GVPT 604: Introduction to War and Armed Conflict in World Politics

Fall 2022
Tuesdays 3:30 – 6:15 pm
Art-Sociology Building (ASY 3203)
Dr. Deniz Cil (she/her) dcil@umd.edu
Chincoteague Hall 2117D
Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Course Description

This course examines major theories of international and internal armed conflict and reviews empirical studies testing these theories. The primary objective of this course is to develop an understanding of the central debates in the academic literature, and how these debates and findings can be applied to understanding contemporary policy issues regarding ongoing conflicts around the world. The first section of the course covers topics related to the emergence of conflicts. The readings in this section center around the different causes of the onset of conflict between states, and between states and non-state armed actors. The second section covers topics related to the conduct and termination of armed conflict. The readings in this section focus on the factors that impact the severity, duration, outcome, and termination of international and internal armed conflict. The third section covers topics related to the aftermath of armed conflict. The readings in this section deal with questions regarding the duration of post-war peace, post-conflict recovery, and the impact of third-party peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course:

1) Students will be able to describe and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing theories and empirical analyses of questions related to the onset, conduct, and termination of international and internal conflicts.
2) Students will be able to assess the future research and policy implications of existing academic scholarship.
3) Students will be able to develop an informed understanding of ongoing armed conflicts based on current political science research and apply this understanding to formulate relevant policy recommendations.
4) Students will be able to develop a systematic approach to answering questions regarding international and internal conflicts and will be able to apply these skills in their future research and/or policy analysis.

Course Structure

We will meet in person every Tuesday at 3:30 pm in Art-Sociology Building (3203). Please note that according to UMD health and safety guidelines (effective August 29, 2022) wearing a KN95 mask indoors is not required but recommended for added protection.

Each week, we will discuss the theoretical arguments and quantitative analyses in the assigned readings. You are expected to read assigned readings before the class, review discussion questions, and participate in the discussion. I will announce any changes to the class structure via ELMS.

Required Resources

All reading material will be posted on the course ELMS page (elms.umd.edu). Required readings are also available online through the University Library (https://www.lib.umd.edu).

Assignments

1) Participation and Engagement (25%)

Your participation grade will be based on your attendance and participation in class discussion. You are expected to be prepared to discuss assigned readings, answer discussion questions, and remain engaged during the class. You should be able to explain the assumptions and logic of theoretical arguments, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each article, and situate them within the larger literature. I will post a sample of discussion questions on Mondays on the course ELMS page. In case of an emergency that prevents you from attending the class, please let me know so that we can arrange make-up work together (see attendance policy below).

2) Two Short Papers (each 5-6 double-spaced pages excluding references) (50 %)

   a. Comparison of theoretical arguments and contributions (25%) September 30, 2022

Pick 3 to 4 research articles from Section 1 (the onset of war and armed conflict) and compare the different theoretical approaches and their contribution to the larger literature on conflict onset. Your comparison should include a discussion of different theoretical assumptions in each article, how these articles contribute to our understanding of conflict onset in general, and how these arguments can be extended to answer other questions related to conflict onset. The last part of your paper should include an example from an ongoing international or internal armed conflict. You should discuss if or how these articles contribute to our understanding of the onset of this conflict. This discussion should lay out the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical approaches in helping to understand conflict onset in your example.
b. Evaluation of findings and policy recommendations (25%) November 11, 2022

Pick one of the research questions covered in Section 2 (the conduct of war and armed conflict) and review the findings from the literature answering this question. Your review should include the scope conditions of the findings and any shortcomings based on data and/or analytical limitations. The last part of your paper should discuss policy recommendations for decision makers based on the findings from these articles. In this last section, you can either focus on one conflict and provide policy recommendations for that specific conflict, or you can provide more general policy recommendations for the question you picked from the Section 2 readings.

3) Take-home Final exam (25%) December 20, 2022

At the end of this course, you will complete a take-home final exam. Exam questions will require you to compare different arguments and assumptions from the existing literature, critically analyze findings, and discuss policy implications. You will answer questions by writing short essays and citing relevant course material. Take-home final questions will be posted on ELMS on December 20 at 8:00 am and will be due on same day (December 20) at 8:00 pm. More detailed information on take-home final exam will be posted on the course ELMS page.

