RPOS 386: International Security and Conflict

Professor: Bryan R. Early  
Class Times: T-Th 8:45-10:05 AM  
Room: Earth Sciences, Rm. 147  
Email: bearly@albany.edu  
Office Hours:  Uptown, Humanities Building – T 10:05-11:35 AM  
                     Downtown, Milne 300A – M 10:00-11:00 AM

Course Description

This class explores the strategies pursued by states to obtain security and power in international relations. It addresses how national interests are formed and how they develop into the grand strategies pursued by states. The class also explores the uses of force in international politics and what causes international conflicts, how they are fought, and how they terminate. Lastly, the class addresses international efforts to prevent conflict and make it more humane. As part of the class, students will gain insight into past international conflicts and gain first-hand experience in the challenges of military strategy through a semester-long war gaming competition.

Expectations

This is a reading intensive class. Students will be expected to attend every class having read the assigned texts, as quizzes will be regularly given to assess students’ knowledge. As well, students are expected to meet all the out of class deadlines for completing their assigned war gaming matches. Students should work with their partners in finding mutually agreeable times for their matches and play all games competitively, fairly, and courteously.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should:
- Understand the various types and uses of force in international relations
- Understand the principle reasons why international military conflicts are fought, how they are fought, and how they end
- Be able to understand the United States’ national security strategy and the security strategies pursued by foreign countries
- Possess a fundamental understanding of military strategy, national security strategy, and grand strategy
- Have experience developing and applying strategies in competitive environments

Grading

Quizzes – 25%

Ten quizzes will be given at the beginning of Thursday’s classes, covering the week’s readings and Tuesday’s lecture. Students absent when quizzes are given will receive zeroes. Only students’ top nine quiz scores will count towards their final quiz grade.
Strategy and War Gaming Exercise – 20%

Students will be required to engage in five mandatory war games vis-à-vis their peers outside of class and complete short post-game assignments. These war game sessions will be played using *Axis & Allies 1942*. Class rankings will be kept publically and top performers will have the option of participating in end of class playoffs to win the 2013 Master Strategist Champion’s Cup.™ Post-game assignments are due in class for each match on the following days:
- Match 1 Completed By: 9/24
- Match 2 Completed By: 10/8
- Match 3 Completed By: 10/22
- Match 4 Completed By: 11/5
- Match 5 Completed By: 11/19
- Playoffs for Division Winners: TBA

Midterm Exam – 25%

This exam will test the material covered in the first half of the semester. It will be very difficult to pass for students that do not keep up with the readings and attend lectures. It will be held on 10/24.

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. Building a running study guide throughout the semester is also strongly suggested.

Grading Policy

Tests and papers will be graded blind by the instructor and/or teaching assistant. 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 five days of having the assignment returned. Both the instructor and assistant will re-grade the entire project, compare their assessments, and mutually decide on a final grade. This grade may be 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: <http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/2003-2004/regulations.html>.
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.

Resources

This course will be very reading intensive. The readings come from a mixture of books, chapters and articles posted on Blackboard, and articles that students will be required to look up online. The instructor will indicate where the readings can be found in advance of their due dates.

Required Texts


Other Required Materials

Axis & Allies 1942 Board Game (Wizards of the Coast)

Single player versions of Axis & Allies 1942 can be played for free at: http://www.gametableonline.com/?post_type=games&p=578. This site requires registration, but solo play vs. a computer opponent can be done for free. I recommend that students practice the game live or at this site before the competition begins. The first two turns are crucial to A&A matches, so this website can give you crucial experience that will provide you with an edge in competitive play. It will also familiarize you with the rules of the game.
Course Schedule

Day 1: 8/27 (T)
- Introduction

Explaining the Pursuit of Power and Security

Day 2: 8/29 (Th)

Day 3: 9/3 (T)

Day 4: 9/5 (Th) No Class

The Use(s) of Force in International Relations

Day 5: 9/10 (T)

Day 6: 9/12 (Th)

Day 7: 9/17 (T)

Day 8: 9/19 (Th)

**Strategic Theory and Grand Strategy**

Day 9: 9/24 (T)
- Frank Zagare. 2013. “Chapter 4: Game Theory.” In *SSI*.

Day 10: 9/26 (Th)

Day 11: 10/1 (T)

**Why Do International Military Conflict Occur?**

Day 12: 10/3 (Th)
Day 13: 10/8 (T)

Day 14: 10/10 (Th)

Day 15: 10/15 (T)
- Cornelia Navari. 2013. “Chapter 3: Liberalisms.” In SSI.
- Special Topics Guest Lecture 1

Day 16: 10/17 (Th)

Day 17: 10/22 (T)
- Special Topics Guest Lecture 2

Day 18: 10/24 (Th)
- Midterm Exam
Military Strategy during International Conflicts

Day 19: 10/29 (T)

Day 20: 10/31 (Th)

Day 21: 11/5 (T)
- Sun-Tzu. Chapters 1-8. The Art of War.

What Determines How International Conflicts End?

Day 22: 11/7 (Th)
- Clayton K. S. Chun. 2010. “Chapter 26: Painting Yourself into a Corner: Conflict Termination, Unconditional Surrender, and the Case of Japan.” In NSPS.

Day 23: 11/12 (T)
- Special Topics Guest Lecture 3

Day 24: 11/14 (Th)
- War Termination Simulation

Just and Unjust Wars and War-Fighting

Day 25: 11/19 (T) Guest Lecture
Day 26: 11/21 (Th)
- Adam Jones. 2013. “Genocide and Crimes against Humanity.” In SSI.

Day 27: 11/26 (T) No Class

Day 28: 11/28 (Th) No Class

Day 29: 12/3 (T)

Day 30:12/5 (Th)

U.S. Grand Strategy and National Security Strategy

Day 31: 12/10 (T)