

International Conflict Sample Syllabus

Designed for a class that meets two days a week on a fourteen week semester

Course Description

This course examines the conditions that make for war and peace in international relations. The course begins with a discussion of the scientific study of interstate warfare. Later sections of the course examine the causes of war, the outcomes and consequences of war, and solutions that have been offered to help prevent or limit war. Upon completion of this course, students should be familiar with the factors that mitigate or exacerbate military conflict between states. Students should be able to apply these factors in examining real-world scenarios, such as studying historical cases of war or assessing the prospects for future conflict in troubled areas of the world.

Course Requirements

Your final course grade is calculated as follows:

Class Attendance	10%
Pop Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exams	50%
Group Project	25%

Class Attendance (10%)

Each class period, I will send around an attendance sheet for students to sign. You are allowed to miss two class periods without penalty. Each missed class after the first two classes incurs a 5% deduction from the attendance portion of the grade. For example, if you miss a total of 4 class periods, you would receive a grade of 90% for the class attendance part of your grade. If you arrive more than five minutes after the class begins, you are not allowed to earn credit for class attendance that day.

Pop Quizzes (15%)

Several days throughout the semester, students will take a short multiple choice quiz at the beginning of class. The quiz will contain questions related to the assigned reading on the day in which the quiz is administered. Students will be allowed to drop their lowest quiz grade. Any missed quizzes are automatically dropped as the lowest score.

Examinations (50%, 25% each exam)

There are two examinations which may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies. If an emergency arises, you will need to contact the instructor before the exam or you will receive zero credit.

Group Project (25%)

Each student will be placed in a group consisting of five to seven students. Each group will receive various pieces of information about a (fictitious) pair of countries and will be asked to predict whether or not these countries will fight a war based on this information. In this project, students will draw upon the theoretical material covered in class to make their predictions. Each group will be required to make a brief (10-15 minute) Power Point presentation during one of the last two classes, in addition to submitting a 10 page paper summarizing the group's findings, and a short paper (2 pages) describing each group member's experience with the project. More information about the group projects will be distributed on the course website.

Required Readings (Order Online)

Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. West Sussex, UK. Wiley-Blackwell. Paperback: ISBN: 978-1405175593.

Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin and John A. Vasquez. 2013. *Conflict, War, and Peace: An Introduction to Scientific Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-4522-4449-5.

All articles marked with an asterisk (*) can be found on the course website. You can also find a copy of the syllabus and copies of the group project assignment.

Outline of Topics and Weekly Readings (LT=Levy & Thompson; MV=Mitchell & Vasquez)

<u>Date/Topic</u>	<u>Assigned Readings</u>
Day 1 Intro. to the Study of Warfare	LT, Chapter 1 MV, Preface
Day 2 Conceptualizing and Measuring War; Data Analysis	MV, Chapter 1 (“Introduction to the Scientific Method”) *Chapter 15 (Learning Package), in John A. Vasquez and Marie T. Henahan, <i>The Scientific Study of Peace and War: A Text Reader</i> . 1992. New York, NY: Lexington Books.
Day 3 Dangerous Dyads	MV, Chapter 2 (Bremer, “Dangerous Dyads”, pp. 5-26; Editors’ Commentary, pp. 27-33)
Day 4	Watch “The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. Mcnamara”
Day 5 System Level Theories	LT, Chapter 2
Day 6 Dyadic Level Theories	LT, Chapter 3 *Reiter, Dan. 2003. “Exploring the Bargaining Model of War.” <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 1(1): 27-43.
Day 7 Dangerous Dyads: Territory	MV, Chapter 3 (Hensel et al, “Bones of Contention”, pp. 35-54; Editors’ Commentary, pp. 55-62)
Day 8 Dangerous Dyads: Alliances	MV, Chapter 4 (Leeds, “Alliances and the Expansion and Escalation of Militarized Interstate Disputes”, pp. 63-75; Editors’ Commentary, pp. 76-81)
Day 9 Dangerous Dyads: Rivalry	MV, Chapter 5 (Klein, Goertz, and Diehl, “The New Rivalry Dataset”, pp. 83-97; Editors’ Commentary, pp. 98-103) *Colaresi, Michael P. and William R. Thompson. 2002. “Hot Spots or Hot Hands? Serial Crisis Behavior, Escalating Risks, and Rivalry.” <i>Journal of Politics</i> 64(4): 1175-1198.

