

DIPLOMACY, CRISIS AND WAR IN THE MODERN ERA

TERM: Fall 2024

WEBSITE: [IAPA 1804](#)

TIME: Tuesdays 2:00–4:30pm

CLASSROOM: Vartan Gregorian 116B

PROFESSOR: Tyler Jost

OFFICE: Watson Room 342

EMAIL: tjost@brown.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 8-10am ([Calendly](#))

COURSE SUMMARY

This undergraduate seminar examines war and peace after 1945 through the lens of international relations (IR) theory. It aims to both teach students theoretical perspectives on international relations and to critically evaluate the changing ways in which states have interacted with one another since the end of World War II. What caused the Cold War? Did nuclear weapons change the way that states negotiated with one another? How much did individuals make a difference during interstate crises? Why did states sometimes fail to reach peaceful settlements with one another? What were the experiences of states other than the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War? How have social and economic institutions changed international politics in the twenty-first century?

SHOULD I TAKE THIS COURSE? AND WHY?

While each student's experience is likely to differ, I believe there are two broad reasons to take this course. First, the study of IR theory may sometimes seem stylized or implicitly grounded in the experience of the United States and Western Europe. This course incorporates the research of international historians who have explored questions pertinent to IR theory in the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, Iraq, India, Pakistan, the Korean Peninsula, and elsewhere.

Second, the study of IR theory and history are mutually reinforcing endeavors. Thinking like a social scientist, we can leverage what scholars have learned in economics, sociology, psychology, and political science in order to better explain what happens in the international arena. However, deep engagement with the history of international conflict, for example, draws attention to the limits of these theoretical models – and illuminates ways in which they might be improved.

The course is generally arranged chronologically, beginning with the origins of the Cold War and ending with the contemporary US-China geopolitical competition. Each week will feature one or two readings on IR theory with a particular application to an interstate dispute. The goal is to critically evaluate how well theoretical frameworks illuminate the events under consideration. Rather than covering all theoretical material at the onset, the course introduces some each week.

While there are no formal prerequisite requirements, the course includes a large amount of material on international relations theory and history. Students who have not taken an introductory

course in international relations – or who are unfamiliar with modern world history – may find the course extremely challenging. If you have not taken a course in IR theory, you may find it helpful to consult an introductory text, such as *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (4th edition). If you are less familiar with modern world history, you might consider reviewing *The History of the World* (6th edition), beginning with Book 7, Chapter 6.

COURSE GOALS

The overall goal of this course is to help you develop informed opinions regarding the causes of war and the conditions of peace in the modern era. You should come away from this class with a better understanding of international history, theories of international politics, and the general value of social science in explaining interstate conflict.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are two required texts for the course: *The Cold War: A World History* by Odd Arne Westad (\$18); *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* by Fredrik Logevall (\$33). All other readings are available through the Brown library.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course will primarily rely on the Socratic method, meaning that content will be covered through a question-answer dialogue between the instructor and the students. In each class, I will pose questions that will help students think through the assigned readings in a critical fashion. As such, this course is still primarily discussion-based.

The success of a discussion-based model hinges on three things. First, it requires you to invest time in engaging with the material prior to class. I expect everyone to devote sufficient time to complete all readings in advance. I do reserve the right to “cold call” on occasion to ensure that everyone is keeping up with the readings. Second, it requires you to engage with the material with a critical eye and come to class prepared to share your thoughts. On the one hand, assigned readings in this course represent the culmination of years of careful academic research by some of the leading scholars in the field. Try to remain open-minded and take what the author is saying seriously. On the other hand, the fields of political science and history are filled with differing opinions. Class discussion will aim to bring out multiple sides of the debate and encourage you to start developing ideas about where you stand. Third, in-class discussion and debate requires that we be respectful of each other’s opinions. That includes the instructor. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is problematic in any way, please contact me.

TIME ALLOTMENT

You should expect to spend approximately: 120 hours reading and reviewing the material (10 hours per week), about 30 hours in class (2.5 hours per week), 10 hours preparing your response papers, and 20 hours preparing your final paper.

