

CAUSES OF WAR

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Rutgers University

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Tuesday, 3:55 - 6:55pm
Hickman Hall, Rm. 206

Poli Sci 324H1

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After a significant decline in the incidence of wars between nation-states since World War II, the current US-Iranian crisis reminds us that it is premature to argue, as many have, that in a globalized world interstate wars are becoming obsolete. There are other threats, of course, other global trends and potential “hot spots.” One is Russia’s expansionist behavior, reflected in its takeover of Crimea and its ongoing support of a separatist war against Ukraine, and exacerbated by anxieties about the viability of deterrence given uncertainty about the American commitment to Europe. Another is the unsettled relationship between the United States and North Korea, which continues to increase its nuclear capability and which may already have the capacity for a nuclear strike against the US homeland. Other potential sources of instability emerge from the rise of China, its increasingly assertive behavior in the South China Sea, Sino-American economic competition, and ongoing tensions regarding the status of Taiwan and now Hong Kong. It is significant that in the last few years “great power competition” has officially replaced terrorism as the primary focus of US national security policy.

A war between nuclear powers is high unlikely (but not impossible). More likely are wars between small or medium powers, which always carry the possibility of great power intervention and the risk of escalation. These scenarios make it imperative that we think about how wars might arise. Could domestic pressures and the need to save “face” prevent Iran and the United States from finding an “off-ramp” from their current crisis? Could an Iranian acceleration of their nuclear program led to a preventive strike by Israel or the United States, leading to a major war? Could adversaries’ misperceptions about American willingness to come to the aid of an ally undermine deterrence and lead to a fatal miscalculation? Could an irrational North Korean leader start a war? Is there a danger that the retreat of the United States from its leadership role in the world might undermine the “rules-based international order” and lead to a system like that of the 1920s and 1930s, in which the isolation of the US is generally regarded as an important

underlying cause of World War II? Could there be a gradually escalating action-reaction cycle, accelerated by fears by one or both sides that the failure to take a firm stand might lead to the loss of credibility, the loss of allies, and the loss of domestic support from nationalistic public that believes that their country has not been given the respect it deserves? Could cyber attacks against vital domestic infrastructure trigger or accelerate a conflict spiral? Do erratic political leaders – and some say the world has more than one – reduce states' capacities for effective crisis management?

This honors seminar is designed to help you think about such questions – not by directly examining contemporary international conflicts, but instead by familiarizing you with theories about how wars start and with the historical experience of interstate wars. Although the contexts of possible future crises and wars will differ from those of past wars, the knowledge generated in this class will give you the conceptual tools and historical perspective to make sense of future conflicts and crises. This is not just abstract theory; a major international crisis is quite likely to occur in your lifetime.

The concern for both theory and history has shaped the structure of this course. In the first half of the semester we survey the leading theories of the causes of war, using the “levels-of-analysis” framework to categorize these theories and organize our survey, while illustrating theories with historical examples. We begin with the “system” level and focus on realist theories of conflict, which emphasize the anarchic structure of the international system, the security dilemmas that arise between states, and state preoccupations with power and interest. We focus in more detail on balance of power theory and power transition theory. Shifting to the “dyadic” level, we examine the “Prisoner’s dilemma” model, deterrence and spiral models, and the “bargaining model of war.” Each of these theories assumes that the foreign policies of states are basically rational responses to the constraints and opportunities existing in their external environments, designed to maximize the national interest.

Other theories question this assumption, and suggest that the causes of war derive from factors internal to the state, including its institutional structure or political culture, the domestic political interests of decision-makers or the economic interests of private groups, public opinion, or bureaucratic rivalries. We examine these “societal” and “governmental” level theories, along with “individual” level theories that emphasize the role of the belief systems, personalities, and idiosyncracies of political leaders. We illustrate each of the main theoretical arguments and each of the levels of analysis with examples from a wide range of historical cases. Among the questions the levels-of-analysis framework leads us to ask is whether the outbreak of wars is due more to states' external competition for power and security or to their internal political dynamics or the psychological make-up of political leaders.

Understanding theories of war is only part of our task. We also want to understand why particular wars occur, and sometimes our general theories do not fit particular historical cases very well. Some wars have changed the course of history – for the states involved and sometimes for the entire international system – and for this reason alone it is important to understand why they occurred. In addition, with so many theories, we need to have a way of deciding which theories are better than others. History provides an answer, a way of “testing” our theories of war and determining which theories are most consistent with historical reality. The process of testing our theories against the historical reality of war will also suggest how we might modify our theories to make them better.