Grading Scale

Grades will be based on a straight scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98 – 100 = A +</td>
<td>87 – 89 = B +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94 – 97 = A</td>
<td>84 – 86 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 93 = A -</td>
<td>80 – 83 = B -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79 = C +</td>
<td>70 – 73 = C -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 – 69 = D +</td>
<td>60 – 63 = D -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 66 = D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 &amp; below = F</td>
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Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance in each class session is required. If you are not able to attend the class for reasons that align with university policy for excused absences, please let me know as soon as possible. If you are not able to attend the class for any reason, you will be required to submit a written make-up assignment reviewing assigned readings. You can use this option twice during the semester. Please note that this assignment should be submitted within a week of your absence (unless we agree on an alternative deadline).

Absence due to COVID-19: If you are not feeling well, please stay home and contact me as soon as possible. You do not need documentation if you miss one to two classes due to COVID-like symptoms. To make-up your participation and engagement, you can submit a written assignment reviewing assigned readings. If you need more than two weeks due to severe
illness/emergency, please contact me for alternative arrangements. Please note that you will need documentation for absences more than two weeks.

**Grading**

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you and correct any mistakes if identified. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade. I will review your request and schedule a time to discuss it.

**Late Assignments and Extensions**

To request an extension for an assignment you should contact me at least 24 hours prior to the due date of the assignment (except in cases of emergency). Late assignments will be penalized 10 percent per day unless you contact me beforehand. Please plan to have your papers submitted before the scheduled deadline to avoid running into technical issues resulting in late submission.

**Communication with Instructor**

**Email:** If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at dcil@umd.edu. Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (e.g., When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

**ELMS:** I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS. Make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency.

**Campus – Wide Policies**

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

**Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity**

The Government and Politics department deeply values the voices and perspectives of all people. We are committed to having a diverse department that recognizes and appreciates the differences
in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, abilities, class, nationality, and other factors. Our department prioritizes diversity and seeks to foster a diverse community reflected in its faculty, staff, and students.

In this class, students are invited to share their thoughts and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one’s statement with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statues, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

**Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias**

If you experience racism or other forms of bias in this class or any GVPT course, I encourage you to do at least one of the following:

- Please report the experience to me.
- Report the experience to David Cunningham, the GVPT Director of Undergraduate Studies at dacunnin@umd.edu
- Report the experience to the GVPT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, led by Professor Antoine Banks at abanks12@umd.edu

Please also report all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/.

**Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications**

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for your fellow Terps.

**Course Evaluation**

Please submit a course evaluation through CourseEvalUM to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the Course Eval UM website to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.
Readings

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

Week 1 – August 30, 2022

Topic: Introduction: What is war and peace?

Optional Reading

Section 1: The Onset of War and Armed Conflict

Week 2 – September 6, 2022

Topic: Territorial conflict

*International Conflict*

*Internal Conflict*


Application

Week 3 – September 13, 2022

Topic: Regime type

International Conflict


Internal Conflict


Application

**Week 4 – September 20, 2022**

Topic: Economics and conflict

*International conflict*


*Internal conflict*


*Application*


**Week 5 – September 27, 2022, No class**

Dr. Cil will be attending a conference at Leipzig University, Germany.

**Week 6 – October 4, 2022**

Topic: Bargaining theory of war

*International conflict*


*Internal conflict*


**Section 2: The Conduct of War and Armed Conflict**

**Week 7 – October 11, 2022**

**Topic:** Civilian targeting in war and armed conflict

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


*Application*

**Week 8 – October 18, 2022**

Topic: Duration of war and armed conflict

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


*Application*


**Week 9 – October 25, 2022**

Topic: Alliances and third-party involvement during war and armed conflict

*International Conflict*


**Internal Conflict**


**Application**


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**Week 10 – November 1, 2022**

**Topic:** War termination

**Internal Conflict**


**Internal conflict**


**Application**


Section 3: Post-War and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Week 11 – November 8, 2022

Topic: Durable peace following wars and armed conflicts

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


*Application*


Week 12 – November 15, 2022

Topic: Implementation of peace agreements and conflict recurrence

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


**Week 13 – November 22, 2022**

**Topic:** Recovery and reconstruction in the aftermath of conflict

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


*Application*


Week 14 – November 29, 2022

Topic: Peacekeeping during and in the aftermath of wars and armed conflicts

*International Conflict*


*Internal Conflict*


*Application*


**Conclusion**

Week 15 – December 6, 2022

Topic: Emerging topics in peace and conflict research

*Climate Change*


Forecasting


COVID-19


Population Movement