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. Brown's [Academic Code](#) provides specific details regarding how to properly cite material. A general rule of thumb is, if you are in doubt, ask for clarification. If you are still in doubt, *include the citation*. Students may find additional support for the writing requirements in this course at the [Brown Writing Center](#). You 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 convention in nearly every assigned reading).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Students are not permitted to use technology of any kind (laptops, tablets, cell phones) during class. The exception, of course, is for students who are attending class through Zoom. **Students are not permitted to record the class by any means.** More broadly, this course is primarily discussion-based, meaning that we should be actively listening while others are speaking in order to better engage with their argument. In addition, there is a growing body of evidence that students perform better in technology-free learning environments. Students who take handwritten notes show improved ability to understand and remember concepts. Perhaps more important to the community, other studies show that students who multitask on laptops not only tend to score lower on tests but also end up distracting those around them.

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).

Brown University welcomes students from around the country and the world, and the unique perspectives international and multilingual students bring enrich the campus community. To empower multilingual learners, an array of support is available including language and culture workshops and individual appointments. For more information about [English Language Learning](#) support at Brown, contact the ELL Specialists (ellwriting@brown.edu).

30% Participation

35% Response Papers

35% Final Paper

Participation. Active participation is the cornerstone of an academic seminar. Creating a healthy learning environment requires both your attendance and your active contribution to the discussion. Under normal circumstances, I will allow one unexcused absence but any additional absences require permission and/or a Dean's excuse. For each class missed, you will need to complete one additional response paper covering that week's material. Please come to class on time. I reserve the right to treat a late arrival greater than 10 minutes as an absence.

Participation will be evaluated based both on the frequency and thoughtfulness of your contributions. Exemplary participation consistently meets the following criteria: (1) complete comprehension of the week's readings; (2) ability to draw connections across readings; (3) engagement with your classmates' ideas; and (4) novel insight. Above average participation consistently meets some of these criteria. Acceptable participation consistently makes a good faith effort but is inconsistent in execution or engagement. Unacceptable participation is consistently uninvolved or otherwise disrespectful. I will contact you if your participation is unacceptable.

Response Papers. You will write two brief (500 words) response papers over the course of the semester based on the assigned readings for a given week. An exemplary response paper makes an argument that demonstrates mastery of the assigned material, critically engages with the authors' arguments, and advances an original or novel insight into the week's topic. An above average response paper meets at least one of these criteria. An acceptable paper makes a good faith effort. While there is no one-size-fits-all model for a response paper, try to think about how these readings speak to one another. Do the authors disagree about the facts, the explanation, or both? Who do you find more compelling? What historical events or theoretical concepts covered in other weeks of the course might complement or contest the author's argument? Please submit response papers over Canvas by **Monday 9pm** on your assigned week. For students submitting a response paper for a missed class, please email the paper directly to me. All students will receive written feedback on this assignment.

On the first day of class, we will have a sign-up sheet for the specific weeks to complete your response papers. To ensure an even distribution across the semester, only three or four students will write response papers in a given week. However, if you have a pressing interest in a topic and are not able to secure a slot, please let me know! I'll do my best to accommodate.

Final Paper. The final paper is designed for you to make a focused, scholarly argument pertaining to some aspect of international conflict. The paper should make a *narrow* argument that speaks to the existing literature. A general rule of thumb is that more Empirical focused questions are almost always better. There are three general format options. The first is to advance a historical argument about what is or has happened. For example, you might argue that the Soviet Union failed to achieve its political objectives during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The second is to advance a theoretical argument about why something happened or is happening. For example, you might argue that US intervention in Vietnam resulted from a US miscalculation of North Vietnam's resolve, rather than the beliefs and characteristics of US leaders. The third is to apply a theoretical concept discussed in the course to a specific policy issue.

Whichever model you choose, you should structure your paper with a brief (generally 5-6 pages double spaced) review of the historiography or theory surrounding your research question, followed by a discussion of empirical evidence (generally 14-15 pages double spaced). The introduction of your paper should clearly state your argument in a few paragraphs. The conclusion should *briefly* summarize the paper's findings and discuss the implications. Please write the final paper in the language of hypothesis testing. Whether or not you choose to adopt the more technical, academic style of some of the political science articles we will read is up to you. All students will receive written feedback on this assignment.

