

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT  
PS 396  
Fall 2022  
M W 9:30am – 10:50am  
1090 Lincoln Hall  
Credit: 3 hours**

**INSTRUCTOR**

Alyssa Prorok (she/her/hers)  
Associate Professor  
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Office Hours: M/W 3:00pm-4:00pm, or by appointment

**Grader**

Matt Mettler  
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**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the conditions that affect the propensity for and prevalence of war and peace in international relations. The course begins with an overview of the scientific study of interstate conflict and an introduction to major approaches (systemic, dyadic) to the study of interstate war. Later sections examine the causes of war and peace, solutions that have been offered to help prevent or limit war, and other forms of conflict that have become prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This course is designed to familiarize students with the factors that mitigate or exacerbate military conflict between and within states. By the end of the semester, students should be able to apply these factors in examining real-world scenarios, such as studying historical cases of war or assessing the prospects for future conflict in troubled areas of the world.

Prerequisites: [PS 280](#) or [PS 281](#) or [PS 283](#), six hours of Political Science credit, or consent of instructor. *This course will be taught in person.*

**2. COURSE GOALS**

By the end of the semester, students should:

- Develop a working knowledge of the major causes of war and peace in international relations scholarship
- Be able to apply theories discussed in class to specific cases/situations, identifying how well different theories perform in predicting actual conflict
- Develop the ability to critique empirical scholarly writing at both a theoretical and empirical level, identifying strengths and weaknesses

### **3. COURSE MATERIALS**

All assigned readings will be made available on the course Canvas page. Students are required to acquire an iClicker (**either a physical clicker OR the mobile app. Physical clickers can be purchased at the bookstore.**) \*iClickers will be used to take attendance and facilitate participation during class.

### **4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will be evaluated based upon the following:

- Class Participation (10%): Class participation grades will be based upon regular attendance AND participation in class discussion. Your attendance at all scheduled classes is mandatory and essential for success in the course (see details on attendance policy below). Students are expected to make positive contributions to the class through comments and questions that build on, react to, challenge, or request specific clarifications on the readings and lectures.
- Weekly Reading Quizzes (10%): There are eight weekly reading quizzes scheduled throughout the semester (see course calendar below). These quizzes must be completed on the Canvas course website **BEFORE 9:30am on Monday**. These are **open-book**. Each quiz should take only a few minutes, and you will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade of the semester from your final grade calculation. Weekly reading quizzes will facilitate achievement of learning outcome 1.
- Exam One (25%): Exam one will be held in class on **Wednesday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>**. Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies. If an emergency arises, you will need to contact me **before** the exam or you will receive zero credit.
- Exam Two (25%): Exam two will be held in class on **Wednesday, Dec 7<sup>th</sup>**. It will cover all material that was not covered on Exam One. Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies. If an emergency arises, you will need to contact me **before** the exam or you will receive zero credit.
- Writing Assignment 1 - Reaction Paper (15%): Between weeks 6 and 9, you will choose one assigned reading from the reading list below and write a **1 page single-spaced** reaction paper discussing that reading. You can choose any reading assigned from WEEK 6 through WEEK 9, but your paper must be turned in **BEFORE 9:30am on Monday** on the week that your chosen reading is assigned (i.e. you must turn in your reaction paper before the reading is discussed in class. More details on this assignment will be provided on Canvas. This assignment is designed to facilitate students' achievement of learning outcome 3.
- Writing Assignment 2 – Theory Application Paper (15%): You will write a **2 page single-spaced** paper that applies research we have covered in class to some data, provided by Prof. Prorok, about two countries at risk of going to war. You will use the data provided and **at least two course readings** to make a prediction about the likelihood of imminent conflict between the two countries. More details on this assignment will be

provided on Canvas. This assignment will be due at 11:59pm on **Monday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>**. This assignment is designed to facilitate students' achievement of learning outcome 2.