With these considerations in mind, the second half of the seminar focuses on student research projects and class presentations on the causes of particular wars. Students can select from a wide variety of interstate wars – American and non-American, past and present, Western and non-Western, great power and small power. Each student will write a preliminary paper summarizing leading interpretations of their war, formulate their own causal interpretation of the war, present their argument and evidence to the class, defend their interpretation in response to questions from the class and from the professor, and incorporate feedback from their first paper and their presentation into a final research paper.

The primary aim of the paper is to explain the outbreak of the war rather than to test a particular theory, but a familiarity with leading theories will help guide students in formulating their interpretation of the conditions, processes, and personalities contributing to the outbreak of war. We restrict our projects to interstate wars in order to maintain the close connection between theory and history. Theories of interstate war differ in many respects from theories of civil war, and one semester does not provide enough time for an intensive focus on both.

Course Learning Objectives

This honors seminar aims to develop skills in critical thinking and writing as well as cultivate substantive knowledge about issues of war and peace. Through reading, class discussions, two papers, and an oral presentation, students will gain experience in constructing logically coherent causal arguments, considering alternative interpretations of those events, and understanding the kinds of evidence needed to discriminate among competing arguments. They will also gain experience in organizing a massive amount of information to summarize what happened and to construct a causal explanation for why it happened. Students will also gain experience in writing with revision based on critical feedback – from the professor on the first paper, and from the professor and the class on the oral presentation.

Our emphasis on causal argumentation, alternative interpretations, critical thinking, and empirical evidence is particularly important at a time of political polarization and “information silos,” where technology makes it easier for people to select incoming information that confirms their preexisting beliefs. There are alternative causal explanations for all social phenomena, but that does not mean that these explanations are equally valid. We must reject causal arguments that are not supported by the empirical evidence.

Substantively, students should emerge from the course with an understanding of the leading theories of causes of war between nation-states, some familiarity with the causes of the 10-15 wars students select as their research projects, and a much deeper understanding of “their war.” In the process, students will develop a sense of whether there are general patterns leading to interstate war (as social scientists tend to argue) or whether each war is unique (as historians tend to argue). In studying why states go to war they will gain a better appreciation of why states make other kinds of foreign policy decisions. Finally, students will develop the analytic skills for assessing the extent to which contemporary international disputes are likely to escalate to war.

Readings

There are four sets of required reading for the seminar:

- 1) Theoretical reading for part I of the course.
- 2) A few sample papers from previous classes, to see what good papers look like.
- 3) Background reading for each of the student presentations in part II of the course.
- 4) Reading for your specific research project.

Required Book (available at Rutgers Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 732 246-8448, 100 Somerset St, New Brunswick), on the internet, and on reserve at Alexander Library):

Jack S. Levy & William R. Thompson, *Causes of War*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Articles and Book Chapters

available in folder #1 on the class Sakai site, www.sakai.rutgers.edu

Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, “Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications.” *World Politics* 24 (Spring 1972): 40-79.

Robert J. Art, “The Four Functions of Force.” In Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007. Pp. 141-48.

- Geoffrey Blainey, "The Abacus of Power." In Blainey, *The Causes of War*. New York: Free Press, 1988. Pp. 108-124.
- Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. Book I, chap. 1.
- Alexander L. George, "A Provisional Theory of Crisis Management." In Alexander L. George, ed., *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management*. Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1991. Chap. 4.
- Edward Vose Gulick, "The Aims of Europe's Classical Balance of Power." In Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955. Pp. 390-97.
- Joe D. Hagan, "Does Decision Making Matter? Systematic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory." *International Studies Review*, 3, 2 (Summer 2001), 5-46.
- Ole R. Holsti, "Crisis Decision-Making." In Philip E. Tetlock, et al., *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Chap. 1.
- Robert Jervis, "Deterrence, the Spiral Model, and the Intentions of the Adversary." In Ralph K. White, *Psychology and the Prevention of Nuclear War*. New York: New York University Press, 1986. Pp. 107-30.
- Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18, 4 (Spring, 1988): 675-700.
- Jack S. Levy, "Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems." *World Politics*, 36, 1 (October 1983): 76-99.
- Jack S. Levy, "Preventive War: Concept and Propositions." *International Interactions* 37, 1 (March 2011): 87-96.
- John J. Mearsheimer, "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power." In Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics*. 7th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005. Pp. 50-60.
- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson. New York: Knopf, 1985. Chap. 1.
- Steven Pinker, "A History of Violence." Edge Master Class, 2011. Excerpt.
- Bruce Russett, *The Prisoners of Insecurity*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1983. Chap. 5-6.
- Ronald L. Tammen, et al. *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*. New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2000. Chap. 1.
- Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances: Balancing and Bandwagoning." In Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*. Tenth ed. Boston: Longman, 2011. Pp. 127-134.
- Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. Chap. 1.

