Political Science 577
Theories of Conflict

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Wednesday 14:00–16:40. Harkness 327

This course examines the literature on conflict that has developed in the last decade. We will examine recent formal literature as well as the latest substantive (non-formal) literature on conflict. 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. Students should have taken or be concurrently taking **PSC 584** or have an equivalent knowledge of complete and incomplete information game theory.

Course Requirements

During the semester students are required to write two 5-page papers which comment on one (set) of readings. One 5-page paper must comment on non-formal readings, the other on a formal paper or book. The paper on non-formal work requires that the student can concisely identify the main themes of the at hand. To that end, the student should summarize in five pages 1) the central question, 2) the central answer, 3) the competing explanations and 4) why the competing explanations are wanting. For both papers, students are required to briefly put the paper in the broader IR context and evolving research agenda(s). At the end of the semester a research paper is due. We hope that students will use the "model building sessions" to lay the foundations for their research papers. Full participation in class discussions is of course mandatory.

Academic Integrity

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (`http://www.rochester.edu/living/urhere/handbook/discipline2.html#XII`). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and We will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

Texts

The following books should be in the bookstore:

1. Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.
2. Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966
3. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Third Edition; New York: Free Press, 1988

Students will also get a photocopy of the following book manuscript:

1. Douglas M. Gibler, *The Territorial Peace: Borders, State Development and International Conflict*, typescript, May 201.

Readings not included in one of the texts can be found through one of the online databases or on the library's course web page or from Prof. Goemans.

Course Outline

Wednesday, January 12

1. Introduction:

It is a good idea to start reading early!

Wednesday, January 19

2. What is War?

- J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War, 1816–1965*, New York: Wiley, 1972, pp. 4 - -24
- Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, Volume 1; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, pp.3 – 41
- Quincy Wright, *The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace*, New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1935, pp. 1 – 11.
- Karl Deutsch, *Peace Research*, Vermont, Middlebury College, April 26, 1972, pp. 7 – 13
- David Kaiser, *Politics & War* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, Chapter 4, pp. 271 – 414.
- Dale Copeland, *The Origins of Major War*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 56 – 117.

Wednesday, January 26

3. Schelling

- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966
- Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960

Wednesday, February 2

4. Blainey & Wagner

- Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Third Edition; New York: Free Press, 1988 Optional but recommended:
- R. Harrison Wagner, *War and the State*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007, Chapters 3 & 4.

Wednesday, February 9

5. Formal Models of Conflict

- James D. Fearon, Rationalist Explanations for War, *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. (Summer 1995), pp. 379 – 414
- Robert Powell, War as a Commitment Problem, *International Organization*, Vol. 60 (Winter), 2006, pp. 169 – 203
- Helmut Bester and Kai A. Konrad, Easy Targets and the Timing of Conflict, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, April, 2005, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 199–215
- Carmen Beviá and Luis Corchón, Peace agreements without commitment, *Games and Economic Behavior*, vol. 68, no. 2, 2010, pp. 469–487

Wednesday, February 16

6. Critiques and Extensions

- Mark Fey and Kris Ramsay, Uncertainty and Incentives in Crisis Bargaining: Game-Free Analysis of International Conflict, *American Journal of Political Science*, January 2011, Volume 55, Issue 1, pp. 149-169.
- Kris Ramsay, Settling it on the Battlefield, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 6 (Winter) 2008, pp.850 – 879.
- Bahar Leventoglu & Ahmer Tarar, Does private information lead to delay or war in crisis bargaining?, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, Issue 3, September 2008, pp. 533 – 553.

Wednesday February 23

7. Mutual Optimism

- Mark Fey and Kris Ramsay, Mutual Optimism and War, *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 51, no. 4, October 2007, pp. 738–754
- Branislav L. Slantchev and Ahmer Tarar, Mutual Optimism as a Rationalist Explanation of War, *American Journal of Political Science*, January 2011, Volume 55, Issue 1, pp. 135148
- Mark Fey and Kris Ramsay, Mutual Optimism and Unilateral War, working paper.

Wednesday, March 2

8. Audience Costs

- James D. Fearon, Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes, *American Political Science Review*, 88 (3) September 1994: 577–592.

