

# INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

TERM: Spring 2020  
WEBSITE: [POLIS 2265](#)  
TIME: Thursdays, 1:30-4pm  
CLASSROOM: Boardroom

PROFESSOR: Tyler Jost  
OFFICE: Watson Room 342  
EMAIL: [tjost@brown.edu](mailto:tjost@brown.edu)  
OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 4-6pm

## COURSE SUMMARY

This graduate seminar examines contemporary scholarship on international conflict. The course seeks to familiarize students with salient theoretical perspectives and debates, with an eye toward assisting students in conducting original research. Course topics include rationalist and psychological frameworks, domestic institutions, leaders and advisers, international institutions, norms and culture, technology, diplomacy, and power transitions. Course readings include a range of qualitative, quantitative, and experimental methods.

## WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

This course is best suited for doctoral students with a substantive interest in international conflict. The course intentionally focuses on recent scholarly books and articles. With the exception of a few foundational pieces, nearly every reading on the syllabus was published in the last 10 years. We will discuss some of the “classic” works in security studies (e.g. Clausewitz, Schelling, Jervis, Allison, Walt, Brodie, Morgenthau) during class but will focus on current state of the field.

This course is designed to expose students to numerous topics, authors, and research methodologies. Any course design requires choices, two of which are worth noting. First, most of the readings focus on explanations for conflict and war, with each week exploring a different category of explanatory variable. Second, the readings focus on *international* conflict. That means the authors will primarily be discussing the reasons why states threaten or use violence against other states. The course’s focus is not intended to privilege this facet of the literature but rather to provide analytical focus for course discussions. Multiple courses could easily be built around other explanatory concepts (polarity, climate change, arms trade, etc.), observable outcomes (cooperation, civil war, terrorism, migration, etc.), or through other conceptual lenses (human security, world state, etc.). Students should feel free to explore these topics in their assignments.

## COURSE TEXTS AND PREREQUISITES

There are no required texts; all readings will be provided on the course website. While there are no prerequisites, we will be engaging with contemporary political science research. As such, students will encounter technical methodologies. The first week’s readings provide basic background but students who have not previously taken coursework in research design should also

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read *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* and *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Students unfamiliar with quantitative methods should consult additional chapters in *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion* as necessary.

## COURSE POLICIES

### ASSIGNMENTS

**Preparation and Participation (25%).** Students are expected to carefully read all assigned materials before class and be prepared to discuss them in a critical, constructive way. There are only four readings per week; invest time in engaging with the details. *Read literature reviews carefully and consult the original articles as necessary.* Classroom comments should not only identify weaknesses in the readings but also propose suggestions for how future research might address them. Students will be responsible for leading two class discussions. Leaders are encouraged to draw attention to how the readings relate to one another within and between weeks.

**Theoretical Response Papers (25%).** Students will write two short (500 words) response papers for weeks that they serve as discussion leaders. The response papers should focus on the theoretical readings. Excellent response papers make an argument that demonstrates mastery of the assigned material, critically engages with the research, and advances an original or novel insight into the week's topic. Please submit response papers to Canvas by **Wednesday at 6pm** on your assigned week.

**Historical Review Note (10%).** Students will write two short (500 words) discussion papers for two other weeks they do *not* serve as discussion leaders. Discussion papers should focus on the wars listed for that particular week. The discussion papers should briefly summarize two to three explanations that historians and political scientists offer for why the conflict *began* (i.e. not escalated or terminated). Students may find it helpful to consider the theoretical readings from the week. Please post discussion papers to Canvas by **Tuesday at 6pm** on your assigned week. Other students should briefly review the historical discussion papers prior to class.

**Research Design (40%).** Think of this as a research article from a scholarly journal without the empirical results. The paper should frame a research question in an engaging and compelling way, succinctly and coherently review existing literature, advance a theory that makes an original contribution, and propose a realistic method for testing the argument. Research designs should be approximately 5-7,000 words (including footnotes and tables) depending on the style of scholarship. Research designs should include a short (1,000 words maximum) appendix in which the student replicates a portion of a *portion* of an existing piece of quantitative or qualitative research. Quantitative replications include reproducing *one* regression using the original author's data. Qualitative replications include reviewing primary sources used by the original author (archival documents, private papers, diaries, memoirs, etc) to evaluate if it accords with descriptive and causal inferences. *Qualitative replications should be narrow in scope, rely on documents available on campus or online, and must be approved by the instructor.* A two-page memo describing the research question is due by **Thursday April 2 at 9am**—and should identify the replication the student plans to perform. The research design is due on **Monday May 11 at 9am**. Because original empirical analysis is not required, extensions will not be granted.

