

**POL 342
Causes of War
Davidson College**

Spring 2006

TR, 11:30-12:45
Chambers 2068

Amy Oakes
Office: Chambers 2262
Phone: x2262 (o); 895-8195 (h)
Email: amoakes@davidson.edu
Office hours: MWF, 10:30-12:00
And by appointment

We should seek by all means in our power to avoid war, by analyzing possible causes, by trying to remove them, [and] by discussion in a spirit of collaboration and good will.
Neville Chamberlain, 1938

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Course Description: What causes war is arguably one of the most important questions in the field of international politics. This course analyzes the major theories about the causes of war, in relation to different levels of analysis (international, state, and individual). In each week of the course, a candidate theory is examined and then a specific war is analyzed in depth to test the validity of the theory. The course aims to discover not only which theories are most persuasive but also the circumstances in which each theory is or is not valid. The course will conclude with a discussion of the future of war, particularly the likelihood of conflict among the great powers.

Required Reading: You may purchase the following books from the Davidson College bookstore or try to find less expensive or used copies on the internet.

- * Richard Betts, ed., *Conflict After the Cold War* (New York: Pearson, 2005).
- * John Mueller, *Remnants of War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- * Robert Rotberg and Theodore Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- * Gordon Martel, *The Origins of the First World War*, 3rd Edition (New York: Longman, 2004).
- * R. J. Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War*, 2nd Edition (New York: Longman, 1998).

Course Requirements: You are expected to attend class regularly, complete the readings before the class for which they were assigned, and participate in class discussions. Graded assignments include: three reviews and a 15 page research paper. The reviews will include a take-home essay and an in-class exam and will assess your ability to think creatively and critically about course material. Study guides for the in-class exams and the take-home essay question will be distributed one week before each review. The take-home essays will be due at the start of the class during which the in-class portion of the review will be given.

Grading: Your participation in class discussions and performance on the reviews and research paper will determine your final grade. They are weighted as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Review #1: 20%
- Review #2: 20%
- Review #3: 20%
- Research paper: 30% (proposal: 1%; annotated bibliography: 4%; paper: 25%)

Numeric grades translate into letter grades in the following manner:

- 100-94: A
- 93-90: A-
- 89-87: B+
- 86-84: B
- 83-80: B-, etc.

Late Assignments: You are expected to take the reviews at the times indicated. Failure to take a review at the scheduled time will result in a zero for that review. If you have a legitimate reason to miss a review, you must notify me in advance so that arrangements can be made for a make-up. Late papers and take-home essays will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., the grade for a paper that is one day late will be lowered, for example, from an A- to a B+).

Academic Honesty: You are expected to adhere to the tenets of the Honor Code when completing course assignments; they will be strictly enforced. Accordingly, you are asked to pledge *all* work, including reviews and the research paper. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism (e.g., the rules for properly attributing cited material or how to paraphrase), please ask for clarification from me before handing in your paper.

Course Schedule

Part I: Theories and Conceptual Tools

January 10 and 12: Anarchy and the Problems of Cooperation

- Readings:
- * John Lewis Gaddis, "History, Science, and the Study of International Relations," Ngiare Woods, ed., *Explaining International Relations Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1996), ch. 2. Electronic reserve.
 - * Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
 - * Michael Doyle, "Liberalism in World Politics," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
 - * Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.

January 17: Levels of Analysis

- Readings:
- * J. David Singer, "The Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* (October 1961). Electronic reserve.
 - * Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 13-31. Electronic reserve.

January 19: Studying the Causes of War

- Readings:
- * John Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), chs 1-2. Electronic reserve.

Part II: Theories and Cases of War

January 24 and 26: The Balance of Power and War (WWII)

- Background:
- * R. J. Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War*, all.
- Readings:
- * Kenneth Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory, in *Origin and Prevention*.
 - * Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer, "Multi-polar Power Systems and International Stability," *World Politics* (1964). Electronic reserve.
- Case Readings:
- * Randall Schweller, "Tripolarity and the Second World War," *International Studies Quarterly* (1993). Electronic reserve.

January 31: Power Transitions and War (Peloponnesian War)

- Readings:
- * AFK Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp 13-28. Electronic reserve.
 - * Robert Gilpin, "Hegemonic War and International Change, in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
- Case Readings:
- * Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," in *Origin and Prevention*.