All theoretical readings except the required book are available in folder #1 on my Sakai site. (Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>, log in, go to Causes of War at the top, then to Resources in the left column). Once students have selected historical cases for their research projects, I will put the background historical reading for part II of the course in folder #4 on Sakai. This will usually consist of one article per war. The aim here is to provide enough historical background so that students in the class can better understand each oral presentation and ask informed questions about the presentation. This reading will also allow the presenter to shorten their discussion of the historical chronology and focus on their arguments about the causes of the war.

The theoretical reading will familiarize you with the leading theories of the causes of war. That is important as an end in itself. It is also essential for your two papers and oral presentation for the class. An understanding of the leading theories will help you identify and summarize the alternative interpretations of the historical case you are studying, which is the focus of your first paper for the course. A theoretical understanding also helps you to organize your research paper on the causes of your war and to interpret the massive amount of historical information on your case. If you are familiar with theories of balance of power, conflict spirals, diversionary behavior, decision-making, etc., you will be quicker to identify those patterns from your historical readings and to interpret the connections among historical events.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There is one interrelated set of formal requirements for the course, centered around your research project on the causes of a particular war and involving three specific tasks:

- 1) a 2-3 page paper (single space) summarizing alternative interpretations of your historical case and including a preliminary bibliography of sources you plan to consult.
- 2) an oral presentation to the class, summarizing your provisional interpretation of the causes of your war, followed by responses to questions from the class.
- 3) a 12-16 page (single space) research paper on your war.

The papers should be single space with an extra space between paragraphs. Any citation style is acceptable as long as you are consistent, but please include a list of references of sources used at the end of your paper, regardless of citation style. Please use footnotes rather than endnotes. Please include your name, title, and page numbers on your papers.

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

“alternative interpretations”	20%
oral presentation and discussion	20%
research paper	50%
general contributions to class discussion	10%

Note the last item in the above list. My evaluation of your contributions (quality and quantity) to class discussion, during both our survey of theoretical approaches and in the discussions of presentations by other members of the seminar, will be important in the evaluation of all borderline cases. This provides a strong incentive to do the readings and to come to class prepared to talk about them. It might help to jot down a few questions before you come to class. Also, I expect you to attend every meeting of the seminar. Grades in borderline cases can be affected by poor attendance. It is particularly inexcusable for students to be absent during other students’ presentations.

There is no mid-term or final examination. Your mastery of the readings is indirectly tested by your performance on each of the graded items. The more your contributions to class discussion are informed by the readings, the better. Some of the questions raised in response to your oral presentation will take the form “to what extent does your case support (or not) such-and-such theory of the causes of war?” The better you know the theories, the more easily you will be able to identify alternative interpretations of your war, and the sharper your analysis of the causes of the war in your research paper. This gives you a strong incentive to complete all required readings prior to class meetings.

Please submit your papers as attachments under the “Assignments” tab on Sakai. Papers should be in an MS Word or pdf format. For those who prefer other processing programs, please convert your papers to a Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format before submitting. Please do not submit your papers in an .odt or other format. Your paper will be automatically run through the “Turnitin” program, which detects any substantial passages in a paper that match passages in the expansive “Turnitin” data base.

Let me add one comment on writing style. I have found that students often quote too much. That may be proper in a literature or poetry class, where you quote a passage and interpret it. In most history and social science, however, it is generally preferable to save quotations for (1) statements of the actors whose behavior you are trying to explain (e.g., quotes from political leaders), or (2) secondary sources who really nail it, who perfectly and succinctly capture an argument you are trying to make (or criticize). For everything else it is better to paraphrase, with appropriate citation. When we discuss sample papers in weeks five and seven I will point out what I regard as the proper use and over-use of quotations. That might take a little more time, but it is good practice.

