



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL TEXAS

**POLI 4316:  
Conflict Studies**  
Section 110 (Fall 2017)  
6 PM – 9 PM Wed  
Founder's Hall 312



**Dr. Jeffrey Dixon**

Office: Founder's Hall 217A

Email: [JeffreyDixon@tamuct.edu](mailto:JeffreyDixon@tamuct.edu)

Phone: (254) 501-5871 (email preferred)

Office Hours: 4:45-5:45 Mon-Thurs

### **Catalog Description**

A study of the causes of international and civil conflict, historical changes in the nature of war, and predictions of future armed conflicts.

### **Course Overview and Learning Objectives**

Conflict Studies is intended to teach students about the causes and characteristics of armed conflict, with a particular focus on war – world wars, dyadic wars, and civil wars. This course is primarily structured as a seminar, not a lecture course; it is fundamentally a joint exploration of the topic by the instructor(s) and the students. The reading load is quite substantial, and the entire course is structured around discussion, criticism, and integration of the readings. Therefore, the bulk of your grade will depend on keeping up with this relatively heavy load.

We will attempt to solve four puzzles of war through a rigorous process of reading, reflection, and discussion.

1. How can we predict armed conflict and war? That is, where are disputes likely and which disputes are most likely to escalate to wars (both civil and interstate)?
2. What determines how wars are fought? In particular, when do states honor the laws of war, what roles do battles play in the war process, and when do wars expand in time (duration) and space (by drawing in more countries)?
3. How do wars end? What are the necessary conditions for a negotiated settlement and the factors that affect the probability of a negotiated settlement?
4. What is Just War Theory? Is it valid? If not, what does determine the ethics of war? Be prepared to apply your standard (Just War Theory or one of its competitors like realism or pacifism) to the initiation, process, and termination of a given or hypothetical war.

Learning Outcomes 1-4: Students should be able to craft a well-written essay with a clear thesis and supporting evidence that answers each of the above questions. (To be achieved through completing daily work, class participation and note-taking, and studying for the final exam – which contains two randomly-selected questions from this list of four).

This course meets face-to-face, with supplemental materials made available online through the A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

### Required Readings

The following three books are required and available for purchase at the Warrior Bookstore. Of course, you may purchase these books from any seller, including online booksellers.

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	YEAR/ED	PUBLISHER
What Do We Know About War?	John Vasquez (ed)	9781442212640	2012 / 2nd	Rowman & Littlefield
Order Within Anarchy	James Morrow	9781107626775	2014	Cambridge University Press
The Morality of War	Brian Orend	9781554810956	2013 / 2nd	Broadview Press

The other required readings are available for download or online viewing on Canvas. It is recommended that students either bring electronic copies of the readings to class on a tablet/laptop or print them (presumably in the library) so they have a hard copy when we discuss them in class.

### Technology Requirements and Support

This course will use the Texas A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system for course readings, the Academic Integrity Exercise, and PowerPoint slides. Logon to Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT email address)

Password: Your MyCT password

*Technology Support:*

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu)

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

*Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.*

For issues with **Canvas**, select “chat with Canvas support,” submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the “Help” link.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

### Grading (90/80/70/60, rounded to the nearest percentile)

*Academic Integrity Exercise:* This consists of watching a brief lecture on Canvas, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. It takes about half an hour. Once you successfully complete this exercise, you will no longer need to do so in future political science courses. If you have successfully completed this exercise in another one of my courses, then you need not complete it again to get the credit.

**\*\*\*Completing the Academic Integrity Exercise is a prerequisite to passing this course. It must be completed before the due date in the course calendar.\*\*\***

**Rubric: You will automatically fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity exercise by the due date.**

*Exam (35%).* There will be a comprehensive final exam. The exam will consist of two questions, randomly drawn from the four questions on page one of the syllabus. The questions may be reworded to make them more precise or in order to take into account material we have discussed in class.