## 5. COURSE POLICIES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### GRADES

The grading scale (in percentages) for the course is as follows:

99-100	A+
93-98	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
59 or below	F

**Challenging a Grade:** If you are dissatisfied with a grade you receive on an exam or writing assignment and would like to challenge that grade, you must submit a written memo to the instructor explaining why you think the grade is unfair within 48 hours of receiving the grade. Grade challenges will not be accepted after 48 hours, nor will they be accepted in person (i.e., they must be challenged in writing with a written justification for why the grade should be raised). The instructor will read the memo, re-read the assignment, and then assign a new grade. The instructor reserves the right to assign a lower grade. Please Note: appealing for a higher grade because of the level of effort you put into an assignment will not result in a higher grade. Your challenge memo should specifically explain why you think you fulfilled the requirements of the assignment better than is reflected in your current grade, using specific evidence from your original assignment. Challenges are allowed on exams and writing assignments only.

### LATE POLICY

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the dates and times specified on the syllabus. If a student anticipates being unable to complete an assignment on time, the student must contact the instructor **before** the due date, but please note that an extension is not guaranteed. Assignments handed in late and without an extension will be penalized one half-grade for each day (24 hours) they are late.

If a personal emergency prevents students from attending class regularly or handing in an assignment on time, they are encouraged to consult with the Student Assistance Center about obtaining a letter explaining their situation. Part 5 of Article 1 of the Student Code of Conduct explains the circumstances under which a letter of absence is appropriate.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance will be taken at class meetings, and students are required to attend class regularly. If you are unable to attend class because you are sick, have been asked to quarantine, are busy with a university-sponsored event, or are observing a religious holiday, you must contact the instructor **before** class in order to receive an excused absence. If you are unable to attend a class meeting, please note that lecture notes will **not** be made available to you. It is recommended that you obtain notes from a classmate. (**Hint:** Make sure you have the contact information for at least one of your colleagues!) If there is material that you are struggling with, please ask clarifying questions in class. Also, feel free to meet with the instructor during office hours to talk through any issues. For students with childcare responsibilities who may need to bring a child with them to class: please contact the professor beforehand and we will come up with a plan to accommodate this as needed. All students are asked to help us create a welcoming environment, respectful of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

## **CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

You are welcome to use your laptops to take notes during class, although research shows that students tend to retain and comprehend information better when they take hand-written notes (<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>). Cell phones should be silenced or turned off during class time.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The campus policy on emergency responses can be found here:

<https://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/run-hide-fight/>. A brief summary of the university recommendation is: follow your own instincts, and, as safe, run, hide and, as a last resort, fight (where applicable—depending on the nature of the emergency). A useful one-page summary can be found here: <https://police.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/syllabus-attachment.pdf>.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & OTHER RESOURCES**

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu) or go to the [DRES website](#). If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting “Sign-Up for an Academic Screening” at the bottom of the page.

If you are interested in obtaining information to improve writing, study skills, time management or organization, the following campus resources are available to all students:

Writer's Workshop

Undergrad Library

217-333-8796

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop>

<http://disability.illinois.edu/strategies>

<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/self-help-brochures/>

Also, most college offices and academic deans provide academic skills support and assistance for academically related and personal problems. Links to the appropriate college contact can be found by going to this website and selecting your college or school: <http://illinois.edu/colleges/colleges.html>

If you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression or are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or in crisis, you can seek help through the following campus resources:

Counseling Center  
206 Fred H. Turner Student Services Building  
7:50 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday  
Phone: 333-3704

McKinley Mental Health  
313 McKinley Health Center  
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday  
Phone: 333-2705

McKinley Health Education offers individual consultations for students interested in learning relaxation and other stress/time management skills, call 333-2714.

\*\* above content on Accommodations taken from <http://disability.illinois.edu/academic-support/instructor-information/examples-disability-statements-syllabus>

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND REPORTING**

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. As such, you should know that faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct—which also includes dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking—to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. What this means is that as your instructor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware. When a report is received, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office reaches out to provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

There is an exception to this reporting requirement about which you should be aware. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: [wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential](http://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential).