- Kenneth A. Schultz, Looking for Audience Costs, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45 (1), February 2001: 32–60.
- Alexander B. Downes and Todd S. Sechser, The Illusion of Democratic Credibility. Typescript, Duke University and University of Virginia.

Wednesday, March 9

9. SPRING BREAK

Wednesday, March 16

10. Leaders

- 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 & Mark Fey, Risky but Rational: War as an Institutionally-Induced Gamble, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 1, January 2009.
- Alexandre Debs & Hein Goemans, Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders and War, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No.3, pp. 430 – 445
- James D. Fearon, Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes, *American Political Science Review*, 88 (3) September 1994: 577–592.

Wednesday, March 23

11. Coups

- Milan Svolik, *Contracting on Violence: Authoritarian Repression and Military Intervention in Politics*. Typescript, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Carles Boix and Milan Svolik, *The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions and Power-sharing in Dictatorships*. Typescript, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Daniel Sutter, A Game Theoretic Model of the Coup d'État, *Economics and Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 2, July 200, pp. 205–223
- Ruth Kricheli and Yair Livne, *Mass Revolutions vs. Elite Coups*, Typescript, Stanford University, 2010.
- James D. Fearon, Why do some civil wars lasst so much longer than others?, *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), May 2004, pp. 275–302
- Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics. Military Coups and Governments*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977

- Samuel Finer. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics.* Transaction Publishers. 1962.
- Edward Lutwak, *Coup d'État: A Practical Handbook*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968
- Bruce Farcau, *The Coup: Tactics in the Seizure of Power*, New York: Preager, 1994
- Aron Belkin & E. Schofer, Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47(5), pp.594–620

Wednesday, March 30

12. Mediation and Cheap Talk

- Andrew Kydd, When Can Mediators Build Trust? *American Political Science Review*, 100 (3), August 2006: 449–462.
- Mark Fey and Kris Ramsay, When Is Shuttle Diplomacy Worth the Commute? Information Sharing through Mediation, *World Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 4, 2010, pp. 529–560
- Shawn Ramirez?

Wednesday, April 6

13. Conflicts over Territory

- Douglas M. Gibler, *The Territorial Peace: Borders, State Development and International Conflict*, typescript, May 201.
- David Carter & Hein Goemans, The Making of the Territorial Order: New Borders and the Emergence of Interstate Conflict, *International Organization*, forthcoming

Wednesday, April 13

Students

- Brainstorming session

Wednesday, April 20

14. Diplomacy and Ultimata

- Garret Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, Cosimo Classics, 2010, reprint of the 1955 edition.

Wednesday, May 4

15. Students

- Brainstorming session

Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research

1. *What is the central question?*
    - Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?
    - What is being explained (what is the dependent variable and how does it vary)?
    - How does this phenomenon present a puzzle?
2. *What is the central answer?*
    - What is doing the explaining (what are the independent variables and how do they vary)?
    - What are the hypotheses, i.e., what is the relationship between independent and dependent variables, what kind of change in the independent variable causes what kind of change in the dependent variable?
    - What are the causal mechanisms, i.e., why are the independent and dependent variables so related?
    - How do the independent variables relate to each other?
    - What assumptions does your theory make?
    - Is the theory falsifiable in concept?
    - What does this explanation add to our understanding of the question?
3. *What are the possible alternative explanations?*
    - What assumptions are you making about the direction of causality?
    - What other explanations might there be for the phenomenon of study, and to what degree do they conflict with the central answer?
    - Could the hypothesized relationships have occurred by chance?
4. *Why are the possible alternative explanations wrong?*
    - What is the logical structure of the alternative explanations (compare 2)?
    - What is the empirical evidence?
5. *What is the relationship between the theory and the evidence?*
    - What does the research design allow to vary, i.e., in this design are the explanations variables or constants?
    - What does your research design hold constant, i.e., does it help to rule out the alternative competing explanations?
    - How are the theoretical constructs represented empirically, i.e., how do you know it when you see it (measurement)?
6. *How do the empirical conclusions relate to the theory?*
    - How confident are you about the theory in light of the evidence?
    - How widely do the conclusions generalize, i.e., what might be the limitations of the study?
    - What does the provisionally accepted or revised theory say about questions of broader importance?