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


Week 3 Bargaining and Fighting


Week 4 Signaling and Audience Costs


Week 5 General Results on Crisis Bargaining


• 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** Mutual Optimism


• Fey, Mark, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. “Mutual Optimism and Choosing to Fight”

**Week 7** Model Building Session

**Week 8** Communication and Diplomacy


• Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2011 “Cheap Talk Diplomacy, Voluntary Negotiations, and Variable Bargaining Power.” *International Studies Quarterly*

**Week 9** Mediation


**Week 10** Alliances and Coalitions


• Benson, Brett V., Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. “Inducing Deterrence through Moral Hazard in Alliance Contracts.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*


**Week 11** Reputation


**Week 12** Model Building Session

**Week 13** Contest Models


**Week 14** Models of Peace