Political Science 945 Seminar: National Security Affairs
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Syllabus
Fall 2018

Course Description

The course is a (selective) survey of security studies in international relations. The course is organized by topic, with a mix of theoretical and empirical readings for most weeks. Emphasis will be on recent work. The field of international security is both old and changing, making it a challenge to stay on top of all the relevant work, but we will do our best. Three areas of literature not covered in this course (because they are covered extensively in others): IR theory (realism is a basis of security studies but you should know it already); civil wars (there is a PhD seminar on political violence); arguments which deeply engage domestic politics (again, there is a PhD seminar on the domestic politics of IR).

Course Requirements

The grade will be based on class participation (40%), a few scattered assignments (10%) and a research paper (50%). Class participation includes one week of serving as a “discussion launcher”. This job entails preparing a set of questions to help begin our discussion of some (or all) of the papers on a given week.

A first stab at a publishable paper (no more than 10,000 words, including notes and references) on a topic that falls within the seminar’s themes, broadly defined. Students are encouraged to begin work on that paper as soon as possible.

Readings

All of the readings are articles. The student is responsible for downloading these from the UW library system.

A couple of additional readings are chapters from books. These will be circulated by the professor.

Office Hours
   Tuesday, 3-4:30pm and by appointment (often the easiest)
## Schedule: Fall 2018

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Reading Assignments

Class 1  
**Introduction: What is International Security?**


**Short Assignment #1 (due in class 2)**
- Choose one of the top-rated journals listed below.
- Find and read the “Guidelines for Contributors”
- Browse the contents (available online) of that journal for the years 2016-2018, as well as two earlier time periods of your choosing. What kinds of questions do the articles in your journal ask? What kinds of methodological or theoretical approaches do the authors/editors seem to favor? Have you noticed any general changes in topic, method, or theoretical approaches over time?
- Come to class ready to give a brief, informal presentation of how you think these journals have defined “international security” or “conflict studies” both in recent years, and in earlier periods.

Journals:
- *International Organization*
- *World Politics*
- *International Security*
- *International Studies Quarterly*
- *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *Journal of Peace Research*
- *Security Studies*
Class 2  The Causes of War: Anarchy, Arms Races, and Patterns

Required:


Recommended:


Class 3  Bargaining and War


Powell, Robert. 2006. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60 (1): 169-


**Class 4 Alliances and Coalitions**


Fordham, Benjamin and Paul Poast. 2016. “All Alliances are Multilateral: Rethinking Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60.5:840-865.


**Short Assignment #2 (due end of week 4): Paper topic**

By the end of the week, send me a one-page summary of your paper topic with a sketch of an argument that you will be making.

**Class 5 Grand Strategy, Unipolarity and Balancing**


*Recommended:*


**Short Assignment #3 (due in class 6): Data in international conflict studies**

Locate one quantitative data set used in the study of conflict (could be international or civil war). Write a brief description of what types of variables are measured with the data. Determine what question drove the researchers to collect the data. Is the data helpful for answering other questions in the field of security? What are the limits of the data? Do you see any issues with measurement? Are concepts translated faithfully into measurement?

**Class 6 Trade and Conflict**


Patrick J. McDonald, “Peace through Trade or Free Trade?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, 4 (August 2004), 547-72.


**Class 7 Nuclear Proliferation**


**Class 8 Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence**


Read:

Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," 143-69.


Recommended:


**Class 9 Leaders and War**


Debs, Alexandre, and H.E. Goemans. 2010. “Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War.” *American Political Science Review 104.3*:430-445.


**Class 10 Political Psychology**


**Class 11 Drones, Robots and Cyberwar**


**Class 12 Intervention & Peacekeeping**


**Class 13 Counterinsurgency**


**Class 14 Terrorism**


