

Government 330  
Wesleyan University  
Fall 2006  
W 1:10-4:00pm, JUDDB6

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### **The Causes of Modern War**

**Course Description:** This course explores the causes of interstate war, with a focus on preventable causes. Topics to be examined include the security dilemma, diversionary war, deterrence, power transition theory, misperceptions, domestic politics, the role of alliances, and economic causes of war. These theories will be examined through the lens of some of the major wars and crises of the modern era. Although we will cover a good deal of historical material, our focus will be primarily theoretical, and the particular conflicts examined will be used to illustrate and to question the logic of the various theories that purport to explain their causes. In other words, we will examine cases with an eye towards “testing” the prevailing explanations for their origins.<sup>1</sup>

**Prerequisites:** GOVT 155 or equivalent.

**Required Texts:** The following texts will be available in the campus bookstore. You should also be able to find them in many neighborhood bookstores and on-line:

Robert Rotberg and Theodore Rabb (eds.), *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 1989)—hereafter referred to as R<sup>2</sup>.

Steve Miller, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera (eds.) *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War: An International Security Reader* (Princeton University Press, 1991)—hereafter referred to as MS.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Basic Books, 2006)—hereafter referred to as Walzer.

Additional readings will be available electronically. On-line journals may be accessed through the e-journals/databases link on Olin Library’s main page. Several others are available through hyperlinks listed below. All other readings will be accessible through Blackboard (noted as BL below) or through the Library’s electronic reserve system (noted as ER). The class password will be govt330 or GOVT330. Students unprepared to take on a heavy reading load should NOT take this course.

In addition, I also recommend, but do not strictly require, the following book—also available at the bookstore:

Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War* (Doubleday, 1996).

For those interested in a basic primer on theories of international conflict, you might also consider purchasing:

Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*

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<sup>1</sup> The grouping of a case with a particular set of theories should not be construed therefore as suggesting that said theories offer the best explanation; that determination is for you to decide.

(Lexington Books, 1999).

Additional recommended readings appear in their respective sessions.

Course Format and Requirements: This course will be conducted as a seminar. This means that during each meeting I will do some conceptual stage setting and, as necessary, raise questions and guide our conversation. However, I will do relatively little lecturing. Thus, if you are not comfortable speaking up in class and/or actively engaging in class discussions and debates, you should NOT take this course.

Students will be expected to complete the following tasks:

1. Class Attendance and Participation (20% of your grade). You are expected to do the readings, attend class, and participate in class discussions. Each session two students will be assigned to be the class “experts” on that week’s readings and may be called upon to give short synopses of the readings and/or raise questions and critiques for class discussion. Please come prepared to each class whether or not you are an assigned expert; those who fail to do so will garner little benefit from our discussions and should not expect to do well in the course.

You are likewise expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration of the class, barring noteworthy extenuating circumstances, e.g., illness. If you arrive more than 10 minutes after the class has begun, you will be considered absent. Two or more absences will adversely affect your final grade.

2. Library Research Assignment (5% of grade); due September 27 at the start of class
3. Three (of five possible) Short Papers (25% each, for a total of 75% of your grade): Papers should be 6-8 pages, double-spaced, and written in a 12 pt font. They will be graded based upon clarity of presentation, organization, and, especially, analytical quality. Papers should support their claims with evidence from class lectures and readings and should be correct in terms of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Papers deficient in these respects will be penalized.

Paper due dates:

October 11  
October 25  
November 8  
November 29  
December 6

*Under no circumstances* will late papers will be accepted or extensions granted. Please plan and prepare accordingly. If you miss a deadline, simply move to the next one. Hard copies are required; e-mailed papers will not be accepted.