February 2 and 7: The Offense-Defense Balance and War (WWI)

- Background: * Gordon Martel, *The Origins of the First World War*, all.
- Readings: * Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
* Jack Levy, "The Offensive/ Defensive Balance of Military Technology and the Incidence of War," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
- Case Readings: * Scott Sagan, "1914 Revisited," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
* Charles Maier, "War Games: 1914-1919," in *Origin and Prevention*.

February 9 and 14: Economic Interdependence and War (WWI)

- Readings: * Richard Rosecrance, "Trade and Power," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
* Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Causes and Economic Effects," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
* Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (Free Press, 1988), ch. 2. Electronic reserve.
- Case Readings: * James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (Longman, 1992), ch. 6. Electronic reserve.

February 16: In-class review #1, take home essay due

February 21: Capitalism and War (WWI)

- Readings: * V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), excerpts. Electronic reserve.
- Case Readings: * James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (Longman, 1992), ch. 7. Electronic reserve.

February 23: Regime Type, Democratization, and War (Russian intervention in Chechnya)

- Readings: * Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," in *Conflict After the Cold War*.
* Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1997), pp. 22-43. Electronic reserve.
- Case Readings: * Michael McFaul, "Precarious Peace: Domestic Politics in the Making of Russian Foreign Policy," *International Security* (Winter 1997). Electronic reserve.

February 25-March 5: Spring Break, no classes

March 7: Regime Type, Democratization, and War, part II (paper proposal due)

March 9: Ethnic Conflict and War (The Breakup of Yugoslavia)

- Readings: * Michael E. Brown, ed., *International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), chs 1 and 17. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Ivo Daalder, "Fear and Loathing in the Former Yugoslavia," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996). Electronic reserve.

March 14: Diversionary War (The Falklands War)

Readings: * Jack Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies*. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Amy Oakes, "Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands." Electronic reserve.
* Jack Levy and Lily Vakili. "Diversionary Action of Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas Case," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (London: Routledge, 1992). Electronic reserve.

March 16: Revolution and War (French Revolutionary Wars)

Readings: * Stephen Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), excerpts. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Gunther Rothberg, "The Origins, Causes, and Extension of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon," in *Origin and Prevention*.

March 21: Bureaucracy and War (Cold War)

Readings: * Scott Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), ch. 1. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Scott Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), ch. 4. Electronic reserve.

March 23: In-class review #2, take home essay due

March 28: Resource Scarcity and War (WWII—Origins of the Pacific War)

Readings: * Nazli Choucri and Douglas North, *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence* (New York: WH Freeman, 1976), excerpts. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Scott Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," in *Origin and Prevention*.
* Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Free Press, 1992), excerpts. Electronic reserve.

March 30 and April 4: Misperception and War (Vietnam War) (bibliography due 3/31)

Readings: * Jack Levy, "Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems," *World Politics* (October 1983). Electronic reserve.
* Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception," in *Origin and Prevention*.
* Irving Janis, *Groupthink* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), ch. 8. Electronic reserve.

Case: * Yuen Fong Khong, "Seduction by Analogy in Vietnam: The Malaya and Korea Analogies," in Kenneth Thompson, ed., *Institutions and Leadership* (New York: University Press of America, 1987). Electronic reserve.

April 6: Gender and War (Persian Gulf War)

Readings: * J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), ch. 3. Electronic reserve.
* Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), excerpts. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Susan Jeffords, "Rape and the New World Order," *Cultural Critique* (Autumn 1991). Electronic reserve.

April 11: Personality and War or the "Bad Men" Theory of War (Iran-Iraq War)

Readings: * John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), ch. 10. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), ch. 8. Electronic reserve.

April 13: Human Nature and War (Iraq War)

Readings: * Stephen Pinker, *The Blank Slate: the Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Penguin, 2003), ch. 1, 17. Electronic reserve.
* Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), ch. 1. Electronic reserve.

Case Readings: * Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), ch. 8. Electronic reserve.

April 15-18: Easter Break, no classes

April 20 and 25: The Future of War

Readings: * John Mueller, *Remnants of War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), all.

April 27 - May 2: Optional classes (if needed)

* Paper due at 5:00 on May 2

May 4: Reading day

May 5-10: Exams

* Take-home essay due by last day of exams