Paper #1: Alternative historical interpretations of your historical case.

2-3 pages, single space, with extra space between paragraphs, including a preliminary bibliography of sources consulted.

Due Tuesday, March 3, 11:55pm, at the “Assignments” tab on the course’s Sakai site.

Historians often vary in their interpretations of particular historical events or episodes. Wars are no exception. One thing that motivates professional historians and political scientists is the aim of demonstrating that an existing interpretation is wrong, suggesting a new interpretation, and supporting that interpretation with evidence from documents or other sources. If one were to accept the conventional wisdom about what happened and why in a particular historical episode, then there is not much point to doing yet another study. This norm is if anything more pronounced in political science. The aim is to demonstrate not only that one’s interpretation is consistent with the historical evidence, but also to demonstrate that it fits the evidence better than do the interpretations of other scholars. By focusing in paper #1 on the alternative historical interpretations of your war, you are situating your paper in the broader literature and setting up your final research paper. I am generally looking for three to five alternative interpretations for a particular crisis or war.

Sometimes it is fairly easy to identify alternative interpretations of a particular war. For the U.S. decision for war against Iraq in 2003, some argue that it was “all about oil.” Others emphasize the ideological aim of overthrowing an evil dictator and bringing democracy to Iraq and the region; misperceptions associated with the belief that Iraq had an ongoing nuclear weapons program; the role of neoconservatives in the U.S. decision-making process; or the world view and personality of U.S. President George W. Bush.

Alternative interpretations are sometimes reflected in the title of books and articles. The subtitle of Herbert Bass’s book on *American Entry into World War I* (1964), for example, is *Submarines, Sentiment, or Security*. This suggests the ongoing debates about whether American decision to enter the war was motivated primarily by the German submarine threat to U.S. commerce, to US control over the Atlantic Ocean, or to the principle of freedom of the seas; by the US ideological commitment to liberal democracy; or by US concerns about the European balance of power.

Identifying alternative interpretations is often complicated by the fact that it is usually possible to identify one or two variations of each alternative interpretation. You have to use your own judgment as to whether a given variation is important enough to qualify as a separate alternative interpretation. The more you read about theories about war and about particular wars in history, the easier it is to make these judgments.

If alternative explanations do not “emerge” from debates among historians, you can suggest some yourself based on your understanding of theories of war and peace. One approach would be to adopt an approach based on the levels of analysis framework. This might lead to the identification of an international system level (or realist) interpretation, a domestic political interpretation, and an individual-level interpretation. Some might want to add a bureaucratic politics interpretation. Others might want to suggest two domestic interpretations – for example, one based on the diversionary theory of war, and another based on the pressure from powerful domestic economic interests.

My primary reason for assigning this first paper is to help you write a better second paper. As I said earlier, your analysis of a war (or anything else) is better if you are clear about whom you are arguing against. In my experience, one thing that separates many excellent research papers (paper #2) from merely good papers is that an excellent paper often includes a discussion of why the student’s interpretation is better than the leading alternative explanations. You can incorporate a condensed and revised version of paper #1 into your final research paper.

Paper #1 need not follow any rigid format. One approach, however, is to include a paragraph for each alternative interpretation, surrounded by an introduction and a conclusion. I have set aside a day in class (February 25) to talk about the alternative interpretations paper. We will read a few sample papers from past classes and to discuss their strengths and weaknesses. I will put these “sample papers” in folder #2 on Sakai once students have selected their historical cases. You might note that each of the sample papers lists at least five or six sources in its reference list. I have no specific number in mind, and books “count” more than articles, but 5-6 is a useful rule of thumb for a minimum. If there are sources you plan to read but have not yet had the opportunity, it is okay to list them in the bibliography of this paper (but in paper #2 list only sources cited).

Paper # 2: Research Paper

12-16 pages, single space, extra space between paragraphs, footnotes rather than endnotes; includes list of references cited.

due Friday, May 8, midnight, at the “Assignments” tab on the course Sakai site.

The paper should focus on the causes of the war that you selected for investigation. I will provide, in folder #1 on my Sakai site, additional guidelines about the paper, and we will talk more about it on and off throughout the course. In addition, I have set aside our March 10 class meeting to talk about the paper and the oral presentation. A brief discussion here would be useful, however, because it is a major project that requires a major commitment on your part, and you should take this seminar only if the paper is something that you would enjoy doing.