Course Schedule:

Session I (September 6): Introduction and Course Overview

- No assigned reading

Session 2 (September 13): (De-?) Evolution in the Conduct and Portrayal of War

- Jack Levy, Thomas Walker, and Martin Edwards, "Continuity and Change in the Evolution of War," in Zeev Maoz, (ed.), *War in a Changing World* (University of Michigan Press, 2000). (BL)
- Gunther Rosenberg, "The Origins, Causes, and Extension of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon" in R<sup>2</sup>.
- Walzer, "Chapter Two, The Crime of War," "Chapter Three, "The Rules of War"; and "Chapter 9: Noncombatant Immunity and Military Necessity."
- Michael Howard, "Men Against Fire: Expectations of War in 1914" in MS.
- Fred Iklé, "Chapter One: The Purpose of Fighting" in *Every War Must End* (Columbia University Press, 1991). (BL)
- Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete? A Review Essay," *International Security*, (Spring 1990).
- Haim Watzman, "Hiding Behind the Enemy," *New York Times*, June 22, 2006.
- Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's view of devastation and death," *The New Yorker*, December 12, 2002; available at: [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/content/?05011ofr\\_archive04](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/content/?05011ofr_archive04)

Session 3 (September 20): Applying the Scientific Method to the Study of War  
(including a "field trip" to Olin Library & lecture by librarian, Erhard Konerding)

- Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methodology for Students of Political Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), ch. 1 (BL)
- Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton University Press, 1994), only pp. 7-12 are required; the rest of the chapter is recommended. (BL)
- Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch. 1. (BL)
- John Gerring, "What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *American Political Science Review*, vol. 98, no. 2 (2004), pp. 341-354.
- Charles S. Maier, "Wargames 1914-1919," only pp. 249-53 in R<sup>2</sup>
- Walzer, excerpt from Chapter 1, entitled "Historical Relativism," only pp. 16-20.

Session 4 (September 27): Structure, Balance, and System Polarity

- Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory" in  $R^2$ .
- John J. Mearsheimer, "Chapter 9: The Causes of Great Power War" in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 334-359. (W.W. Norton, 2001). (ER)
- R. Harrison Wagner, "Peace, War, and the Balance of Power," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 88, no. 3 (September 1994), pp. 593-607.
- Dale Copeland, "Neorealism and the Myth of Bipolar Stability: Toward a New Dynamic Realist Theory of Major War," *Security Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Spring 1996).
- Excerpt from Charles L. Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help." *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 50-90.
- *Recommended*: Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "The Contribution of Expected Utility Theory to the Study of International Conflict," in  $R^2$ ; and Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?" *Security Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1996), pp. 90-121.

*Short Research Assignment due at the start of class; late papers will be penalized.*

Session 5 (October 4): Alliances: Balancing, Bandwagoning and Abandonment; Inadvertent Escalation and the Case of the Crimean War

- Stephen Walt, "Chapter 2: Explaining Alliance Formation," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 17-33 only. (ER)
- Jack Snyder and Thomas Christensen, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, (Spring, 1990).
- Excerpt from Paul Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert*, pp. TBA (BL)
- Jack Snyder, Excerpt from "Chapter 2: Three Theories of Overexpansion," pp. 21-39 only; and Chapter 5: Social Imperialism in Victorian Britain" in *Myths of Empire* (Cornell University Press, 1991). (BL)
- Excerpt from Richard Smoke, "The Crimean War" in *War* (Harvard University Press, 1977) pp. 147-194; exact pages TBA. (ER)

Session 6 (October 11): Hegemonic War and Power Transitions; Segue to WWI

- Robert Gilpin. "The Theory of Hegemonic War," in  $R^2$ .
- Walzer, "Chapter 5: Anticipations."
- Jack Levy. "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War." *World Politics*,

vol. 40, no. 1 (October 1987), pp. 82-107.

- Dan Reiter, "Exploding the Powder Keg Myth: Preemptive Wars Almost Never Happen," *International Security*, (Fall 1995).
- Richard Ned Lebow, "Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?" *International Security*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Summer 1984), pp. 147-186.
- Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War" in MS.

*Paper deadline #1*

Session 7 (October 18): World War I continued

- Scott Sagan, "1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense and Instability" in MS.
- Marc Trachtenberg, "The Meaning of Mobilization in 1914" in MS.
- Sean Lynn-Jones, "Détente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911-1914" in MS.
- Review Van Evera, "Cult of the Offensive" and Howard, "Men Against Fire."

*Recommended:* Kagan, Chapter 2: The First World War; still better is Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1962).

