

IRG 378: Capstone Research in International Relations and Global Studies

Topic: Twenty-first Century Conflict

Fall 2012

#39990

International Relations and Global Studies (IRG) major
The University of Texas at Austin

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Course location: SZB 278
Course time: T 3:30 – 6:30
Office hours: T, Th 9:00 – 11:00
(and by appointment)

Course concept

As an academic field of inquiry, international security tends to focus on the ability of states to remain secure in the face of threats to their internal and external sovereignty. Increasingly, however, the study of security has broadened to include not merely new actors, but also new conceptions of what it means to be 'secure.' While conflict among and within states (and increasingly non-state actors) is a major concern, the idea that insecurity can exist but still stop short of conflict has become increasingly accepted among both scholars and practitioners.

Moreover, conflict and security have evolved since the end of the Cold War. While possible, the idea of a superpower-on-superpower strategic conflict on the scale of World War II seems increasingly unlikely. Rather, conflicts appear to occur now based much more on localized and transient grievances, or in certain cases where a major power feels the need to act unilaterally to accomplish some set of strategic aims.

This capstone course will treat all forms of conflict as our object of study, and will ask the following question: what types of conflict are we likely to see in the twenty-first century, and what patterns might we discern from these conflicts? No longer confined to interstate war, conflict since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union has ranged from superpower engaged in major conflict among states to civil war and intrastate violence. Moreover, states no longer hold the monopoly of violence. Indeed, in the last 15 years conflict has entered into areas previously thought unimaginable, such as in cyberspace.

Course objectives:

During the course of this semester, students will be exposed to a wide range of thinking on the nature of conflict after the Cold War. Beginning with a specific focus on the changing "American way of war" since 9/11, the course moves to a broader interpretation of conflict since the end of the superpower confrontation that characterized the Cold War. The course ends with a reflection on the United Nations as the arbiter of international security, its successes and failings, and its changing role in the decades since the end of the Cold War.

Readings:

There is no required textbook for this course. Rather, each week has a series of readings assigned that are to be read before the class meets on Tuesday. Befitting a once-a-week capstone course, the readings are more extensive but still manageable. The average reading load per week is ~100 pages.

Recommended Reading:

- Richard K. Betts, *Conflict after the Cold War* (4th Edition). Prentice Hall, 2012.

Assignments and grading

Your course grade will consist of a paper grade and a discussion/participation grade. A breakdown of the requirements and expectations for each category is below.

Paper: 80%

As this class is a capstone course, the bulk of the grade for the course will consist of a capstone original research paper. Fulfillment of this writing requirement will entail completing a paper of approximately 7,500-8,000 words (approximately 20-25 pages double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font). Such a paper should be a thorough treatment of the topic chosen, including a clear thesis statement, logical consistency in the arguments used to show the validity of the thesis, and a clear and concise conclusion that effectively summarizes your argument. It should be appropriately documented with references and citations, and should stand on its own as an individual work of scholarship.

Soon after the beginning of the semester, I will meet with each of you individually to discuss your choice of paper topic and your approach chosen to address it. The paper will comprise the majority of the total grade for the course, but attendance and a presentation of your research count for grades as well.

The paper is divided into the following sections:

- a) Research proposal: Worth 10% of overall grade
- b) Abstract, outline, and list of references: Worth 10% of overall grade.
- c) First draft of paper: Worth 20% of overall grade.
- d) Oral presentation to the group: Worth 20% of overall grade
- e) Final draft of paper: Worth 20% of overall grade.

Discussion Leading / Participation / Discussion Questions: 20%

Class discussion in a capstone seminar is more than expected; it is a given. Everyone has his or her own style of discussion, and I do not expect to turn those who prefer not to speak often in class into debate champions. Nevertheless, I do expect that each of you will at some point in the semester lead a course discussion on the topic of your choosing. You will have your classmates' questions to serve as a point of departure (see below), which you may use as you wish. There will be a sign-up sheet distributed at the first and second class sessions for you to

sign up to lead a discussion. The discussion leadership and general course participation will comprise 10% of your course grade.

Because this is a capstone course, it is expected that you will have already absorbed the importance of class attendance. I strongly encourage you to attend every class and be prepared for lively and stimulating discussion. To that end, I will require that each of you prepare two discussion questions for the upcoming class to submit to the discussion leader. These should be drawn from the readings and should reflect any questions, comments, or cries of outrage you may have regarding the arguments set forth by the authors. These discussion questions will not be graded individually, but together will count for 10% of your course grade. They most definitely will help you get the most from the class. I will prepare the first set of discussion questions as a template for future assignments.

Important Information

Plagiarism / academic misconduct:

Don't do it. Minimum penalties for cheating are zeros on quizzes or exams where the cheating takes place, and a grade of F on a paper that has been plagiarized. Questions about what constitutes academic misconduct should be brought to my attention.

