

International Security: On the Causes and Consequences of Political Violence Between and Within States [DRAFT] *

University of California, DC

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Course Description and Objectives

This course will introduce students to the study of security in international relations. Broadly, the course will consider the causes and consequences of organized political violence between and within states; how the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems have influenced international security; and opportunities for international cooperation, with a game theoretic focus on the conditions under cooperation is likely to emerge and what form such cooperation may take. The course will begin by considering international conflict drawing from prominent theories of international relations. The course will then explore more specific conceptual approaches to studying the behavior of actors involved in, affected by, or in positions to potentially avert conflict. The concepts introduced in this course will be paired with recent (or still ongoing) case studies that will assist students in applying them to the study of contemporary international security affairs. Throughout the semester, guest speakers from various professional backgrounds will join the class to both engage in discussion with the class about the course material as well as share details related to their work in positions related to international security. Throughout the course, I will introduce students to more general concepts that will assist them in thinking critically about the subject matter and, specifically, about associations and causal relations between variables. Through the writing assignments, the course will introduce students to the process of drafting policy memoranda and opinion editorials.

*This is a draft syllabus and will be updated as the course progresses. This content is protected and may not be shared uploaded or distributed.

Required Materials

All required course materials will be made available through CatCourses or active hyperlinks on this syllabus. These include a combination of both written and audio/visual materials. No text purchases will be necessary.

Grading (percentage contributions)

- 5% L^AT_EX Submission
- 5% “Dark Data” Discussion
- 15% Research Article Presentation
- 20% Mid-Term Examination
- 35% Policy Memorandum
- 20% Final Commentary Writing Assignment

Final course grades will be based on the L^AT_EX submission; engagement in the “data data” discussion; performance on the mid-term examination; and the quality of their research article presentation, policy memorandum, and opinion editorial (Op-Ed) submissions. Regular attendance is essential as we will often cover logistics, assignment details, etc. during classes.

L^AT_EX Submission

To develop a basic working knowledge of L^AT_EX, students will complete an assignment in which they are directed to implement various commands. Students will then use L^AT_EX to produce their memoranda and commentary. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided during the semester.

“Dark Data” Discussion

Building on the inferential concepts covered early in the semester, students will be asked to participate in a discussion in which they provide examples of cases in which our understanding of social phenomena may be limited by lack of data. Complete details will be supplied during class.

Research Article Presentation

For this assignment, students will be assigned to groups. Each group will be responsible for presenting the results of a research article. Detailed assignment instructions will be shared with students during the semester.

Mid-Term Examination

The mid-term examination will test students on fundamental concepts covered during the class. These concepts will relate closely to the memoranda that the students will be writing concurrently. Active work on the memoranda throughout the semester that incorporates concepts covered throughout the class will go a long way in ensuring preparation for the examination.

Policy Memorandum

For this assignment, students will be asked to analyze an international security issue (to be described in an assignment prompt distributed in class) and present several policy options to a senior government or non-governmental organization official. The main text of the memoranda **should not exceed 1000 words** in length (excluding citations). However, supporting information supplied through footnotes will significantly increase the length of the assignment. **Overall, this assignment will require the work and overall writing associated with a standard academic paper of at least ten pages.** I will distribute to and review with students a sample policy memorandum to help guide them through this exercise.

Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)

For this assignment, students will be asked to succinctly analyze and express some opinion relating to current events **2 to 3 pages**. Each op-ed should clearly present and defend a central argument intended to influence public and political opinion in some manner. The writing should be direct, succinct, and grammatically precise. As New York Times' Op-Ed Columnist Bret Stephens has advised, "[a]void the passive voice. Write declarative sentences... Keep your sentences short and your paragraphs tight... [S]tart with a longer draft, then cut and cut again." (Please read all fifteen of his "[Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers](#)".) I will share sample Op-Eds with the class.

Academic Integrity

To be replaced with UCDC Policy and Services

- Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of California, Merced's Academic Honesty Policy. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.
- You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Policy can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

Student Accessibility Services

To be replaced with UCDC Policy and Services

University of California, Merced is committed to creating learning environments that are accessible to all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please feel welcome to contact me privately so we can discuss options. In addition, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at (209) 228-6996 or disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu as soon as possible to explore reasonable accommodations. All accommodations must have prior approval from Student Accessibility Services on the basis of appropriate documentation.