The paper must be more than a historical chronology of the events leading to the outbreak of war. It must provide a theoretically-informed, causal interpretation of the outbreak of the war. That is, you should use some of the theoretical concepts from the first part of the course to help explain the outbreak of your war. The paper must include an evaluation of the relative importance of different causal factors at different levels of analysis in the processes leading to the outbreak and escalation of the war. I do not want a “laundry list” of ten or twenty causes of the war. You need to prioritize among the many causes, and identify primary and secondary causes of the war. You also need to support your interpretation with historical evidence. This requires extensive research and extensive footnoting. In your first paper – on alternative interpretations of your war – you should include a list of sources that you have consulted or plan to consult. If I know enough about your case to know that something critical is missing, I will let you know. If I recommend additional sources that you have omitted – and I usually do – it would be prudent to follow up on my suggestions.

Among the various theoretical questions we will attempt to answer in our historical cases are the following: What is the relative importance of causal factors from different levels of analysis on each state’s behavior? Or, to ask the same question in a slightly different way, what is the relative importance of strategic, ideological, economic, and domestic political motivations in political leaders’ decisions? Did states escalate a crisis or go to war primarily to increase their power and security, to promote certain principles of justice or forms of socio-political organization, to increase their wealth, or to consolidate the domestic positions of key elites? How important were conflicts of interests over tangible issues, like territorial disputes, as opposed to concerns over power, reputation, and internal politics? How influential were parochial private interests or the military? Did individual decision-makers make a difference, or would policy choices have been similar if someone else was in power? Did political leaders have reasonably accurate perceptions of the intentions and capabilities of their adversaries and third states, or were there substantial misperceptions? Questions like these are likely to come up during the discussion period following student presentations, and students should do their best to incorporate answers to these questions into the conclusions of their final research paper.

To give you a sense of what my expectations are on the papers, and hopefully to reduce the level of uncertainty and anxiety, I will post a few sample research papers from previous undergraduate research seminars in folder #3 of my Sakai site.

The Oral Presentation (10-15 minutes followed by discussion)

Your oral presentation is based on your research paper but comes before the paper. It serves (informally) as a first draft of your research paper. The question-and-answer period following your presentation will provide feedback on your argument and suggestions as to how you might fine-tune your argument and improve your paper. Thus the discussion following your presentation is as important as the presentation itself.

You should spend no more than half of your 10-15 minutes tracing the historical events leading to the war (which the students in the class will have a decent sense of given their background reading). You should focus the bulk of your remarks on summarizing your causal argument as to what caused the war, differentiating between primary and secondary causes, suggesting the path through which each cause contributed to the outbreak of the war, and providing some evidence to back up your argument. You might also note, building on paper #1, how your interpretation fits into the existing literature on the war. You will have more opportunity to elaborate on your interpretation and supporting evidence in the discussion session.

In the question and answer session, other students and I will raise questions relating to the theoretical coherence of your argument, the strength and validity of your supporting evidence, how your interpretation fits with various theories surveyed in the first part of the course, how your interpretation differs from other interpretations of the war, and other topics. Some of these questions will be relevant for your final paper. This gets back to the presentation-as-first-draft theme. With this in mind, I strongly recommend that after your presentation you take the time to write down all the useful ideas and any responses that come to mind while things are still fresh, so that you can deal with those questions in your final research paper. Or, even better, make a deal with a friend in the class for them to take notes on the questions pertaining to your paper, and you on theirs.

As I note in the next section, I have no objections to several students researching the same historical case. In that event, the presentations will take the form of a panel. This would require some coordination on the summary of the history leading up to the war, as I would like to minimize overlap. However, there is no need to coordinate on presentations of causal interpretations. Your interpretation is your own. That is, students doing the same case should divide up the history, and then each will present their own argument as to the primary and secondary causes of the war. Questions following the presentations might be directed toward the panel as a whole or toward a particular student's interpretation, but all presenters would be welcome to respond. It is worth noting that the more focused and coherent your presentation on the causes of your war, the more useful feedback you will get. This provides an additional incentive to do as much research on your case as possible before your presentation. Know your case.

Time constraints prevent me from reading drafts of your papers, but I would be happy to look at an outline and discuss it with you.