Undergraduate Writing Center:

Because the bulk of the work in this course revolves around researching and writing a significant paper, the instructor strongly encourages all those enrolled to make use of the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>). The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant's advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive an "F" in the course and be remanded to the appropriate University of Texas authorities for disciplinary action. For more information, view Student Judicial Services at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Religious Holidays:

According to UT-Austin policy, students must notify the instructor of an impending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If a student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the student will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Student Privacy:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that student privacy be preserved. Thus the posting of grades, even by the last four digits of the social security number, is forbidden. All communication will remain between the instructor and the student, and the instructor will not be able to share details of the student's performance with parents, spouses, or any others.

Documented Disability Statement:

The University of Texas will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Emergency Evacuation Policy:

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Course calendar

4 September

Topic:

- Theorizing and Operationalizing the Future of Conflict

Readings:

- Gray, Colin (2009). "The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War," *Parameters* 38:4 (Winter), pp. 14-26
- Department of Defense. 2012. [Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense (January).
- Mueller, John. 2009. "War Has Almost Ceased to Exist: An Assessment." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 124, no. 2 (summer): 297–321.
- Sarkees, Meredith Reid. n.d. "[The COW Typology of War: Defining and Categorizing Wars](#)." Correlates of War Data Project.
- Biddle, Stephen. 2003. "Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare." *Foreign Affairs* ,vol. 82, no. 2 (March/April): 31–46.
- *Economist*. 2011. "The Lessons of Libya," vol. 398, no. 8734 (May 21): 67–8. Accessed [here](#) on 21 February 2012.

11 September

Topic:

- The American and European Ways of War Since 9/11: COIN and Stability Operations

Readings:

- US Army/Marine Corps Field Manual FM 3-24 "[Counterinsurgency](#)"
- US Army/Marine Corps Field Manual FM 3-07 "[Stability Operations](#)"
- John Nagl, "[The Age of Unsatisfying Wars](#)," *New York Times*, 6 June 2012

18 September

Topic:

- The American and European Ways of War Since 9/11: COIN and Stability Operations (continued)

Readings:

- Counterinsurgency critiques:
 - Gian Gentile. "[A Strategy of Tactics: Population-Centric COIN and the Army](#)." *Parameters* (Autumn 2009), pp. 5-17.

- Celeste Ward Gventer, "[Counterinsurgency: A Debate Far From Over](#)," *Shadow Government* (blog), 15 June 2012.
- Elisabeth Bumiller, "[West Point is Divided on a War Doctrine's Fate](#)," *New York Times*, 27 May 2012.

25 September

Topic:

- Resource Wars: Is Water the New Oil?

Readings:

- Butler, Christopher K. 2012. "[African Range Wars: Climate, Conflict and Property Rights](#)," *Journal of Peace Research* 49:1 (January 2012), pp. 23-34
- Kalbhenn, Anna. 2011. "[Liberal peace and shared resources – A fair-weather phenomenon?](#)" *Journal of Peace Research* 48:6 (November 2011), pp. 715-735.
- Tir, Jaroslav and John T. Ackerman. 2009 "[Politics of Formalized River Cooperation](#)," *Journal of Peace Research* 46 (2009), pp. 623-640

Requirements:

- Paper proposals due today

2 October

Topic:

- The Evolution of Terrorism

Readings:

- Martha Crenshaw, "[The Causes of Terrorism](#)," *World Politics* 13:4 (July 1981), pp 379-399.
- Crenshaw, Martha 2007. "[Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay](#)," *Security Studies* 16:1, pp. 133-162)
- Arie W. Kruglanski, Martha Crenshaw, Jerrold M. Post and Jeff Victoroff (2007) "[What Should This Fight be Called? Metaphors of Counterterrorism and Their Implications](#)" *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 8:3 (December 2007), pp. 97-133

9 October

Topic:

- Cyber Warfare

Readings:

- Zetter, Kim. 2011. How Digital Detectives Deciphered Stuxnet, the Most Menacing Malware in History. □ Wired, July 11.
- United States Department of the Army. 2010. Cyberspace Operations Concept Capability Plan: 2016–2028 (February 22).
- Libicki, Martin C. 2011. —Cyberwar as a Confidence Game.□ Strategic Studies Quarterly, vol. 5, no. 1 (spring): 132–46.
- MacDonald, Bruce W. 2008. China, Space Weapons, and U.S. Security, Council Special Report No. 38. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

16 October

Topic:

- Library instruction
 - Students will report to PCH for meeting with Library research staff

23 October

Topic:

- Individual research week / meetings with instructor

30 October

Topic:

- Individual research week / meetings with instructor

6 November

Topic:

- Oral presentations (Group I)

13 November

Topic:

- Oral presentations (Group II)

20 November

Topic:

- Oral presentations (Group III)

27 November

Topic:

- Oral presentations (Group IV)

4 December

Topic:

- Course wrap-up

Requirements:

- Final papers due today