GVPT 409P: Seminar in International Relations and World Politics: Conflict in the International System

Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12 and by appointment

Course Description:
This course is designed to provide an overview on conflict in the international system. Students will examine different types of conflict—including state-to-state war, civil war, terrorism, and non-violent conflict. The course will describe trends in the incidence of conflict, as well as theories about the causes of conflict and conflict resolution. In addition, we will examine three conflicts—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, and Sudan—in some detail.

Course Requirements:
As a seminar course, student participation is crucial to this class. Students are expected to have done all of the reading before class, to attend, and to participate actively in class. There are three main assignments in this course—one midterm exam, a final exam and a research paper. The final exam will be cumulative, although weighted more heavily toward the latter portion of the course. The research paper will be a 10-12 page paper. The paper will be due December 1, and all students will be required to submit a written topic proposal to me by October 20. Additionally, students will have an opportunity to submit a rough draft of the paper on November 10 and get comments on it.

Grading:
Midterm 25%
Final Exam 30%
Research Paper 35%
Participation 10%

Course Readings:
There are two required books for this class: *Sixteen Million One* by Patrick Regan and *Winning the War on War* by Joshua Goldstein. Each of these books is available in the bookstore. In addition to these required texts, there are a number of required readings that are articles or selections from books. These readings will be posted on the course page on elms.

Religious Observance
By the end of September students must provide in writing a request for a make up of exams and other required assignments if the syllabus indicates a date when you are unable to attend due to a specific religious observance.

Absence due to illness.
Campus Senate policy requires students who are absent due to illness/injury to furnish documentary support to the instructor. Students are required to contact me by email prior to class time to indicate that they have an illness or an injury and will be missing class. Students must then, on the day that they return to class, provide written documentation verifying the illness/injury. Students will not be allowed to turn in missed assignments or make up quizzes, tests, papers, etc. if they have not provided this documentation.

**Academic Integrity**
The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards applicable to all undergraduate students, and you are responsible for upholding these standards as you complete assignments and take exams in this course. Please make yourself aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information see [www.studenthonor council.umd.edu](http://www.studenthonor council.umd.edu). If any student is believed to be in violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, they will be referred to the Student Honor Council.

**Students with disabilities.**
I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide us with documentation or have not had that documentation reviewed by DSS before October 1.

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**Course Schedule**

**Part I: Types of Conflict**

**Week 1: Trends in Conflict**

September 1: Introduction

September 3: Trends in Political Violence

Reading:
- Goldstein, *Winning the War on War*, Chapters 1 & 2
Week 2: Types of Conflict I

September 8: Interstate War

Reading:

September 10: Civil War

Reading:
- Regan, *Sixteen Million One*. Chapters 1-6

Week 3: Types of Conflict II

September 15: Civil War & Ethnic Conflict

Reading:
- Connor, Walker. "A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a…." *Ethnic and racial studies* 1.4 (1978): 377-400.

September 17: Terrorism

Reading:

Week 4: Types of Conflict III

September 22: Protest and Non-Violence

Reading:
September 24: Genocide and Mass Killing

Reading:

**Week 5: Cases of Conflict: DRC**

September 29: Background to the Conflict

Reading:

October 1: Africa’s First World War

Reading:

**Week 6: Cases of Conflict: Syria**

October 6: The so-called “Arab Spring”

Reading:

October 8: Civil war in Syria

Reading:
• Lynch, Marc, Deen Freelon and Sean Aday. BLOGS AND BULLETS III: SYRIA’S SOCIALLY MEDIATED CIVIL WAR. USIP Report.
Week 7: Midterm Exam

October 13: Preparation for midterm
October 15: Midterm

Part II: Causes of Conflict

Week 8: Structural Causes

October 20: Democracy

Reading:

Paper proposal due Tuesday, October 20

October 22: The Liberal Peace

Reading:

Week 9: Individual Motivations

October 27: Economics

Reading:
October 29: Discrimination

Reading:

**Week 10: Repression and External Intervention**

November 3: Repression and Dissent

Reading:

November 5: The External Dimension

Reading:

**Part III: Conflict termination and resolution**

**Week 11: Peacekeeping**

November 10: Foundations of peacekeeping

Reading:
  • Goldstein, *Winning the War on War*, Chapters 3-5

**Rough Draft of paper due Tuesday, November 10 (optional)**

November 12: Does peacekeeping work?

Reading:
  • Goldstein, *Winning the War on War*, Chapters 6-8

**Week 12: Mediation**

November 17: Barriers to Negotiation

Reading:
November 19: Mediation

Reading:

**Week 13: Justice and Accountability**

November 24: Post-conflict Justice

Reading:

November 26: No class (Thanksgiving)

**Week 14: Cases of Conflict: South Sudan**

December 1: Two civil wars in Sudan

Reading:

**Paper due Tuesday, December 1**

December 3: Independence and continued conflict

Reading:

**Week 15: Conclusion**

December 8: Trends in Conflict II

Reading:
  • Goldstein, *Winning the War on War*, Chapters 9-12

December 10: Course wrap-up

**Final Exam: Friday, December 18: 1:30-3:30**