RPOS 386: International Conflict and Security

Instructors: Amira Jadoon and Bryan Early  
Class Times: MW 4:15PM – 5:35PM  
Room: Humanities, 0133  
Instructor Email: amirajadoon@gmail.com  
Assignments submission: conflict386@gmail.com  
Office Hours: Uptown, Humanities Building B16 – M 12:00 -2:00 PM

I. Course Description

“War is the continuation of Politik by other means” Carl von Clausewitz.

Why do states go to war? Why can states sometimes resolve disputes peacefully, but resort to violence at other times? What are some strategies to mitigate the chances of war, and make it more humane? How is war changing today?

This class focuses on explanations for these broad questions of war and peace. It explores the strategies used by states to obtain security and power in international relations. The class looks into the use of force in international relations, what causes international conflict, how wars are fought and how they terminate. Finally, it looks at foreign intervention and the use of international policy tools to manage and prevent conflict. Course participants will survey various analytical frameworks and social scientific tools to analyze the above topics and learn how to apply these to current issues in security and defense policy such as nuclear deterrence and terrorism. Assessment is based on quizzes, regular written assignments and contributions and examinations.

II. Course Objectives

We will work together on answering the questions above. Throughout the semester, we will specifically:

- Identify the meanings and implications of the concepts of war and peace
- Develop and compare different frameworks to study why states go to war and why they maintain peace
- Understand the principle reasons why international military conflicts are fought, how they are fought, and how they end
- Possess a fundamental understanding of military strategy, national security strategy, and grand strategy
- Understand the United States’ national security strategy and the security strategies pursued by foreign countries
- Study war within states
- Discuss current challenges in defense policy
• Learn how to examine theories and support arguments
• Learn to communicate insights from the scientific study of conflict to the broader public

III. Course Materials and Resources

There is one main book that you are required to purchase. Articles and book chapters/excerpts are posted on blackboard or are available through the UAlbany library. The library website offers helpful tutorials on how to retrieve scholarly articles here: ⟨http://library.albany.edu/usered/find/index.html⟩

IV. Requirements and Assignments

This is a reading intensive class. Students will be expected to attend every class having read the assigned texts. You must complete and take notes on all assigned readings prior to the class in which they are scheduled to be discussed. We will go over efficient reading techniques in the first week of class. You are also required to read both national and international news sources on a regular basis as these will be a part of your class participation grade (see below). You can miss two class meetings without any direct effect on your grade, but please save these for planned absences or emergencies.

Note: all assignments must ALWAYS be emailed to conflict386@gmail.com in addition to turning in printed copies and uploaded via safe-assign.

Your final grade for this class is calculated based on your performance in the following categories:

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quizzes</strong> (approx. once a week)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War &amp; Peace Simulation &amp; write-up</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Participation</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research topic notecard</strong> (Due Oct 10th)</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Final paper component)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Review Outline</strong> (Due Nov 16th)</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Final paper component)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Paper</strong> (Due Dec 5th)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong> (Dec 20th 10:30am-12:30pm)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
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1. Quizzes (30%)

About once a week, every Wednesday, you will take a short quiz in class. These quizzes will test your comprehension of the material assigned and discussed in all class meetings. They will be administered at the beginning of the class period and take about 5-10 minutes. If you miss a quiz for any reason, it will be scored as a 0. Your two lowest quizzes are dropped automatically, so missing two quizzes will still allow you to earn a perfect score on the quiz portion of your grade.

2. War & Peace Simulation (5%)

There will be a simulation held over two class meetings towards the end of the semester. A handout will be given closer to the time with guidelines. Students will be assigned countries and will work in groups. A final one-page write-up per group is due the week after the simulation.

3. Class Participation and Discussion Questions (15%)

Participation will be graded based on
(1) Your individual in-class contributions to discussions
(2) In-class group-based exercises and presentations
(2) Regular in-class short written statements about current events & theory application
This assignment is designed to ensure that all class members remain connected with world events and more fully understand how the course material relates to the real world. Recommended news sources include the BBC World News, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Economist, and Foreign Policy (all available online).

4. Final Research Project and Related Components (20%)

Overview

Each student is responsible for developing a novel research question and a proposed research design on a topic/conflict/security issue of their choice (but related to the subject matter of the class). The overall goal is to provide a novel research question or puzzle, and explain why pursuing it is substantively and theoretically valuable. The overall project is expected to be 6-7 pages (excluding the bibliography) where you introduce your topic, review the literature, pose your question and your approach in brief to investigate it scientifically.

(i) Research topic notecard:
This will be a short in-class exercise on October 10th, where students will write up a brief note on their proposed topic, why its important and potential questions to be investigated (this is the exploratory stage of your final project). You will relate your research topic to a current or recent event.
(ii) Literature Review Outline
This will be due on November 16th in class. You will conduct a literature review on the
topic of your interest to see what current and previous research has found. This will help
you identify the gaps in the literature on your topic, or prompt you to test a theory using a
specific case study, multiple case studies or datasets. An outline of the literature review,
with at least 10 scholarly articles or books will be due before the final project. Further
guidance on how to conduct a literature review will be provided in class and materials
provided on blackboard.

(iii) Final Paper
The final paper is due on December 5th by Noon. It must be uploaded on blackboard via
safe assign, and you must bring printed copies to class. This will be about 6-7 pages long,
double-space. The paper will build on the work you did in the exploratory stage and
literature review. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be provided separately in
class and posted on blackboard.