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: [wecare.illinois.edu](http://wecare.illinois.edu).

\*\* Text from: <http://wecare.illinois.edu/faq/employees/>

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Unless noted otherwise, all assignments in this class are individual, and the work you turn in must be yours alone. When making use of external sources, it is required that students cite them completely. As described in the University of Illinois Student Code, the consequences of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty can include a zero (0) on the assignment, failure in the course, or dismissal from the university.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

It is the responsibility of each student to help make the classroom conducive to learning. Students should treat each other with respect during classroom discussion. If you disagree with a claim made by someone else during class discussion, you must find a way to express that disagreement in a constructive and impersonal fashion.

## **PREFERRED PRONOUNS**

Please call me Prof. Prorok, Dr. Prorok, or, for short, Prof./Dr. P. My preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. In class, I will call you by the name that you use when introducing yourself to me. If you would like to share your preferred pronouns with me, please feel free to do so.

## **COVID POLICIES**

For the most up-to-date policies, see: <https://covid19.illinois.edu/on-campus/on-campus-students/>. Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 protocols. If you feel ill or are unable to come to class or complete class assignments due to issues related to COVID-19, including but not limited to testing positive yourself, feeling ill, caring for a family member with COVID-19, or having unexpected child-care obligations, you should contact your instructor immediately, and you are encouraged to copy your academic advisor.

## 6. COURSE SCHEDULE

Topic/Date	Readings (complete weekly readings <b>before Monday's class</b> )	Activities/Assignments
<b>Week 1 (August 22-24)</b> <b>Introduction to the Scientific Study of Warfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PS 396 Syllabus (read in full)</li> <li>- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. <i>Causes of War</i>. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. (E-BOOK AVAILABLE VIA <a href="http://www.library.illinois.edu">www.library.illinois.edu</a>). Chapter 1.</li> <li>- Pettersson et al. 2021. "Organized Violence 1989-2020, with a special emphasis on Syria. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 58(4).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Due this week:</b> acquire an iClicker and make sure it is linked to this course.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2 (Aug 29-31)</b> <b>Conceptualizing and Measuring Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sarkees, Meredith Reid. "The COW Typology of War: Defining and Categorizing Wars (Version 4 of the Data)".</li> <li>- Palmer et al. 2021. "The MID5 Dataset, 2011-2014: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description." <i>Conflict Management and Peace Science</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Due BEFORE class on Monday:</b> Canvas course readings quiz</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3 (Sept. 5-7)</b> <b>NO CLASS Sept 5 Due to Labor Day</b> <b>System Level Theories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. <i>Causes of War</i>. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. (E-BOOK AVAILABLE VIA <a href="http://www.library.illinois.edu">www.library.illinois.edu</a>). Chapter 2.</li> <li>- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. <i>The Tragedy of Great Power Politics</i>. New York: WW Norton and Co. CHAPTER 9.</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 4 (Sept. 12-14)</b> <b>System Level (cont.) and Dyadic Level Theories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. <i>Causes of War</i>. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. (E-BOOK AVAILABLE VIA <a href="http://www.library.illinois.edu">www.library.illinois.edu</a>). Chapter 3.</li> <li>- Reiter, Dan. 2003. "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 1(1): 27-43.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Due BEFORE class on Monday:</b> Canvas course readings quiz</li> </ul>

**Week 5 (Sept. 19-21)****Dyad Level (cont.) and Individual Level Theories**

- Recommended (not required): Levy and Thompson, Chapter 5

**- In Class Activity** (time permitting): “The Fog of War”

**Week 6 (Sept. 26-28)****Dangerous Dyads: Territory**

- Hensel et al. 2008. “Bones of Contention: Comparing Territorial, Maritime, and River Issues.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(1): 117-43

- Due BEFORE class on Monday:** Canvas course readings quiz
- Due BEFORE class on Monday (or in Week 8 or 9):** Writing assignment 1