Please submit a short, 200-word abstract of your research topic to me by **Monday October 7th at 9am**. In addition, students are required to schedule at least one 15 minute office hour session

with me. The final paper is due on **Tuesday December 11th at 7am**. Extensions on assignments will be considered on a case by case basis. Requests for extensions should be submitted in writing at least 24 hours prior to the assignment deadline, should explain the extenuating circumstances surrounding the request, and propose an alternative deadline.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. COURSE OVERVIEW - SEPTEMBER 10

2. FOUNDATIONS - SEPTEMBER 17

Theoretical concepts: international conflict and international cooperation

- Blainey, Geoffrey. *Causes of War*. New York: The Free Press, 1973. pp. 35-56.
- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2001. pp. 1-28.
- Keohane, Robert. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 4.
- Horowitz, Michael C., Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. pp. 1-24.
- Jost, Tyler. *Inherit the Earth: Global Peripheries and Major Power Cooperation*. Introduction.

3. THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR - SEPTEMBER 24

Theoretical concepts: power and institutions

Empirical focus: United States and the Soviet Union, 1945-1950

- Gaddis, John Lewis. "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System." *International Security* 10.4 (1986): pp. 99-142.
- Owen IV, John. M. *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510-2010*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. Chapters 1 (skim), 3, and 6 (selected pages). **(BLO)**
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. pp. 19-69.
- Pechatnov, Vladimir. "The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953." *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. I. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 90-111.
- Lorenzini, Sara. *Global Development: A Cold War History* (Princeton University Press, 2019). pp. 33-67. **(BLO)**
- Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. Introduction and Chapter 10. **(BLO)**
- (Optional) Zubok, Vladislav, and Constantine Pleshakov. *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. pp. 9-77.
- (Optional) Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. pp. 3-124.

4. DOMESTIC REVOLUTION AND DECOLONIZATION AFTER WORLD WAR II - OCTOBER 1

Theoretical concepts: domestic regimes and individuals

Empirical focus: international camps, 1945-1954

- Acharya, Amitav. *Constructing Global Order: Agency and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018). pp. 1-32.
- Steven David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Chapter 1.
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 73-109.
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. pp. 129-158, 261-286.
- Asselin, Pierre. *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954-1965*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. pp. 11-71.
- (Optional) Colgan, Jeff D., and Jessica L.P. Weeks. "Revolution, Personalist Dictatorships, and International Conflict." *International Organization* (2015): 163-194.

5. THE EARLY COLD WAR CRISES I - OCTOBER 8

Theoretical concepts: coercive diplomacy and nuclear weapons

Empirical focus: 1954 Taiwan Strait Crisis, Berlin Crisis, and Cuban Missile Crisis

- Sechser, Todd S., and Matthew Fuhrmann. *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. pp. 3-19.
- Goddard, Stacie E. *Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy: Jerusalem and Northern Ireland*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 1-17.
- Holloway, David. "Nuclear Weapons and the Escalation of the Cold War, 1945-1962," *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. I. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 376-397.
- Harrison, Hope M. *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. pp. 96-138.
- Craig, Campbell, and Fredrik Logevall. *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2020. pp. 176-214.

6. THE EARLY COLD WAR CRISES II - OCTOBER 15

Theoretical concepts: international status and nationalism

Empirical focus: 1956 Suez Crisis, 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis

- Miller, Manjari Chatterjee. *Wronged by Empire: Post-Imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. pp. 7-34.

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- Pons, Silvio. *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism 1917-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). pp. 206-254.
 - Little, Douglas. "The Cold War in the Middle East: Suez Crisis to Camp David Accords." *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. II. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 65-87.
 - Friedman, Jeremy. *Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022), chapters 1 and 4.
 - Chen Jian. *Mao's China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. pp. 163-204.
 - (Optional) Lawrence, Mark Atwood. *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. pp. 17-58.

7. VIETNAM - OCTOBER 22

Theoretical concepts: information and perception

Empirical focus: US escalation in Vietnam

- Jervis, Robert. *The Logic of Images in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. pp. 18-40.
- Jost, Tyler. *Bureaucracies at War: The Institutional Origins of Miscalculation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 2, 8 (optional).
- Logevall, Fredrik. *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Chapters 3, 7, 9-12.
- Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. pp. 48-83.