Selecting a Paper Topic

You should move as quickly as possible to select a war to serve as the topic of your research paper for the class. The sooner you select a topic, the sooner you can move ahead with your reading, and the sooner I can set up a schedule of presentations, select the background reading, and provide suggestions as to sources for your projects. (Depending on which cases you pick, I may have many or few suggestions.) With paper #1 due March 3, I would like you to select your topic by the third week of class (February 5). Email me with your topic at any time. Selecting a topic early is also important so that you can begin collecting research materials. A fair amount of material will be available on the internet, especially in the form of journal articles, but other material is available only in books. Some books, but perhaps not too many, might be available for free on the internet. Hopefully most other books will be available in Rutgers libraries. If not, you might have to go through EZ Borrow or Interlibrary Loan (if these are unfamiliar, ask the librarian at the Alexander Library Reference Desk for details). These are reasonably good systems, but they do not work overnight, so please do not put off your collection of research materials until the last minute.

A few of you might already have a good sense of diplomatic/international history, and be able to narrow down the choices for a research topic fairly quickly. Many of you will have less historical background, and for that reason I have provided the following list of interstate wars to think about. Let me emphasize, however, that you are not restricted to this list.

Selected List of Interstate Wars

(feel free to select another war, but please clear it with me)

- Peloponnesian War (431BCE)
- War of the Spanish Armada (1585)
- Imjin War (1592) [Japan, Korea, and China]
- Second Northern War (1700) [Sweden and Russia]
- War of the Spanish Succession (1701)
- French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792)
- War of 1812
- Mexican-American War (1846)
- Crimean War (1854) [Britain and France vs. Russia]
- Paraguayan War (1864)
- Franco-Prussian War (1870)
- War of the Pacific (1879) [Chile vs. Bolivia & Peru]

Sino-Japanese War (1894)
 Spanish-American War (1898)
 Russo-Japanese War (1904)
 World War I (1914)
 World War I – American Intervention (1917)
 Russo-Finnish War (1939)
 World War II (1939, Europe)
 Pacific War (1941) [U.S.-Japan]
 Korean War (1950-53)
 Arab Israeli Wars (1956 or 1967 or 1973)
 Sino-Indian War (1962)
 Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) [question: why was the crisis resolved peacefully?]
 Vietnam War (1965-1973)
 Soccer War (1969) [El Salvador vs. Honduras]
 Indo-Pakistani Wars (1965 Kashmir War, or 1971 Bangladesh War, or 1999 Kargil War)
 Iran-Iraq War (1980)
 Falklands/Malvinas War (1982) [Argentina vs. Britain]
 Persian Gulf War (1990/91)
 2003 Iraq War (2003)

Assuming that no single war leaps off the page, you need a way to quickly learn enough about a few of these wars to make a decision. I will say a little about some of these wars in class. I hope that some of you are adventurous enough to expand your horizons and at least think about going back in time rather than selecting a more familiar recent war. I think that you can get a good sense of most of these wars from the internet. Internet sources like Wikipedia generally focus more on the history of particular wars than on scholarly debates about the causes of the war. That will be a serious limitation when it comes to writing your two papers, but it works well for the purpose of gaining enough familiarity about the war to make a decision as to whether it would make for a good research project for you.

However you proceed, one thing to keep in mind is that this class focuses on the causes of the war, not how the war is fought, how it ended, or what its consequences were. Consequently, I suggest that – for the purposes of this class, at least – that you stop reading when they start fighting. An exception, of course, is if a war expands through the intervention of outside states, like American intervention in World War I. For that, you would need some understanding of the course of the war to explain the American decision to intervene.

Although we can make some exceptions, we will generally do the presentations in chronological order. However, please do not hesitate to pick one of the early cases just because that would mean you are presenting early. For one thing, my expectations are

lower for the early presentations, given the more restricted time to do background research and less familiarity with how things will work. In addition, one significant advantage to presenting early is that you receive early feedback and have more time to do more research and fine-tune the final research paper before it is due, and before the end-of-semester crunch. In this sense, presenting last can be a disadvantage. Presumably your presentation will be better, but you will be less able to respond to feedback.

It is okay if several of you pick the same war. The oral presentation would then take the form of a panel discussion. You would divide up the presentation of the historical sequence of events running up to the war, and spend the rest of your time presenting your own interpretation of the causes of the war. You will each have the opportunity to respond to questions, though some questions might be directed primarily to one presenter. You will write your own paper. From my perspective, the presentations will work better if we have one or two cases (or more) on which several people are working. Plus, with several presenters, you will not be sitting in front of the class by yourself (though some might prefer that). So feel free to coordinate before selecting your paper topics.