- General advice
  - It is generally best to write an outline first, then write your answer. For each major point on your outline, you should have support (a finding or example from the course materials).
  - You can write an annotated outline for each question as we encounter it in the course, saving yourself considerable time and effort reviewing for the final exam.
- The exam is both open-notes and open-book. You are free to use class handouts, your notes, and all of the assigned readings. You are **not** permitted to use other resources (such as online material) during the exam.
- Exam grading rubric. Grading is primarily based upon your demonstrated knowledge of the material and ability to apply it to a new situation, rather than spelling/grammar issues. Having said this, atrocious grammar can make it impossible for the reader to understand your argument.

#### **POLI 4316 Final Exam Grading Rubric**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Thesis (20%)</b>	<b>Argument Structure (30%)</b>	<b>Evidence (50%)</b>
A	Answers the question and drives the rest of the essay	The thesis is built up from arguments about each element of the question, each with its own support	Each element of the argument is supported by evidence from the course. In general, consistent statistical findings are better evidence than isolated examples, where such evidence is available. No major source of evidence is ignored (including counter-evidence, which is addressed and shown to be less compelling or more flawed than the evidence supporting the thesis).

Grade	Thesis (20%)	Argument Structure (30%)	Evidence (50%)
B	Answers the question, but most of the paper ignores it	Some elements of the thesis do not correspond to sections of the answer, or vice versa	Each element of the argument is supported by evidence from the course, but major sources of evidence are ignored. OR The evidence used is insufficient to support one or more of the claims in the paper. OR Much of the support consists of direct quotes or naked claims, unsupported by research.
C	Does not match up with every element of the question	The essay is a set of arguments that proceed without logical order	The evidence, when taken as a whole, fails to support the paper's thesis, with necessary steps in the argument being assumed instead of demonstrated. Much relevant evidence is omitted and irrelevant evidence may be present. References to evidence from the course lack specificity.
D	Does not match up with most elements of the question	Most of the essay is devoid of actual argument, instead following a stream-of-consciousness or "data dump" strategy	At least one major element of the essay's argument has substantial evidence from the course that supports it. However, other references are generally vague, irrelevant, or refuted by counter-evidence from other studies.
F	None	The essay is devoid of structure	Little if any evidence from the course is used in the answer. It fails to demonstrate a grasp of what the authors found.

*Participation and Attendance (32.5%).* A substantial portion of your grade is determined by your in-class participation. While there may be structured exercises from time to time, the bulk of the participation grade is determined by whether you discuss the assigned readings for the day. I am looking for comments and questions that clarify, question, or challenge the theories offered by the authors. Feel free to challenge my statements as well.

- Daily grades:
  - You will receive 40 points for attending a class and doing little else.
  - You will receive 80 points for attending and making a reasonable comment (or participating in an in-class exercise when these are offered).
  - You will receive 120 points for attending and making a particularly insightful observation or several reasonable comments.
  - On days when a lecture or structured exercise takes up about half of the class period, only half the participation is required. On days where these things take up the entire class period, only attendance (and active participation in any group work) is required. In either case, the maximum daily participation score will be 100 points.
  - If you are late for class without providing me with a legitimate excuse that session, participation credit will be deducted in proportion to your lateness (10% for each 15 minutes), rounding up to the next 10%.

- Overall grade:
  - You are expected to average 100 points per class period, except the first and last days of class.
  - The maximum participation grade can be as high as 120% (120 average). This is a significant extra-credit opportunity.
- Tip: If you have trouble thinking of things to say in class (a common problem for shy students), write down discussion questions or objections while you are reading the material at home. Then you don't have to worry about "blanking" in class because you can simply read off a question from your notes.

*Weekly Assignments (32.5%).* Students are required to hand in one of the following at the beginning of each class session. None of them are required to be typed.