<u>Date/Topic</u>	<u>Assigned Readings</u>
Day 10 Dangerous Dyads: Arms Races	MV, Chapter 6 (Sample, "The Outcomes of Military Buildups", pp. 105-125; Editors' Commentary, pp. 126-131)
Day 11 Dangerous Dyads: The Steps To War Model	MV, Chapter 7 (Senese and Vasquez, "Assessing the Steps to War", pp. 133-159; Editors' Commentary, pp. 160-167)
Day 12 Dangerous Dyads: Domestic Factors	LT, Chapter 4, pages 83-104 MV, Chapter 8 (Mitchell and Prins, "Rivalry and Diversionary Uses of Force," pp. 169-187; Editors' Commentary, pp. 188-194)
Day 13	Exam #1
Day 14 Peaceful Dyads: Democratic Peace	LT, Chapter 4, pages 104-127 MV, Chapter 9 (Oneal and Russett, "The Kantian Peace", pp. 195-222; Editors' Commentary, pp. 223-229)
Day 15 Peaceful Dyads: Economic Interdependence	MV, Chapter 10 (Barbieri, "Economic Interdependence", pp. 231-250; Editors' Commentary, pp. 251-257)
Day 16 Peaceful Dyads: Power Preponderance	MV, Chapter 11 (Reed, "A Unified Model of Conflict Onset and Escalation", pp. 259-269; Editors' Commentary, pp. 270-275)
Day 17 Peaceful Dyads: Territorial Peace	MV, Chapter 12 (Gibler, "Bordering on Peace", pp. 277-296; Editors' Commentary, pp. 297-302)
Day 18 Peaceful Dyads: Nuclear Weapons	MV, Chapter 13 (Asal and Beardsley, "Proliferation and International Crisis Behavior", pp. 303-316; Editors' Commentary, pp. 317-322)
Day 19 Organizational Models	LT, Chapter 6 *Allison, Graham T. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 63(3): 689-718.
Day 20 Decision-Making Models	LT, Chapter 5 *McDermott, Rose and Jacek Kugler. 2001. "Comparing Rational Choice and Prospect Theory Analyses: The US Decision to Launch Operation 'Desert Storm', January 1991." <i>Journal of Strategic Studies</i> 24(3): 49-85.

Date/Topic

Day 21

Outcomes & Consequences:
Enforcing Settlements

Assigned Readings

MV, Chapter 14 (Werner, "The Precarious Nature of Peace", pp. 323-337; Editors' Commentary, pp. 338-343)

Day 22

Outcomes & Consequences:
Leadership Consequences

MV, Chapter 15 (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson, "War and the Survival of Political Leaders", pp. 345-365; Editors' Commentary, pp. 366-371)

Day 23

Outcomes & Consequences:
Phoenix Factor

*Organski, A.F.K. and Jacek Kugler. 1977. "The Costs of Major War: The Phoenix Factor." *American Political Science Review*, 71(4): 1347-1366.

Day 24

Outcomes & Consequences:
Willingness to Suffer

*Rosen, Steven. "War Power and the Willingness to Suffer," Chapter 11 in John A. Vasquez and Marie T. Henehan. 1992. *The Scientific Study of Peace and War: A Text Reader*. New York: Lexington Books.

Day 25

Causes of Civil Wars

LT, Chapter 7

Day 26

Presentations for Group Projects

Day 27

Presentations for Group Projects

Day 28

Exam #2