Session 8 (October 25): Economics, Trade, and Interdependence

- Dale C. Copeland, "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Spring 1996), pp. 5-41.
- Debating Dale Copeland's *The Origins of Major War*, *Security Studies*, (Summer 2001) articles by Jeffrey Talliafero, Robert Kaufman, and Dale Copeland.
- Bruce M. Russett, "Prosperity and Peace," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4 (December 1983), pp. 381-387.
- Geoffrey Blainey, "Chapter 2: Paradise is a Bazaar" and "Chapter 6: War Chests and Pulse Beats" in *The Causes of War* (New York: Free Press, 1973), pp. 18-32 and 87-107. (ER)

*Paper deadline #2*

Session 9 (November 1): Domestic Politics and Diversionary War; Segue to WWII

- Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War" in R<sup>2</sup>.

- Walzer, "Chapter 18—The Crime of Aggression: Political Leaders and Citizens."
- Kenneth A. Schultz, "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War." *International Organization*, vol. 53, no. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 233-266.
- Christopher Gelpi, "Democratic Diversions: Governmental Structure and the Externalization of Domestic Conflict," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 41, no. 2 (April 1997), pp. 255-282.
- Jack Snyder, revisit "Chapter 2: Three Theories of Overexpansion" (BL) and "Chapter 3: Germany and the Pattern of Late Development" in *Myths*. (ER).
- *Recommended*: Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace." *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Autumn 1994), pp. 5-49.

Session 10 (November 8): World War II

- Jeffrey L. Hughes, "The Origins of World War II in Europe: British Deterrence and German Expansionism," in R<sup>2</sup>.
- Kagan, "Chapter 4: The Second World War, 1939-1945."
- Scott Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," in R<sup>2</sup>.
- Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), chs. 1-3. (ER)

*Paper deadline #3*

Session 11 (November 17—note that we meet on Friday this week): War in the Middle East

Guest Speaker: Middle East expert Professor Jeremy Pressman, University of Connecticut will talk about the causes of conflict in the Middle East

- Readings TBA

Session 12 (November 22): No class—Thanksgiving holiday

Session 13 (November 29): Psychology and Misperceptions; the Case of Korea

- Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," in Morton Halperin and Arnold Kanter. eds., *Readings in American Foreign Policy* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1973).
- Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception" in R<sup>2</sup>.
- Richard Ned Lebow, "Cognitive Closure and Crisis Politics" in *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 101-147.

- Jack S. Levy, "Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems," *World Politics*, vol. 36, no. 1 (October 1983), pp. 76-99.
- Daniel Gilbert, "He Who Cast the First Stone Probably Didn't," *New York Times*, July 24, 2006.
- Allen S. Whiting, "The U.S.-China War in Korea" in Alexander L. George (ed.), *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management* (Westview Press, 1991). (ER)

*Paper deadline #4*

Session 14 (December 6): (Nuclear) Deterrence; the Case of the Cuban Missile Crisis

- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), chs. 1-2. (ER)
- Walzer, Chapter 17—Nuclear Deterrence
- Kagan, "The Cuban Missile Crisis." (in text and ER)
- George H. Quester, "Crises and the Unexpected" in R<sup>2</sup>.
- Iklé, "Epilogue: Ending Wars Before they Start" in *Every War Must End*. (ER)
- *Recommended:* Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospects of Armageddon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), chs. 1-2. (ER); and Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days* (W.W. Norton, 1971).

*Paper deadline #5*

*What follows is valuable advice on paper writing, authored by Professor Stephen Van Evera of MIT. I recommend you read it closely and consider its recommendations when crafting your own papers.*

## HOW TO WRITE A PAPER

I often offer the following suggestions to undergraduates writing class papers.

### I. GENERAL FORMAT

The following general format is often appropriate: "tell them what you're going to tell them; then tell them; then tell them what you told them."

### II. INTRODUCTION FORMAT

Begin your paper with a short summary introduction. This summary introduction should answer up to five (5) questions:

1. What question or questions do you address?
2. Why do these questions arise? From what literature or real-world events? Offer background that clarifies your questions and puts them in context.
3. What answer or answers do you offer? Summarize your bottom line in a few sentences.
4. How will you reach your answers? Say a few words about your sources and methods.
5. What comes next? Provide a roadmap to the rest of the paper: "Section I explains how I began my life of crime; Section II details my early arrests; Section III describes my trip to death row; Section IV offers general theoretical conclusions and policy implications." Something of that sort.

