

International Conflict
(Political Science 370)
Fall 2021

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Objectives

In this course, we start by exploring why we study international conflict in a scientific manner. After that we review the international conflict literature. Since the dominant theoretical frame in the foreign policy decision making literature is Rational Choice Theory (RAT), we first investigate rationality and war decision. Then, we discuss Realism (i.e., balance of power theory, power transition theory), terrorism, the political economy of defense spending, deterrence, Liberalism (democratic peace and the trade-conflict nexus), civil wars, and why interstate military disputes escalate to war.

Requirements

2 Exams (25 percent each): You will be tested on the assigned readings and lecture notes. Exams will have multiple choice questions and a short essay. The essay question will be graded separately after the exam period is over. You are expected to write a few paragraphs to answer the essay question. No make up exam will be given as you have a week to take the test. I strongly suggest that you do not wait until the last minute.

Exams will have multiple choice questions and a short essay question taken through Canvas. You can take exams at any time during the week it is available, but you will only have one opportunity to take it. **Once you begin the exam, you MUST finish it.** You **cannot** start an exam, then enter again at a later time to finish it. Also, exams will be timed (60 minutes), so you will have a set amount of time to take the exam once you begin. You should make sure that you have set aside the whole time allotted to take the exam just in case you need it. You should also make sure that you have a secure connection before you begin. **Internet connection or any other computer related problems cannot be an excuse for not finishing it on time.** You should study and prepare for these exams in the same way you would any closed-book exam and be prepared to complete the exam on your own.

11 Discussions (3 percent each); Response 2 points and comment 1 point

You will get full credit for your discussion response as long as it is 300 words and you comment on another student's posting. When you comment on another student's response, you are required to justify your comment. Simply saying you like it or agree with the posting will not be good enough to get credit. Again, your response **MUST be at least 300 words** in length, but there is no length requirement for your comments. If your response is shorter than 300 words or if your response is posted late or if you fail to comment on another student's response, you will get partial credit for your discussion response. There will be no credit for late comment on another student's posting.

You are required to post your response to the discussion question(s) on the Canvas site by 11:59 PM on the due date. **Keep in mind that all responses and postings on the Discussion Questions forum must follow the rules of behavior we would observe in the face-to-face classroom. Your responses to the discussion questions should address the question itself and demonstrate that you understand the topic under discussion. Do NOT question the discussion question. When you respond to someone else's posting, do so with respect and thought. Personal attacks or excessive opinion-spouting will not be tolerated.** You should engage each other's ideas and respond in a thoughtful, constructive, informed manner.

A Research Paper (17 percent): Students are free to choose the topic of the paper as long as it is related to the course material and content. Turn in the paper to the Assignments on Canvas. Please do NOT ask for a research question. I do NOT provide a research question as coming up with a research question is part of learning.

Term Paper Guidelines: The length requirement is 3,000-3,500 words (approximately 8-10 double spaced pages with Times New Roman 12-point font size and 1-inch margin) including everything (references and tables, figures). You can have a cover page if you wish. Regardless, you are required to have a paper title. You MUST have at least FIVE references. There is NO required citation format. It is fine as long as your format is consistent. This research paper satisfies the capstone requirement (there is no additional requirement for capstone).

1. You MUST have a clearly defined and narrowly focused question. I suggest you develop a research question in a literal question form. For instance, what led North Korea to develop nuclear weapons? Do arms races lead to conflicts? What are the effects of defense spending on economic growth in the United States? What was the cause of the September 11 terrorist attack? What are the causes of dispute between the US and China in the South China Sea?

2. In the introduction, you introduce the research question and describe why the question is meaningful/interesting.

3. At the beginning of the body, you provide background information. If it is a case study or analytical paper, you provide historical information so that the reader can understand the background. If it is a theoretical paper, you provide a literature review on the subject.

4. In the main body of the paper, you provide your answer to the research question, which should be a logical argument based on the literature. You MUST provide evidence to back up your argument/answer to the research question.

5. In the conclusion, you summarize what you did in the paper and discuss theoretical or policy implications of your study. It depends on the type of research question you have.

Required Readings

Quackenbush, Stephen. 2015. International Conflict: Logic and Evidence. Sage/ CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-4522-4098-5--All other readings will be available at the course site.

