

# POLI/PWAD 457: International Conflict Processes

Fall 2015 — University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Instructor

Dr. Stephen Gent  
Office: Hamilton 352  
Email: gent@unc.edu

## Course Information

Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30–4:45pm, Gardner 210  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00am-12:00pm; Thursdays 1:00–3:00pm  
Course Website (Sakai): <https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli457f15>

## Course Description

This course is an advanced undergraduate seminar on the causes and patterns of conflict processes in the international system. We begin with the assumption that there may be recognizable patterns of behavior that influence the occurrence of conflict. Our task is to evaluate the scholarly attempts to uncover these patterns and the underlying causes of war and its termination. In this course, we will primarily focus our attention on so-called “rationalist” theories of conflict. These theories, many of which use a bargaining perspective, assume that conflict processes are driven by the strategic decisions of rational actors.

The course presupposes basic familiarity with international politics as taught at the level of POLI 150. The emphasis will be on developing your analytical capacity to examine and assess scholarly arguments. The ability to memorize factual material is taken for granted, but it is not the primary goal of the course. Please note that this is *not* a current events course. Current events will be addressed only when relevant to learning about and evaluating the theories and empirical investigations at hand.

Because this class will focus almost exclusively on scholarly research, you may notice that many of the readings have technical components. This is reflective of much contemporary research in international relations and conflict processes. I do not expect you to have any previous knowledge of quantitative methods, such as statistics or game theory. In this class, we will mainly be analyzing the scholarly arguments made in these readings, which you will be able to do without delving into the technical details. Early in the semester, I will provide basic information about statistics and game theory that will help you be a better consumer and analyst of political science research.

## Grading

Two Papers	60%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

## Class Participation

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly readings. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. I will ask many questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions, and you are strongly encouraged to participate even if you found the readings difficult or problematic.

The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity and quality of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance is not the same thing as participation, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. I will take attendance at each class period. If you miss a significant number of class sessions, this will adversely affect your participation grade. If you have personal circumstances will prevent you from regularly attending class, you should consider withdrawing from the course.

## Papers

During the semester you will be responsible for writing two analytical papers (roughly 7 pages each) that address the course readings. For each paper, I will give you a list of possible questions/topics that you could address in your paper. You should not feel constrained by these prompts. If you have a different idea for a paper that addresses the relevant readings, contact me. Together, the two papers will be worth 60% of your total grade. The paper with the higher grade will be worth 35%, while the paper with the lower grade will be worth 25%. To excel in these assignments, you must go beyond a basic review of the readings. Instead, you will need to analyze the authors' arguments and/or identify and assess the overall impact and agenda of the works. Note that you do not have to agree with the author(s) or assume that they have accomplished what they have set out to do.

Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade (i.e., 3 points) for each day late. Note that plagiarism is a violation of the UNC Honor Code and will be prosecuted accordingly.

## Exam

In addition to the papers, there will be a final in-class exam. The exam will require you to step back and process the material in the course beyond the individual contributions of each reading. Mere demonstration of knowledge of the material will be regarded as an average performance. To excel on this exam you will have to demonstrate an ability to synthesize and analyze the material relevant to the questions on the test.

## Course Materials

One required book is available in the UNC Bookstore. All other readings are available on Sakai.

- Walter, Barbara F. 2002. *Committing to Peace*. Princeton University Press.

## Important Dates

- Paper 1 due: Thursday, October 8
- Paper 2 due: Tuesday, December 1
- Final Exam: Thursday, December 10 (4:00pm)

## Class Schedule

### *Introduction*

#### **Tuesday, August 18**

- No reading

#### **Thursday, August 20: The Scientific Study of Conflict**

- Frieden, Jeffry A., and David A. Lake. 2005. "International Relations as a Social Science." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 600(1): 136-156.

#### **Tuesday, August 25: The Bargaining Approach**

- Muthoo, Abhinay. 2000. "A Non-Technical Introduction to Bargaining." *World Economics* 1(2): 145-166.
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### *Part 1: Interstate War*

#### **Thursday, August 27: The Bargaining Model of War**

- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.

#### **Tuesday, September 1: Bargaining and War Outcomes**

- Slantchev, Branislav. 2004. "How Initiators End Their Wars: The Duration of Warfare and the Terms of Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 813-829.
- Sullivan, Patricia L. 2007. "War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(3): 496-524.

#### **Thursday, September 3**

- TBD

#### **Tuesday, September 8: Bargaining and the Duration of Peace**

- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2003. "Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace." *International Organization* 57(2): 337-372.
- Werner, Suzanne, and Amy Yuen. 2005. "Making and Keeping Peace." *International Organization* 59(2): 261-292.

#### **Thursday, September 10: A Democratic or Capitalist Peace?**

- Schultz, Kenneth A. 1999. "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War." *International Organization* 53(2): 233-266.
- Gartzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 166-191.

