

Gov. 360N
Spring, 2010
Wagner

BAT 3.134
MW 2-3:00, F 10:30-11:30
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THE CAUSES OF WAR

Conflicts among states sometimes lead to war, but usually do not. This course will focus on how to explain the occurrence of wars. It will investigate both the conditions leading to the initiation of wars, and those leading to their termination. Included under the latter heading will be a discussion of peace negotiations.

The following books have been ordered by the book stores for purchase by students in the course:

Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*

Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War*

Fred Iklé, *Every War Must End*

Additional readings will be available on the course website on the university's Blackboard system, at <http://courses.utexas.edu>.

Each week, students will be given a reading assignment in these materials, and a brief essay to write on a subject related to the reading. Essays should be approximately two double-spaced typewritten or word-processed pages in length, and will be due one week later. These essays will be graded, and returned a week later with comments. Grades on these essays will constitute one half a student's grade for the course. ***Students are allowed to drop without question three of these essay grades. Beyond that number, late essays will not be accepted without special permission, and will be given an F in averaging the grades.*** The other half of the grade will be determined by a final examination. (Final examinations are scheduled by the Registrar. Up-to-date information about the final examination for this class can be found at <http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/102/finals/index.html>. It is currently scheduled for May 14, 7-10 PM.)

Conversion of these grade averages into a final course grade may be influenced by class attendance. ***Students are expected to attend class.*** While occasional absences are unavoidable, a pattern of poor class attendance will count against a student in determining the overall grade for the course unless the absences have been excused by the instructor.

Essay assignments will be handed out each week, and will also be available on the course website. We will begin by assuming that wars are the product of choices made by the leaders of states, and ask how one might explain why anyone would ever choose to fight a war. We will then examine how the answer to that question might be affected by nuclear weapons and other so-called weapons of mass destruction. After looking at how to explain why wars begin, we will think about how to explain why they end. The course will conclude by examining what the answers to those questions imply about broader controversies about international politics, including the effect of alliances and the balance of power and the role of international institutions.