Grades

Grading scale is as follows:

A = 93-100	A- = 90-90.9		
B+ = 87-89.9	B = 83-86.9	B- = 80-82.9	
C+ = 77-79.9	C = 73-76.9	C- = 70-72.9	
D+ = 67-69.9	D = 63-66.9	D- = 60-62.9	F = Below 60

There is no other extra credit. So, please do NOT ask for it. Any student who cheats on an exam or commits any other act of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, taking the test together) will receive an F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate university authorities. Copying someone else's work without proper quote or citation is plagiarism. You MUST avoid plagiarism when you post your response to discussion questions and write your research paper.

Flow of the Class: For this course, a week will start on Thursday (September 2) at 12:01 AM and end on Wednesday at 11:59PM although this will change after the Thanksgiving recess.

Posted my lecture notes combined with the readings from the textbook or any other assigned reading material, will constitute the materials for the week.

You are expected to do the reading, access the lecture notes, and answer the discussion question and comment on another student's post (**This is your responsibility**).

Please remember that I will be sending everything to your UWM e-mail accounts. If you don't regularly use that account, make sure you check it or forward it to an account you use regularly. When you need to e-mail me something for the class, send it to me at heouk@uwm.edu.

Schedule

Week 1 (9/2-8) Introduction

Please post a brief introduction of yourself in the discussion section on Canvas. This is NOT a discussion, so the discussion response requirements do not apply here.

Week 2 (9/9-15) Scientific Study of War & Identifying Wars and militarized Disputes

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 1&2

Discussion 1: Describe the scientific study of war. Why do we need to study wars in a scientific manner? What are the benefits and drawbacks of studying international conflicts in this manner?

Week 3 (9/16-22) War and Rationality (Expected Utility Theory of War)

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 3

Discussion 2: Evaluate the expected utility theory of war. Do you agree or disagree with the assumptions and decision process of the theory and why?

Week 4 (9/23-29) National Power

Reading Quackenbush Ch. 5

Discussion 3: Which do you think is a better measure of national power between GNP and CINC measure of national capability and why? Describe the strengths and weaknesses of both measures and compare them.

Week 5 (9/30-10/6) Alliance

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 6

Discussion 4: Why do states form alliances? Do you think alliances matter? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not? Does the end of the Cold War have any implications for alliance?

Week 6 (10/7-13) Democratic Peace

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 7

Discussion 5: Liberal scholars argue that democratic countries do not fight each other, the so-called Democratic Peace. Do democracies really not fight each other? Are democratic countries more pacific than non-democracies?

Week 7 (10/14-20) **Mid-term Exam**—You can take the mid-term exam at any time before the deadline.

Week 8 (10/21-27) International Trade and Conflict

Mansfield, Edward and Brian Pollins (2001) “The Study of Interdependence and Conflict: Recent Advances, Open Questions, and Directions for Future Research” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(6): 834-859.

Discussion 6: Globalization has deepened international interdependence. Does economic interdependence lead to peace as liberals argue? Describe why you agree or disagree with the theory.

Week 9 (10/28-11/3) Deterrence

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 8

Discussion 7: Based on all the deterrence theories, what do you think makes deterrence work?

Week 10 (11/4-10) The Political Economy of Defense

Reading: (1) Heo, Uk. 1998. “Modeling the Defense-Growth Relationship around the Globe” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(5): 637-657; (2) Heo, Uk and John Bohte. 2012. “Who Pays for National Defense: Financing Defense Programs in the United States, 1947-2007.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(3): 406-431.

Discussion 8: Nations spend a significant portion of their government budget on the military. What are the economic effects of defense spending on growth?

Week 11 (11/11-17) Escalation of Disputes to War

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 9

Discussion 9: Some interstate military disputes escalate to war while some do not. What makes interstate disputes escalate to war?

Week 12 (11/18-23) Terrorism

Reading: Readings on Terrorism, available on Canvas

Discussion 10: Since the September 11 terrorist attack, terrorism has received a lot of scholarly attention. Why do you think terrorism occur and what do terrorists try to achieve?

Thanksgiving Break (11/24-28)

Week 14 (11/29-12/6) No Discussion: **Research Paper Due at 11:59 PM on December 6**

Week 15 (12/7-13) Recurrent Conflict and Rivalry

Reading: Quackenbush Ch. 13

Discussion 11: Some countries maintain hostile relationship and fight repeatedly. What factors lead states that have fought in the past to fight again?

Week 16 (12/14-20): **Final Exam (Due at 11:59 PM on December 20)**—You can take the final exam at any time before the deadline.