- A. The most common choice: A paragraph summarizing each assigned reading (each chapter or article, not each author). These will be graded for accuracy and detail, rather than argument construction (since they are purely descriptive). Each should be no fewer than 3 and no more than 7 sentences.
  - a. Each summary is weighted equally in the day's homework grade
  - b. If a summary contains the author's (not your own) thesis and a description of the evidence offered by the author, then it will be considered complete. Incomplete summaries are worth half-credit, at most.
  - c. Spelling or grammar errors will reduce the credit which you would otherwise receive by 1% each, up to a maximum of 20%.
- B. To better train you for the exam: A 300-800 word memo that uses the assigned readings to answer part or all of one of the four questions on the first page of the syllabus. (Be sure to identify the part / question being addressed by the essay). The rubric for this essay is the exam rubric, but
  1. The "evidence" portion of the grade is based on having something relevant from each assigned reading or film (each chapter or essay, not each author). Each reading is weighted equally (so offering evidence from only one of four assigned readings provides an evidence grade of 25%).
  2. Spelling or grammar errors will reduce the credit which you would otherwise receive by 2% each, up to a maximum of 20%.

*Please note that an A on the exam requires much more evidence than an A on a weekly assignment, even if the question posed is identical.*

- B. The most educational but most time-consuming option: A copy of your notes from the readings at the beginning of each class session. This must be a copy so that you can continue to use and annotate your notes during our discussion.
  1. Grading:
    - a. If you turn in notes for some readings but not others, your maximum credit will be equal to the proportion of the readings for which you have notes, as estimated by the professor.
    - b. As for the notes you turn in, they should contain three elements. They are listed in order from most to least important. The first will get you up

to 75% (depending on level of detail, given the reading); both the first and second will get you 90%; all three will get you 100%.

- i. An outline or similar indented format, with main points (perhaps 4-10 words each) followed by the supporting points or statistical findings by the author (same length each)
  - ii. Authors and page numbers and/or table numbers for each piece of evidence, so you can access it easily later (e.g. in class discussion or on the exam).
  - iii. Questions you have while you read (one per chapter/reading). These need to be distinguished from the surrounding notes somehow, so that I can identify them. Leave a line or two of space so you can write in an answer later.
2. Abbreviations and symbols are acceptable but should be easy to decipher. Will you remember whether “comp.” means comprehensive, comprehend, or composition?
  3. Spelling is irrelevant, but points should contain a **subject** and **verb** (they need not be grammatically-correct sentences, but must express a complete thought). In other words, they should be claims, not merely topic words.
  4. Examples of incomplete points and better alternatives:

Example of poor note-taking	A better alternative
Territorial wars	Territorial disputes more likely than policy/regime to → war ( <i>Original contains no verb</i> )
International law constrains	International law constrains when: [List of conditions that make it work] ( <i>Original is actually incorrect as written, especially when we have a whole book on <u>when</u> international law constrains – and does <u>not</u> constrain – behavior during war</i> ).
“Intervenor’s Dilemma”	Intervention in civil wars = dilemma b/w duration and compromise ( <i>Original is too vague to help you on an exam, but the second contains enough to remember what the phrase “Intervenor’s Dilemma” means</i> )

#### (Optional) Book Critique

- Book Critique (Up to 10% extra credit). The book critique allows you to examine one argument in depth, whereas the rest of the course shows you the breadth of arguments about war. Pick any book from the Appendix to this syllabus. All are available through the TAMUCT library (note that many are ebooks, available electronically but not physically). Get it, read it, and critique its argument using the following system.
  - These critiques should be well-written, clearly argued essays of between 1000 and 1500 words in length. They should contain an introduction that clearly identifies the book being reviewed, the thesis of its author, and your academic response to the book's argument (a thesis of your own). This should be followed by two elements, of roughly equal importance to the final grade:

- Description: Your book critique should describe the basic argument of the book, beginning with the author's thesis and proceeding through the major arguments of the text (if you outline the book, this would be a step-by-step march through the major points). It should also describe the nature, amount, and sources of evidence used by the author to evaluate or defend his/her thesis.
- Evaluation: Your book critique should critically examine the author's argument for omissions or flaws (you must find some - and not merely stylistic ones), but it should also identify strong elements of the argument (particularly anything not already established by the course readings). This is not a stylistic review; you are looking at the overall argument rather than the prose style of the author. Things to consider:
  - Macro-level argument: Are there flaws in the author's reasoning? Are all logical connections clearly explained and supported? How well does the author address potential counter-arguments? Does he or she seem to avoid answering difficult questions that would challenge the book's thesis?
  - Micro-level argument: Is the book's argument adequately supported by its evidence? Is the evidence impressionistic and anecdotal? How well does the author handle conflicting evidence? Does he or she ignore it altogether? Does the author focus too narrowly on a single side of the issue under discussion?
- Rubric. Begin with full credit and then:
  - Look for the student's thesis on the first page. If it cannot be found, deduct 20% points. If it exists but fails to take the form of a clear statement about the validity of the book's thesis, then deduct 10% instead.
  - Look for the book's thesis on the first page. If it cannot be found, deduct 10% points. If it is present but incorrect, deduct credit in proportion to how distant from the book's actual thesis it is.
  - Evaluate the description, which is worth half of the remaining credit.
    - Half of the description credit is the degree to which the student has provided a full description of the author's argument (including any hypotheses or rules proposed by the author)
    - The other half is whether the student has accurately described the author's evidence. Type (qualitative vs. quantitative, anecdotal or systematic, data or logic, etc), amount (frequency of examples, number of reasons, or number of observations), and sources (how the evidence was gathered, which authors were cited for evidence, archival research vs. press accounts, etc) are each worth one third of this credit.
  - Evaluate the evaluation, which is worth the other half of the remaining credit.

- Half of this is based on the flaws the student identified. Are they real or merely stylistic? Does the student accurately assess their importance to the book's argument(s)? Most of all, does the student provide (a) evidence of the flaw and (b) reasoning connecting the flaw or omission to the book's thesis or one of its hypotheses/rules?
  - The other half is based upon the student's ability to describe the actual contributions made to the study of war by the author. "None" is a legitimate answer, but shifts all of the credit for this section onto the flaws or omissions described by the student. The more concrete the student can be about what the book reveals that we (and he/she) did not previously know about war, the better.
- Deduct 1% of the remaining credit for each spelling/grammar error, up to a maximum of 20%. (This makes it almost impossible for a poorly-written paper to receive higher than a C).

### Overall Course Rubric for POLI 4316

Item	Points	Percent of Grade
Academic Integrity Exercise (Required to pass the course)	0 (but required to pass the course)	0%*
Final Exam	1400 Points (700 per question)	35%
Participation	1300 Points (100 per class, excluding the first and last sessions)	32.5%
Daily Assignments	1300 Points (evenly divided between the 13 days for which assignments are due)	32.5%
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>4000 Points</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Book Critique (Optional)</i>	<i>Up to 400 points</i>	<i>Up to +10%</i>
<i>3580+ = A    3180-3579 = B    2780-3179 = C    2380-2779 = D    2389 or lower = F</i>		

### Course Policies

#### *Late/Incomplete Policies for POLI 4316*

- There will be no incompletes in this class, barring actual hospitalization or unforeseen deployment after the withdrawal deadline has passed.
- Late homework will receive zero credit. The point of the Weekly exercises is to prepare you for class discussion. Naturally, that objective cannot be fulfilled if you only prepare them after such discussion has occurred.

### *Absences and Make-Up Work*

- Attendance is required. If absent, let the instructor know in advance if possible and ASAP if some emergency arises at the last minute. Failure to do so will mean an unexcused absence (no participation or homework credit for the day).
- Make-up work is required for any **excused** absence after the first. It makes up for the inability of the student to participate in the class. I will generally have you write an additional 400-600 word “participation exercise” on some topic(s) or question(s) we discussed in class. *Note that this is in addition to completing the homework for the missed session – the two are graded separately.* **When you return from a second or subsequent excused absence, be sure to request the make-up work. It is your duty to ask, not the instructor’s duty to remind you.** Make-up work is due one week after it is assigned, or by the last day of the course – whichever is **sooner**.