NOTE #1: Please silence your cell phones before class begins. If you need to have your cell phone on for medical or family reasons, please provide a note from your dean. You are free to use a laptop computer, iPad, or other device to take notes, to look at the syllabus or reading material online, or to look up other factual material relating to the course, but not for any other purpose. Texting or emailing or surfing the web is not permitted and will hurt your class participation grade.

NOTE #2: ABSENCES. Attendance is required at all sessions.

NOTE #3: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. The University, the Dept. of Political Science, and I each take academic integrity seriously. The University imposes heavy penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If the meanings of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty are not clear, please see the Rutgers policy on academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> . Please pay particular attention to the section on “Levels of Violations and Sanctions.” Remember that your written work for the class goes through the “Turnitin” program on Sakai, which picks up plagiarism. One additional note, based on recent experience. If you use someone’s exact words, it is necessary but not sufficient to cite the source. You must also put exact words in quotation marks.

NOTE #4: RUTGERS DISABILITY POLICY. See <https://ods.rutgers.edu/> .

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Number indicates the week of the term, beginning January 21; letters represent multiple topics each week. All reading except the Levy & Thompson book is on Sakai.

PART I: THEORIES OF WAR AND PEACE

1. **Course Introduction** (January 21)
focus, aims, organization, requirements
- 1a. **What Is War?**
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 1
Clausewitz, *On War*, Book I, chap. 1
- 1b. **The Politics of Force**
Robert J. Art, “The Four Functions of Force”
- 1c. **The Decline of Interstate War**
Steven Pinker, “A History of Violence” (excerpt)
- 1d. **Classifying the Causes of War: The Levels of Analysis Framework**
Waltz, “Introduction” to *Man, the State, and War* (chap. 1)
-
2. **The System Level: Realist Theories** (January 28)
- 2a. **Realist International Theory**
Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*,
6th ed. Chap. 1.
John Mearsheimer, “Anarchy and the Struggle for Power”
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 2
- 2b. **Balance of Power Theory**
Edward Vose Gulick, “The Aims of Europe's Classical Balance of Power”
Stephen M. Walt, “Alliances: Balancing and Bandwagoning”
- 2c. **Power Transition Theory**
Ronald L. Tammen, et al. *Power Transitions*, Chap 1
Levy, “Preventive War: Concepts and Propositions”
-

3. **Dyadic-Level Theories** (February 4)
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 3
- 3a. **The Prisoner's Dilemma Model**
Bruce Russett, *The Prisoners of Insecurity*, chap. 5-6.
- 3b. **Deterrence and the Spiral Model**
Robert Jervis, "Deterrence, the Spiral Model, and the Intentions of the Adversary"
- 3c. **Why Can't They Settle? The Bargaining Model of War**
Blainey, "The Abacus of Power"
- 3d. **Crisis Management**
Alexander L. George, "A Provisional Theory of Crisis Management"

4. **Economic and Societal Theories** (February 11)
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 70-77 & chap. 4.

- 5a. **The Decision-Making Approach** (February 18)
Joe Hagan, "Does Decision Making Matter? Systematic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory"
- 5b. **Psychology of Decision-making**
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 5
Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception"
Levy, "Misperceptions and the Causes of War," pp. 82-93 only.
- 5c. **Politics of Decision-Making**
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 6
Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics"
- 5d. **Crisis Decision-Making**
Ole R. Holsti, "Crisis Decision-Making"

6. **Paper #1 and Discussion of Sample Papers** (February 25)
3 sample papers (to be selected)

7. **Theoretical Summary** (March 3)

** March 3, PAPER #1 DUE (“Assignments tab” on Sakai, by 11:55pm)

8. **Writing Paper #2 and Discussion of Sample Papers** (March 10)
 “Guide for Research Papers”
 3 sample papers (to be selected)

March 17 - no class (Spring break; Happy St. Patrick’s Day)

PART II: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
 background reading to be provided for each case

9. March 24 – April 28

DEADLINES

February 4 (in class) selection of paper topic

March 3 (midnight) paper #1

May 8 (midnight) paper #2

submit each paper to class Sakai site, “Assignments” tab (Word or pdf only)

I hope you enjoy the semester!