**Week 7 (Oct. 3-5)****Exam Review/Exam**

- NO READINGS, Catch up and exam review

- IN CLASS:** Exam review session Monday. Come with questions!
- IN CLASS:** Midterm exam Wednesday, Oct. 5

**Week 8 (Oct. 10-12)****Dangerous Dyads: Alliances**

- Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. “Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 427-439.
- Leeds, Brett Ashley, Andrew Long and Sara Mitchell. 2000. “Reevaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific threats, specific promises” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(5): 686-699.
- Berkemeier, Molly and Matthew Fuhrmann. 2018. “Reassessing the fulfillment of alliance commitments in war” *Research and Politics*.

- Due BEFORE class on Monday:** Canvas course readings quiz
- Due BEFORE class on Monday (or in Week 6 or 9):** Writing assignment 1

**Week 9 (Oct. 17-19)****Dangerous Dyads:**

- Klein, Goertz, and Diehl. 2006. “The New Rivalry Dataset:

**- Due BEFORE class on**

<b>Rivalries</b>	Procedures and Patterns." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 43(3) - Colaresi, Michael and William Thompson. 2002. "Hot Spots or Hot Hands? Serial Crisis Behavior, Escalating Risks, and Rivalry." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 64(4): 1175-1198.	<b>Monday:</b> Canvas readings quiz <b>- Due BEFORE class on Monday (or in Week 6 or 8):</b> Writing assignment 1
<b>Week 10 (Oct. 24-26)</b> <b>Dangerous Dyads:</b> <b>Domestic Factors</b>	- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. <i>Causes of War</i> . West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. (E-BOOK AVAILABLE VIA <a href="http://www.library.illinois.edu">www.library.illinois.edu</a> ). pg. 83-104; 117-120. - Mitchell, Sara and Brandon Prins. 2004. "Rivalry and Diversionary Uses of Force." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 48(6): 937-61.	<b>- Due BEFORE class on Monday:</b> Canvas course readings quiz
<b>Week 11 (Oct. 31-Nov. 2)</b> <b>Dangerous Dyads:</b> <b>Domestic Factors</b>	- No required readings – catch up week.	<b>- IN CLASS:</b> In Class Movie (time permitting): <i>Wag the Dog</i>
<b>Week 12 (Nov. 7-9)</b> <b>Peaceful Dyads:</b> <b>Democratic Peace</b>	- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. <i>Causes of War</i> . West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. (E-BOOK AVAILABLE VIA <a href="http://www.library.illinois.edu">www.library.illinois.edu</a> ). pg. 104-117. - Oneal and Russett. 1999. "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885-1992." <i>World Politics</i> 52(1).	<b>- Due BEFORE class on Monday:</b> Canvas course readings quiz
<b>Week 13 (Nov. 14-16)</b> <b>Peaceful Dyads: Economic Interdependence</b>	- Barbieri, Katherine. 1996. "Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Conflict?" <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 33(1). - Gartzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace" <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 51(1): 166-191.	<b>- Due BEFORE class on Monday:</b> Canvas course readings quiz

**Week 14 (Nov. 21-23)**  
**Fall Break, NO CLASS**

- No Readings, Fall Break

**Week 15 (Nov. 28-30)**  
**Peaceful Dyads: Nuclear Weapons**

- Asal, Victor and Kyle Beardsley. 2007. "Proliferation and International Crisis Behavior." *Journal of Peace Research* 44(2).
- Sechser & Furhmann. 2013. "Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail" *International Organization* 67(winter): 173-195

**Week 16 (Dec. 5-7)**  
**Exam Review/Exam**

- NO READINGS, Catch up and exam review

- **IN CLASS:** Exam review session Monday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. Come with questions!
- **IN CLASS:** Exam 2 Wednesday Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Week 17 (Exam Week)**

- NO READINGS, Final Paper Due

- **Due Monday Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59pm:** Writing assignment 2