If you anticipate or experience barriers due to pregnancy, temporary medical condition, or injury, please feel welcome to contact me so we can discuss options. You are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students for support and resources at (209) 228-3633 or <https://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/dean-students>.

(Post)-Pandemic Education¹

To be replaced with UCDC Policy and Services

Teaching and learning have always required safe and open classroom environments. Conducting scholarly work under (post-)pandemic conditions simply extends values long established in higher education and reflected in UC Merced's Principles of Community. In enrolling at UCM and in this course, we will observe the following:

- Appreciate and support the physical and psychological nuances of returning to an in-person classroom.
- Wear a face covering-and wear it effectively-at all times
- Keep informed on current campus information and maintain a consistent practice
- If symptomatic, quarantining is expected along with notification to the Covid Response Center <https://doyourpart.ucmerced.edu/crc> for tracking and support

As a reminder, the above expectations are consistent with our campus' Code of Student Conduct, which emphasizes that a productive and safe campus involves honesty, fairness, and respect.

Circumstances and guidelines may change, and we will discuss important updates to affirm any updates or adjustments to classroom plans. This transition is new for all of us, and we are in this together as a classroom community. If you have questions, you are encouraged to stay in touch with me and/or UCM's Campus Ready COVID-19 site is an ongoing resource: <https://doyourpart.ucmerced.edu/crc>.

¹The language in this section was generously supplied by the Anne Zanzucchi, UC Merced Associate Dean, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

Tentative Schedule and Relevant Readings (Subject to Change)

- Week 1, Tuesday, Aug 23– Thinking Critically About Our Inferences
 - * Hand, David J. *Dark Data: Why What You Don't Know Matters*. Princeton University Press, 2020. Chapter 1.
- Week 2, Tuesday, Aug 30 – Introduction to International Security and Social Science Inquiry
 - L^AT_EX Submission Due
 - * A very brief article on "**Strategies for Reading Academic Articles.**"
 - * Explicit Theorizing
 - Professor Robert Keohane speaks about "**Being an International Relations Theorist**". (For anyone interested, the entire taped interview can be accessed [here](#).)
 - * Relations between Variables:
 - * –Sampling on the Dependent Variable
 - Pape, Robert A. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97.3 (2003): 343-361.
 - * –Regression to the Mean
 - Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Macmillan, 2011. Chapter on regression to the mean.
 - * Psychological Tendencies – Risk Perception
 - Slovic, Paul. "Perception Of Risk." *Science* 236.4799 (1987): 280-285.
- Week 3, Tuesday, Sep 6 International Security: What Attentions Receive Attention (and Which Don't)
 - "Dark Data" Discussion Notes Due
 - * Baum, Matthew A., and Yuri M. Zhukov. "Media Ownership and News Coverage of International Conflict." *Political Communication* 36.1 (2019): 36-63.
 - * Earl, Jennifer, et al. "The Use of Newspaper Data in the Study of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 30 (2004): 65-80.
 - * Zuckerman, Ethan. "Global Attention Profiles-A Working Paper: First Steps Towards a Quantitative Approach to the Study of Media Attention." Berkman Center Research Publication 2003-06 (2003).
- Week 4, Tuesday, Sep 13 – International Security Theory: Global Structural Perspective
 - * Snyder, Jack. "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy* 145 (2004): 52.
 - * Mearsheimer, John J. "Structural realism." *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* 83 (2007).
 - * Professor Mearsheimer **describes structural realism.**
 - * Bhambra, Gurminder K., et al. "Why is Mainstream International Relations Blind to Racism?" *Foreign Policy* 3 (2020).
- Week 5, Tuesday, Sep 20 – International Security Theory (Continued): "Liberal" Theory of International Relations & Levels of Analysis in Foreign Policymaking

