn violent? How is violence often avoided? What are the different strategies used to fight ethnic conflicts? Why are these strategies chosen? What determines whether and how other states intervene in ethnic conflicts? When and why do some violent ethnic conflicts end, while others persist more or less indefinitely?


Discussion questions: In these conflicts, what are the main objectives and strategies of the two sides? How did the conflicts start, and why have they persisted? Why have certain military strategies been chosen? In each case, what are the main objectives and strategies of the United States? More generally, explain the nature of international intervention in the conflicts. What is likely to happen in the near future? How if at all are these conflicts likely to end? Discuss the relative importance of the balance of power, national identities, regime types, and leadership preferences. China’s rise to superpower status has been going on since Deng Xiaoping’s market reforms in 1979. Why have tensions with China’s neighbors risen so sharply under the leaderships of Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping?

Reading: Rubin 2004; Lewis 2001; Nau 2016, pp. 304-328; Alexiev 2002; West 2008; Biddle, Christia and Their 2010.

Discussion questions: What kinds of regimes, ideologies, leaders, and policies have been most common in the postwar Middle East? What explains this pattern? Why have these regimes been so prone to rule through internal repression and to support international terrorism? What is terrorism? What regimes and movements have used terrorism most intensively in recent decades, and why? Discuss some examples of terrorist movements. Why do these movements use terrorism instead of alternative political strategies? Under what, if any, circumstances is terrorism a politically legitimate means of pursuing political goals? What are the legitimate responses to terrorism? In what ways was the US unprepared to confront terrorism before September 11? Why did these shortcomings exist? How has the US responded to the September 11 attacks? What future steps are likely? Why? What role do international law and international organizations play in the war against international terrorism?

Reading: Nau 2016, pp. 349-500; Nye 2003, 185-203.
Discussion questions: What explains why relatively poor countries have had such different rates of economic growth? What is the relative importance of internal and external influences on economic performance? Is international trade good or bad? Is it preferable to the alternative of protection? Why do countries choose different international trade policies? Is international investment good or bad? What explains why some countries impose significant restrictions on international investment, while others use subsidies to attract it? Is international migration good or bad? Why is immigration typically much more heavily restricted than international trade or investment? How will trade, investment, and immigration policies evolve in the future? Choose a country and summarize both its economic policy history and current debates. What does the World Trade Organization (WTO) do? What are the main criticisms usually aimed at the WTO? Are they accurate? What does the IMF do? Are IMF policies typically a correct response to international financial crisis? Were IMF policies right in places such as South Korea, Russia and Greece? What are the pros and cons of cultural globalization? How do national identity and regime type influence attitudes toward cultural globalization?

Final Exam: Friday, December 16, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Bolton B46

Readings Available on the Course D2L Site


Sestanovich, Stephen. (1993) “Did the West Undo the East?” National Interest 31 (Spring), 26-34. (In E-Reserve, listed under Political Science 330.)


Selected Sources for Background Information and Current Events
Journalistic sources (all have web sites with limited access, along with their complete print versions):

Selected Web sites:
Freedom House http://www.freedomhouse.org
World Trade Organization http://www.wto.org
International Monetary Fund http://www.imf.org