5. Final Exam – 30%
This will be a cumulative exam that will cover the entire semester’s course material. It
will be pretty much impossible to pass for students that do not keep up with the readings
and attend lectures. Students should take detailed notes throughout the semester on their
readings and during their lectures and carefully review their quizzes. Building a running
study guide throughout the semester is strongly recommended.

V. Course Policies

• Grade Appeals

If a student wishes to challenge how his or her exam or paper was graded, the student
must submit a written statement describing what part of their assignment was improperly
evaluated and why they think that was the case. This must be done within three days of
having the assignment returned. Your entire assignment will be re-graded, which may
result in a higher or lower than the original grade given and will be final. Any clear
mistakes or errors made by the instructor will be promptly corrected.

• Policy on Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the undergraduate bulletin’s descriptions of cheating. If
you are involved in cheating on an exam or rigging and/or skipping game matches, the
penalty will be failure on that entire assignment and you will be reported to judicial
affairs. If you are not sure if something violates standards – feel free to ask ahead of time.
The university’s official policy can be found at:
• Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). The office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.” For the University’s policy, see: http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

• Emergencies and Absence

If you miss a quiz or deadline, there are no opportunities to make up for late work regardless of the reason for absence. However,
  o You may miss two classes without an effect on your grade
  o Your lowest two quizzes are dropped automatically, so missing two quizzes will still allow you to earn a perfect score on the quiz portion of your grade.
  o You can submit your discussion questions before the class to avoid missing participation points
  o Your paper is eligible for 80% of the paper grade is submitted by 9am on December 6th and eligible for 60% of the paper grade if submitted by 9am on December 7th

• Laptops and cell phones

  o No cellphones are allowed in class. Please put these on silent and away during class.
  o You may use your laptop to take notes or access readings. You are not allowed to use these for non-class related browsing.

• Changes to course materials

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, including changes to readings, and assignment due dates, if necessary. However, if any changes are necessary, students will be informed ahead of time.
VI. Calendar and Class Schedule

Students are expected to keep up with the reading assignments and do all readings before coming to class.

No class on the following dates:

- Mon, September 5 (Labor Day)
- Mon, October 3 (Rosh Hashanah)
- Wed, October 12 (Yom Kippur)
- Wed, November 23 (Thanksgiving Break)

Required Texts

  This book is available on Amazon or at the university bookstore. You can also obtain a Kindle version, which may be cheaper.

- Carl Von Clausewitz. 1873. On War. Available online and blackboard (Carl Von Clausewitz On War)

- Sun-Tzu. The Art of War. Available online and Blackboard. (The_Art_Of_War)


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<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments</th>
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| 1  | M: August 29<sup>th</sup> | • Introduction  
• Review Syllabus & Expectations  
• How To Read a Journal Article |
|    | W: August 31st | NO CLASS (APSA conference) |
| 2  | M: Sept 5<sup>th</sup> | NO CLASS – LABOR DAY |
|    | W: Sept 7<sup>th</sup> | **Intl Security as a Social Science**  
### 5. Strategic Theory and Grand Strategy

**M: Sept 26th**

**W: Sept 28th**

### 6. National Interests

**M: Oct 3rd**
- NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

**W: Oct 5th**
  - *Research paper topic: Q&A*

**M: Oct 10th**

**W: Oct 12th**
- NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

### How Military Conflicts Start, Are Fought, and End

**M: Oct 17th**

**W: Oct 19th**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| W: Oct 26<sup>th</sup> | **Peaceful Dyads: Democratic Peace & Institutions**  
- Chapter 9 (The Kantian Peace) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez.  
| 10 M: Oct 31<sup>st</sup> | **Peaceful Dyads: Economic Interdependence & Peace**  
- Chapter 10 (Economic Interdependence) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez.  
- **Research paper Literature Review: Q&A** |
| 11 M: Nov 7<sup>th</sup> | **Dangerous Dyads: Rivalry & Arms Race**  
- Chapter 2 (Dangerous Dyads) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez.  
- Chapter 3 (Bones of Contention) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez  
- Chapter 4 (Alliances) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez |
| W: Nov 9<sup>th</sup> | - Chapter 6 (Arms Races) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez  
- Chapter 7 (Steps to War) in McLaughlin &. Vasquez |
| 12 M: Nov 14<sup>th</sup> | **How Are International Military Conflicts Fought?**  
- Sun-Tzu. Chapters 1-8. The Art of War. |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 21st</td>
<td><strong>What Determines How International Conflicts End? Peace Agreements</strong></td>
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<td>- Chapter 14 (Enforcing Settlements) in McLaughlin &amp; Vasquez</td>
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<td>- <strong>Research paper: Q&amp;A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W: Nov 23rd</td>
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<td>(Thanksgiving Break)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 28th</td>
<td><strong>Atrocities, International Law, and International Conflict</strong></td>
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<td>W: Nov 30th</td>
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<td><strong>Simulation Introduction</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 5th</td>
<td><strong>Nuclear Weapons &amp; Bargaining</strong></td>
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<td>W: Dec 7th</td>
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<td><strong>Civil Wars</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 12th</td>
<td><strong>Non-State Actors</strong></td>
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<td>- WRAP UP</td>
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