8. THE RISE AND FALL OF DÉTENTE - OCTOBER 29

Theoretical concepts: reputation

Empirical focus: USSR invasion of Afghanistan and the collapse of détente

- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. Chapters 2 and 6.
- Jost, Tyler. *Inherit the Earth: Global Peripheries and Major Power Cooperation*, chapter 5.
- Radchenko, Sergey. *To Run the World: The Kremlin's Cold War Bid for Global Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2024. Chapters 15-17.
- Saunders, Chris and Sue Onslow. "The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976-1990," *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. III. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 222-243.
- Rubin, Barnett R. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. pp. 107-145.

- (Optional) Lyakhovskiy, Aleksandr Antonovich. *Inside the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the Seizure of Kabul, December 1979*. Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2007.
- (Optional) Leffler, Melvyn P. *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. pp. 234-258.
- (Optional) O'Rourke, Lindsey A. *Covert Regime Change: America's Secret Cold War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018. pp. 1-21, 97-124,

9. THE END OF THE COLD WAR - NOVEMBER 12

Theoretical concepts: diplomacy and globalization

Empirical focus: the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and China, 1980-1989

- Hall, Todd, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. "The Personal Touch: Leaders' Impressions, Costly Signaling, and Assessments of Sincerity in International Affairs." *International Studies Quarterly* 56.3 (2012): 560-564 and 567-571 only (skip section on Munich).
- Brown, Archie. *The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher, and the End of the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. pp. 31-58, 90-130, 289-312, 343-377 (skim). **(BLO)**
- Vogel, Ezra F. *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. Cambridge: Belknap Press Press, 2011. Introduction and Chapter 7.
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. pp. 553-578.
- (Optional) Torigian, Joseph. *Prestige, Manipulation, and Coercion: Elite Power Struggles in the Soviet Union and China after Stalin and Mao*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. Chapter 5.

10. THE UNIPOLAR MOMENT - NOVEMBER 19

Theoretical concepts: international order

Empirical focus: post-Soviet NATO and the 1991 Persian Gulf War

- Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. pp. 3-20 and 215-256 (skim).
- Spohr, Kristina. *Post Wall, Post Square: How Bush, Gorbachev, Kohl, and Deng Shaped the World After 1989*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. pp. 11-67.
- Sarotte, Mary Elise. "Perpetuating US Preeminence: The 1990 Deals to 'Bribe the Soviets Out' and Move NATO In." *International Security* 35.1 (2010): 110-137.
- Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Random House, 2006. pp. 9-96 and 254-268.
- Gewirtz, Julian. *Never Turn Back: China and the Forbidden History of the 1980s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022. Chapters 13-15.
- (Optional) Engel, Jeffrey A. *When the World Seemed New: George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. pp. 376-394 and 415-439.

11. THE RETURN OF MAJOR POWER COMPETITION I - NOVEMBER 26

Theoretical concepts: polarity and balancing

Empirical focus: the US War on Terror, NATO expansion

- Monteiro, Nuno P. *Theory of Unipolar Politics*. New York Cambridge University Press, 2014. pp. 1-27.
- Schub, Robert. *Wars of Ignorance: Silenced Advisers and International Crises*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2025. Chapter 5.
- Tooze, Adam. *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. New York: Penguin, 2018. Part II.
- Doshi, Rush. *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapter 7.
- Stent, Angela. *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*. New York: Hachette, 2020. Chapters 1, 7, and 11.

12. THE RETURN OF MAJOR POWER COMPETITION II - DECEMBER 3

Theoretical concepts: power transition, global populism

Empirical focus: end of US-China engagement, the Ukraine War

- Ding, Jeffrey. *Technology and the Rise of Great Powers: How Diffusion Shapes Economic Competition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024. Chapters 1 and 7.
- Weiss, Jessica Chen. "A World Safe for Autocracy: China's Rise and the Future of Global Politics." *Foreign Affairs*. 98 (2019): 92.
- Shirk, Susan. *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Chapters 8 and 10.
- Jost, Tyler. *Inherit the Earth: Global Peripheries and Major Power Cooperation*. Chapter 8.
- Plokhyy, Serhii. *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2023. Chapters 6 and 7.
- MacAskill, William. "The Beginning of History: Surviving the Era of Catastrophic Risk," *Foreign Affairs*. Volume 101, Number 5 (September/October 2022).
- Tooze, Adam. "Whose Century?" *London Review of Books*. July 2020.