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Please arrive to class and complete assignments on time. Students who miss class are required to write an additional response paper for that week. Please inform me of class absences in advance.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria for participation, response papers, and the research design are generally the same. An exemplary response paper, for example, makes an argument that demonstrates mastery of the assigned material, critically engages with the authors' arguments, and advances a original or novel insight into the week's topic. An above average response paper meets some of these criteria. A satisfactory response paper makes a good faith effort.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COLLABORATION

Plagiarism violates the academic policies of Brown University and the norms of the scholarly community. Consequences for plagiarism are often severe, and can include suspension or expulsion. Students are encouraged to discuss course material and assignments with classmates. This is critical to academic work. In the end, however, all assignments must be your own work. You should acknowledge assistance given by other students. For example, if a classmate provided comments on an earlier draft, simply include a footnote acknowledging the assistance (you will see this practice in every assigned reading).

## ACCESSIBILITY

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services (401-863-9588; SEAS@brown.edu).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### 1. INTRODUCTION & METHODS - JANUARY 23

- Angrist, Joshua, and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricists Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Slater, Dan, and Daniel Ziblatt. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46.10 (2013): 1301-1327.
- McDermott, Rose. "The Ten Commandments of Experiments." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46.3, (2013): 605-610.
- Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Chapter 2.

### 2. RATIONALIST THEORIES - JANUARY 30

- Fearon, James. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49.3 (1995): 370-314.

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- Ramsay, Kristopher W. "Information, Uncertainty, and War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 505-527.
  - Altman, Daniel. "The Evolution of Territorial Conquest after 1945 and the Limits of the Norm of Territorial Integrity," *International Organization*, forthcoming.
  - Lake, David A. "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security* 35.3 (2010): 7-52.

*Historical Discussion: Persian Gulf War (1991); Wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003)*

### 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES - FEBRUARY 6

- Kertzer, Joshua D. and Dustin Tingley. "Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018), 319-339.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., et al. "The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations." *International Organization* 71.S1 (2017): S1-S31.
- Saunders, Elizabeth N. "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making." *International Organization* 71.S1 (2017): S219-S247.
- Powell, Robert. "Research Bets and Behavioral IR." *International Organization* 71.S1 (2017): S265-S277.

*Historical Discussion: Vietnam War (1964-5); Sino-Vietnamese War (1979)*

### 4. POWER AND TRANSITIONS - FEBRUARY 13

- Slantchev, Branislav L. *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Chapter 2.
- Debs, Alexandre, and Nuno P. Monteiro. "Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War." *International Organization* 68.1 (2014): 1-31.
- Tingley, Dustin. "Rising Power on the Mind." *International Organization* 71.S1 (2017): S165-S188.
- Leffler, Melvyn P., and Odd Arne Westad, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, 2010. Chapters 1 (skim) and 2.

*Historical Discussion: First (1947) and Second (1965) Kashmir Wars; Six-Day War (1967)*

### 5. DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS - FEBRUARY 20

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and Alastair Smith. "Domestic Explanations of International Relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 161-181.
- Tomz, Michael and Jessica Weeks. "Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 107.4 (2013): 849-865.
- Flores-Macías, Gustavo A., and Sarah E. Kreps. "Political Parties at War: A Study of American War Finance, 1789-2010." *American Political Science Review* 107.4 (2013): 833-848.

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- Downes, Alexander B. and Todd S. Sechser. "The Illusion of Democratic Credibility," *International Organization* 66.3 (2012): 457-489.

*Historical Discussion: World War I (1914)*

#### 6. AUTHORITARIAN INSTITUTIONS - FEBRUARY 27

- Weeks, Jessica. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 106.2 (2012): 326-347.
- Weiss, Jessica. "Authoritarian Signaling, Nationalist Protest, and Mass Audiences in China," *International Organization* 67.41 (2013): 1-35.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. Chapter 1.
- Lee, Melissa M. "The International Politics of Incomplete Sovereignty: How Hostile Neighbors Weaken the State." *International Organization* 72.2 (2018): 235-315.