**Tuesday, September 15: Leaders and War**

- Croco, Sarah E. 2011. "The Decider's Dilemma: Leader Culpability, War Outcomes, and Domestic Punishment." *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 457-477.
- Weeks, Jessica L. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 106(2): 326-347.

**Thursday, September 17: Reputation and War**

- Sartori, Anne E. 2002. "The Might of the Pen: A Reputational Theory of Communication in International Disputes." *International Organization* 56(1): 121-149.
- Crescenzi, Mark J.C. 2007. "Reputation and Interstate Conflict." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 382-396.

**Tuesday, September 22: Alliances and War**

- Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 427-439.
- Mattes, Michaela. 2012. "Reputation, Symmetry, and Alliance Design." *International Organization* 66(4): 679-707.

**Thursday, September 24: Territory and War**

- Carter, David B., and H. E. Goemans. 2011. "The Making of the Territorial Order: New Borders and the Emergence of Interstate Conflict." *International Organization* 65(3): 275-309.
- Melin, Molly M., and Alexandru Grigorescu. 2014. "Connecting the Dots: Dispute Resolution and Escalation in a World of Entangled Territorial Claims." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(6): 1085-1109.

**Part 2: Civil War and Terrorism****Tuesday, September 29: Bargaining and Civil War**

- Lake, David A. 2003. "International Relations Theory and Internal Conflict." *International Studies Review* 5(4): 81-89.
- Walter, Barbara F. 2009. "Bargaining Failures and Civil War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 243-261.

**Thursday, October 1: Civil War Actors**

- Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher. 2013. "Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 659-672.
- Prorok, Alyssa K. 2015. "Leader Incentives and Civil War Outcomes." Forthcoming, *American Journal of Political Science*.

**Tuesday, October 6 & Thursday, October 8**

- In-Class Simulation: Bargaining and War
- \*\*\***PAPER 1 DUE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8**\*\*\*

**Tuesday, October 13: Resolving Civil Wars**

- Walter, *Committing to Peace*, Part 1 (pp. 1-43).

**Thursday, October 15**

- **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**

**Tuesday, October 20: Resolving Civil Wars**

- Walter, *Committing to Peace*, Part 3 (pp. 109-168).

**Thursday, October 22: Military Intervention**

- Salehyan, Idean, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham. 2011. "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups." *International Organization* 65(4): 709-744.
- Koga, Jun. 2011. "Where Do Third Parties Intervene? Third Parties' Domestic Institutions and Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts." *International Studies Quarterly* 55(4): 1143-1166.

**Tuesday, October 27: Terrorism**

- Bapat, Navin A. 2006. "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups." *International Studies Quarterly* 50(1): 213-230.
- Findley, Michael G. Findley, and Joseph K. Young. 2011. "Terrorism, Democracy, and Credible Commitments." *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 357-378.

***Part 3: Third Party Conflict Management*****Thursday, October 29: Mediation**

- Savun, Burcu. 2008. "Information, Bias, and Mediation Success." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(1): 25-47.
- Beardsley, Kyle. 2008. "Agreement without Peace? International Mediation and Time-Inconsistency Problems." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 723-740.

**Tuesday, November 3: Legal Dispute Resolution**

- Allee, Todd, and Paul Huth. 2006. "Legitimizing Dispute Settlement: International Legal Rulings as Domestic Political Cover." *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 219-234.
- Gent, Stephen E., and Megan Shannon. 2011. "Decision Control and the Pursuit of Binding Conflict Management: Choosing the Ties that Bind." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(5): 710-734.

**Thursday, November 5: Humanitarian Intervention**

- Gent, Stephen E. 2007. "Strange Bedfellows: The Strategic Dynamics of Major Power Military Intervention." *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1089-1102.
- Murdie, Amanda, and Dursun Peksen. 2014. "The Impact of Human Rights INGO Shaming on Humanitarian Interventions." *Journal of Politics* 76(1): 215-228.

**Tuesday, November 10: The Role of International Institutions**

- Kuperman, Alan J. 2008. "The Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention: Lessons from the Balkans." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(1): 49-80.
- Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2014. "Beyond Keeping Peace: United Nations Effectiveness in the Midst of Fighting." *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 737-753.

**Thursday, November 12**

- TBD

**Tuesday, November 17: Humanitarian Aid**

- Narang, Neil. 2015. "Assisting Uncertainty: How Humanitarian Aid can Inadvertently Prolong Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 59(1): 184-195.
- Wood, Reed M., and Christopher Sullivan. 2015. "Doing Harm by Doing Good? The Negative Externalities of Humanitarian Aid Provision during Civil Conflict." *Journal of Politics* 77(3): 736-748.

**Thursday, November 19**

- In-Class Simulation: Third Party Conflict Management

**Tuesday, November 24**

- Film: "Fog of War"

**Thursday, November 26**

- **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

**Tuesday, December 1**

- Film: "Fog of War"
- **\*\*\*PAPER 2 DUE \*\*\***

**Thursday, December 10**

- **Final Exam: 4:00 pm in Gardner 210**