#1 ("What is your question?"), #2 ("Why does this question arise?"), and #3 ("What is your answer?") are essential: make sure you cover them. #4-#5 are optional.

Summary introductions of this sort help readers grasp your argument. They also help you diagnose problems with your paper. A summary introduction can be hard to write. A possible reason: gaps or contradictions in your arguments or evidence, which summary exposes. Solution: rethink and reorganize your paper.

### III. CONCLUSION FORMAT

Authors often recapitulate their argument in their conclusion. However, a good summary introduction often makes a full summary conclusion redundant. If so, recapitulate quickly and then use your conclusion to explore the implications of your argument. What policy prescriptions follow from your analysis? What general arguments does it call into question, and which does it reinforce? What further research projects does it suggest?

### IV. ARGUMENTATION

Four injunctions on argumentation should be kept in mind.

1. Use empirical evidence--facts, numbers, history--to support your argument. Purely

deductive argument is sometimes appropriate, but argument backed by evidence is always more persuasive.

2. Clearly frame the general point(s) that your evidence supports. Don't ask facts to speak for themselves.

To sum points #1 and #2: offer evidence to support your arguments and state the arguments your evidence supports.

3. Argue against yourself. After laying out your argument, acknowledge questions or objections that a skeptical reader might raise, and briefly address them. This shows readers that you were thoughtful, thorough, and paid due regard to possible objections or alternate interpretations.

Often, of course, the skeptic would have a good point, and you should grant it. Don't claim too much for your theories or evidence!

4. Use footnotes to document all sources and statements of fact. On footnote and citation format, consult and obey Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., rev. by John Grossman and Alice Bennett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), in paperback. You should own a copy.

## V. WRITING

Good writing is essential to clear thinking and effective communication. So bear the following points in mind:

1. Your paper should make a single overarching point or a handful of related points, and should follow a simple organization. Avoid cluttering it with extra points. If you developed an argument that later became ancillary as you rethought your paper, drop the argument from the paper. This is painful ("I sweated hours on that idea!") but extraneous arguments drain power from your main argument.

2. Break your paper into sections and subsections. More sections is better than fewer. Sections help readers see the structure of your argument.

3. I recommend the following structure for sections/subsections:

a. Your argument;

b. Your supporting evidence;

c. Counter-arguments, qualifications, and limiting conditions of your argument.

4. Start each section with several sentences summarizing the argument presented in the section. You may cut these summaries from your final draft if they seem redundant with your summary introduction, but you should include them in your first drafts to see how they look. Writing such summaries is also a good way to force yourself to decide what you are and are not doing in each section, and to force yourself to confront contradictions or shortcomings in your argument. Often these section summaries are best written after you write the section, but don't forget to add them at some point.

5. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that distills the point of the paragraph. Later sentences should offer supporting material that explains or elaborates the point of the topic sentence. Qualifications or refutation to counter-arguments should then follow. In short, paragraphs should have the same structure as whole sections.

A reader should be able to grasp the thrust of your argument by reading only the first sentence of every paragraph.

6. Write short, declarative sentences. Avoid the passive voice. (Passive voice: "the kulaks were murdered"--but who did it? Active voice: "Stalin murdered the kulaks.")

7. Write from an outline. Outlines are major aids to coherence and readability.

## VI. VETTING

Ask a friend or two to give your paper a look before you turn it in; and return the favor for them when they have a paper underway. Two heads are better than one, and giving and receiving comments are important skills.

## VII. GENERAL BEAUTY TIPS

Take care to turn in a neat, clean paper. Run your spellchecker. A messy-looking paper suggests a messy mind.

## VIII. HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO WRITE PAPERS

Re-read articles you or others admire, and imitate their better aspects.

1. For more advice on writing see William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed. (NY: Macmillan, 1979); and Teresa Pelton Johnson, "Writing for International Security: A Contributor's Guide," *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 1991), pp. 171-180. If you are doing a research paper, you might also consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) for more clues on how to do research.