*Historical Discussion: Yom Kippur War (1973); Iran-Iraq War (1980); Aouzou War (1986)*

#### 7. LEADERS - MARCH 5

- Horowitz, Michael C., and Allan C. Stam. "How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders." *International Organization* 68.3 (2014): 527-559.
- Colgan, Jeff D., and Jessica LP Weeks. "Revolution, Personalist Dictatorships, and International Conflict." *International Organization* 69.1 (2015): 163-194.
- Dube, Oeindrila and S.P. Harish. "Queens." *Journal of Political Economy*, forthcoming.
- Yarhi-Milo, Keren, Joshua D. Kertzer, and Jonathan Renshon. "Tying Hands, Sinking Costs, and Leader Attributes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62.10 (2018): 2150-2179.

*Historical Discussion: Korean War (1950); Ugandan-Tanzanian War (1978); USSR-Hungary (1956)*

#### 8. ADVISERS, INTELLIGENCE AND BUREAUCRACIES - MARCH 12

- Saunders, Elizabeth N. "War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force." *Security Studies* 24.3 (2015): 466-501.
- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. "In the Eye of the Beholder: How Leaders and Intelligence Communities Assess the Intentions of Adversaries." *International Security* 38.1 (2013): 7-51.
- Rovner, Joshua. *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011. Chapter 2.
- Brooks, Risa. *Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. Chapter 2.

*Historical Discussion: Sino-Indian Border War (1962); Bangladesh War (1971); Kargil War (1999)*

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## 9. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS - MARCH 19

- Morrow, James D. "When Do States Follow the Laws of War?" *American Political Science Review* 101.3 (2007): 559-572.
- Songying Fang, Jesse Johnson, and Brett Ashley Leeds. "To Concede or to Resist? The Restraining Effect of Military Alliances." *International Organization* 68.4 (2014): 775-809.
- Coe, Andrew J., and Jane Vaynman. "Why Arms Control Is So Rare." *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming.
- Goddard, Stacie E. "Embedded Revisionism: Networks, Institutions, and Challenges to World Order." *International Organization* (2018): 1-35.
- Carnegie, Allison. "States Held Hostage: Political Hold-Up Problems and the Effects of International Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 108.1 (2014): 54-70.

*Historical Discussion: World War II*

## 10. NORMS - APRIL 2

- Johnston, Alastair Iain. *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Chapter 1.
- Carpenter, R. Charli. "Vetting the Advocacy Agenda: Network Centrality and the Paradox of Weapons Norms." *International Organization* 65.1 (2011): 69-102.
- Pauly, Reid B.C. "Would US Leaders Push the Button? Wargames and the Sources of Nuclear Restraint." *International Security* 43.2 (2018): 151-192.
- Terman, Rochelle. "Rewarding Resistance: Theorizing Defiance to International Norms." Working Paper.

*Historical Discussion: Wars in the Balkans: Bosnia (1992) and Kosovo (1999)*

## 11. TECHNOLOGY - APRIL 9

- Lindsey, David. "Military Strategy, Private Information, and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 59.4 (2015): 629-640.
- Narang, Vipin. *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Chapter 1.
- Cunningham, Fiona S., and M. Taylor Fravel. "Assuring Assured Retaliation: China's Nuclear Posture and US-China Strategic Stability." *International Security* 40.2 (2015): 7-50.
- Schneider, Jacquelyn. "Cyber Operations and Crisis Escalation: Insights from War Gaming." Working Paper.

*Historical Discussion: First (1954) and Second (1958) Taiwan Straits Crises*

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12. DIPLOMACY AND SIGNALING - APRIL 16

- Trager, Robert F. "The Diplomacy of War and Peace." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): 205-228.
- Eric Min. "Talking While Fighting: Understanding the Role of Wartime Negotiation." *International Organization* (forthcoming).
- Mastro, Oriana Skylar. *The Costs of Conversation: Obstacles to Peace Talks in Wartime*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019. Chapter 2.
- McManus, Roseanne W. "Making It Personal: The Role of Leader-Specific Signals in Extended Deterrence." *The Journal of Politics* 80:3 (2018): 982-995.

*Historical Discussion: Arab-Israeli War (1948); Ogaden War (1977); Cenepa Valley War (1995)*

13. COURSE CONCLUSION - APRIL 23