

University of Rochester Political Science

PSC 577
Theories of Conflict

Profs. Fey & Goemans
Spring 2016

Syllabus & Reading List

This course examines the formal literature on conflict that has developed in the last two decades. It is meant to expose students to the techniques and models used in this line of research. The course will help graduate students identify the broad direction of international conflict studies and will also permit graduate students to pursue topics or ideas of their own interest. To that end, we set aside two classes for “model building sessions” where students can explore approaches to formalize some of the ideas in the substantive literature, or explore extensions of the current formal literature. The course covers both complete and incomplete information models and thus students must have completed PSC584 (or its equivalent) prior to taking this course.

There are three main obligations for students taking the course. Reading the required articles and participating in class is the first and most important of the obligations. The second obligation is taking a turn presenting one of the topics from the reading list. Assignments of topics will be worked out at the first class meeting. The last requirement for the course is a final paper. The two model building sessions during the semester will be focused on helping students develop their ideas for final papers.

Schedule: Starting on the next page is the list of topics and the scheduled readings for the course. Naturally, this schedule may change as the semester unfolds.

Week 1 Introductory Thoughts and Review of Bargaining

Week 2 Rationalist Explanations for War

- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49:379–414.
- Fearon, James D. 1996. "Bargaining over Objects that Influence Future Bargaining Power"
- Powell, Robert. 2006. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60:169–203.

Week 3 Bargaining and Fighting

- Powell, Robert. 2004. "Bargaining and Learning While Fighting." *American Journal of Political Science* 48.2:344-361.
- Slantchev, Branislav. 2003. "The Principle of Convergence in Wartime Negotiations." *American Political Science Review*,47:621–632.
- Spaniel, William and Peter Bils. 2015. "Slow to Learn: Bargaining, Uncertainty, and the Calculus of Conquest." Working paper
- Fey, Mark. 2015. "Learning to Fight: Information, Uncertainty, and the Risk of War." Working paper

Week 4 Domestic Political Explanations for War

- George Downs and David M. Rocke. 1994. "Conflict, Agency and Gambling or Resurrection: The Principal-Agent Problem Goes to War." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(2):362–380.
- Hein Goemans and Mark Fey, "Risky but Rational: War as an Institutionally-Induced Gamble", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 1, January 2009.
- Jackson, Matthew and Massimo Morelli. 2007. "Political Bias and War." *American Economic Review*, 97(4): 1353-1373.

Week 5 General Results on Crisis Bargaining

- Banks, Jeffrey S. 1990. "Equilibrium Behavior in Crisis Bargaining Games." *American Journal of Political Science* 34.3:499–614.

- Fey, Mark and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2012. "Uncertainty and Incentives and Crisis Bargaining." *American Journal of Political Science* 55.1:149–169.
- Fey, Mark, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2013. "Credibility of Peaceful Agreements in Crisis Bargaining." *Political Science Research and Methods*
- Fey, Mark and Brenton Kenkel. 2014. "Choosing to Make an Ultimatum"

Week 6 What is Bargaining About?

- Ken Schultz and Hein Goemans, "Aims, Claims and the Bargaining Model of War." Working paper
- Peter Bils and William Spaniel, "Policy Bargaining and International Conflict." Working paper
- Hein Goemans and Ken Schultz, "The Politics of Territorial Claims: A Geo-Spatial Approach Applied to Africa." Working paper
- Andrew Moravcsik, "Taken Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization*, 51(4), Autumn 1997: 513-553.

Week 7 Contest Models

- Hirshleifer, Jack. 1991. "The Paradox of Power." *Economics and Politics* 3:177-200.
- Michelle R. Garfinkel and Stergios Skaperdas. 2000. "Conflict without Misperceptions or Incomplete Information: How the Future Matters", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44:793–807
- Roland Hodler and Hadi Yektas. 2012. "All-pay War." *Games and Economic Behavior* 74:526-540

Week 8 Model Building Session

Week 9 Communication and Diplomacy

- Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2011. "Cheap Talk Diplomacy, Voluntary Negotiations, and Variable Bargaining Power." *International Studies Quarterly* 55.4:1003–1023.

- Trager, Robert F. 2010. "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters." *American Political Science Review* 104.2:347–368.
- Brenton Kenkel, "Information and Communication in Public Goods Problems," Working paper

Week 10 Alliances and Coalitions

- Smith, Alastair. 1995. "Alliance Formation and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 39.4:405–426.
- Benson, Brett V., Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. "Inducing Deterrence through Moral Hazard in Alliance Contracts." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- Bradley C. Smith, "With Friends Like These...Military Cooperation, Crisis Bargaining, and Communication," Working Paper

Week 11 Civil Wars and Coups

- Daniel Sutter, "A Game Theoretic Model of the Coup d'Etat." *Economics and Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2, July 2000, pp. 205–223
- Andrew T. Little, "Coordination, Learning, and Coups." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2015.
- Hein Goemans and Nikolay Marinov, "Coups and Democracy." *The British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44(4): 799–825, 2014.
- Michael T. Dorsch, Paul Maarek, "Rent seeking, revolutionary threat and coups in non-democracies." Working Paper

Week 12 Model Building Session

Week 13 Non-state States

- TBD

Week 14 Models of Peace