- * Moravcsik, Andrew. "Liberal Theories of International Relations: A Primer." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University (2010).
 - Professor Moravcsik **describes liberal theory.**
- Week 6, Tuesday, Sep 27– Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons, & the Case of Iran: Deterrence and Nuclear Weapons Design
 - * Curry, Dan, filmmaker. On Deterrence. Sandia National Laboratories, 2017. (Accessible [here.](#))
- Week 7, Tuesday, Oct 4 – Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons, & the Case of Iran (Continued): Nuclear Weapons: Estimates, (In)Stability, and Proliferation & The Case of Iran
 - * Bollfrass, Alexander. "Did the US Underestimate North Korea's Weapons Program? It's Not That Simple." *The Washington Post* (2018).
 - * Bell, Mark S., and Nicholas L. Miller. "Questioning the Effect of Nuclear Weapons on Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59.1 (2015): 74-92.
 - * Sagan, Scott D. "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb." *International Security* 21.3 (1997): 54-86.
- Week 8, Tuesday, Oct 11 – Non-State Actors, Terrorism, Civil War, and Insurgency: Non-State Actors and Civil War, and Insurgency
 - Mid-Term Examination
 - * Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature* (2010): 3-57. (Pages 3 and 4 and the referenced graphs only.)
 - * Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97.1 (2003): 75-90. (Entire article.)
 - * Fearon, James. "Grievances and Civil War" *The Monkey Cage* blog (2012). (Entire article.)
 - * Pierskalla, Jan H., and Florian M. Hollenbach. "Technology and Collective Action: The Effect of Cell Phone Coverage on Political Violence in Africa." *American Political Science Review* 107.2 (2013): 207-224. (Skim.)
 - * Burke, Marshall B., et al. "Warming Increases the Risk of Civil War in Africa." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106.49 (2009): 20670-20674. (Skim.)
 - * Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 112.4 (2004): 725-753. (Skim.)
- Week 9, Tuesday, Oct 18 – Non-State Actors, Terrorism, Civil War, and Insurgency (Continued): Terrorism
 - * Krueger, Alan B. "**What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism**" *American Enterprise Institute* (2007).
 - * Abrahms, Max. "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy." *International Security* 32.4 (2008): 78-105.
 - * Shaver, Andrew. "You're More Likely to be Fatally Crushed by Furniture than Killed by a Terrorist." *The Washington Post* 23 (2015).

- Week 10, Tuesday, Oct 25 – The Costs and Consequences of Conflict
 - * Ghobarah, Hazem Adam, Paul Huth, and Bruce Russett. “Civil Wars Kill and Maim People—Long After the Shooting Stops.” *American Political Science Review* 97.2 (2003): 189-202.
 - * Fearon, James D., and Andrew Shaver. “Civil War Violence and Refugee Outflows.” (2020) (skim).
 - * Bauer, Michal, et al. “Can War Foster Cooperation?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 30.3 (2016): 249-74.
- Week 11, Tuesday, Nov 1 – Judgments and Decision Making – Behavioral Approaches to the Study of Conflict and the Case of Wartime Attitudes and Behaviors
 - Memoranda Due
 - * Renshon, Jonathan, and Jennifer Lerner. “The Role of Emotions in Foreign Policy Decision Making.” *Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology* (2012): 313-317.
 - * Halperin, Eran, et al. “Can Emotion Regulation Change Political Attitudes in Intractable Conflicts? From the Laboratory to the Field.” *Psychological Science* 24.1 (2013): 106-111.
 - * McDermott, Rose. “Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission.” *Political Psychology* (1992): 237-263.
 - * Shaver, Andrew, and Alexander Bollfrass. “Emotions and Institutional Constraints: A Demonstration Case of Temperature and Insurgent Violence.” (2018).
 - Week 12, Tuesday, Nov 08 – Memoranda Review
 - Week 13, Tuesday, Nov 15 – International Cooperation and the Case of International Security Institutions
 - * Allison, Graham. “The Myth of the Liberal Order: From Historical Accident to Conventional Wisdom.” *Foreign Affairs*. 97 (2018): 124.
 - * Kagan, R. “The World America Made—and Trump Wants to Unmake.” *Politico Magazine* September 28, 2018.
 - * Haass, Richard. “America and the Great Abdication.” *The Atlantic* 28 (2017).
 - Week 14, Tuesday, Nov 22 – Op-Ed/Commentary Peer Review Sessions
 - Week 15, Tuesday, Nov 29 – Final Op-Ed/Commentary Presentations
 - * Final Op-Ed/Commentary Due