*Regrade Policy:* It is possible for me to make a mistake when grading. For example, if there are 15 of you and 13 homework assignments each, that makes 195 assignments. So if I’m 99% accurate, that implies two mistakes somewhere. So if you think that I graded part or all of an assignment incorrectly, you have one week to return it to me for regrading against the rubric or key. You may request that all or only part of the assignment be regraded. I take no offense at this. The same policy applies to the final exam; you have one week from when grades are posted to request a regrade of one or both questions. As for participation, I make the daily participation grades available both during the class break and after class, so if you need to remind me of something you said that didn’t receive credit, do so that night as I probably won’t remember who said what the next week.

### **Academic Integrity**

*University Code of Academic Honesty:* Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student’s academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student’s work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university’s Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university’s standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Specific guidelines for this course, which supplement and do not replace University policy:

- *Violations:* There are plenty of ways to cheat listed by the Student Handbook. Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
  - Copying another student's homework. I encourage study groups, but copying must be avoided. Discuss the readings as long as you wish, but don't "share" the contents of your memos before they are due. You may not "jointly" complete any of the homework exercises in this course unless otherwise indicated on the assignment; these are to be completed by yourself alone. If you provide another student with a copy of your homework and they copy it, both you and the copier will be deemed to have violated the policy.
  - Using direct quotes without quotation marks. Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn't create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase; instead, it transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the expression of the cited source's ideas in your own words.
  - Paraphrasing another person's words without citing the source
- *Penalties:*
  - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of zero for the work or a deduction of 20% (two letter grades) from your course grade, whichever is **greater**. The infraction will be reported to the TAMUCT administration, with a recommendation for probation in the case of deliberate violation or no further action in the case of clearly inadvertent violation.
  - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** recommendation for expulsion to the TAMUCT administration.

## Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form, found through the [Registrar's web page](#):

<https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/business-office/droppolicy.php>

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

## Student Resources

- **911 Cellular:** Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas
  - 911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.
  - Connect at 911Cellular [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.
- **Library Services:** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.
  - Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.
  - Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>
- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
  - For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion webpage: <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion/>
  - TAMUCT supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's

Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit

<https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php> Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines, please visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>

- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.
  - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at [k.wood@tamuct.edu](mailto:k.wood@tamuct.edu)
  - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University – Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-4pm Monday-Thursday during the Summer semester (June 5, 2017 to July 27, 2017). Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help! If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu)

## Amendments

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing.

## **Instructor's Personal Statement (not required reading, but may be of interest)**

I strive to provide my students with a liberal arts education. Such an education is intended to expand human potential by emphasizing critical thinking skills, strong writing and oral communication skills, and perceptive responses to others' arguments. These goals enable students to become lifelong learners, community members, and ultimately to lead rewarding lives. Therefore, under the broad rubric of a liberal arts approach to teaching, I emphasize four objectives in my teaching: development of critical thinking skills, advancement of writing and speaking skills, moral development, and mastery of what in my judgment constitutes the "core" of the area under study. These goals determine how I construct course syllabi, which materials I use, and how I manage the classroom.

### *Critical Thinking Skills*

Students should learn to think critically about the material in the course (primarily readings, but also handouts, lectures and the occasional film). This is a difficult skill to learn, but one that pays dividends in every other class and in the outside world. After all, we want educated and critical citizens. In this course, I sometimes assign my own work, as this is my research area. Note that I expect students to bring the same critical focus to my own work as they do to those of other authors.

I divide critical thinking skills into three components. First, students must be perceptive readers and listeners. In nearly all courses, there are either sections of the readings, lectures, or class handouts which we discuss and debate, nearly line by line. The point of these exercises is to draw students' attention to the multiple ways in which one might read a phrase or argument. Even where the course readings consist largely of a standard textbook, I try to model this skill in class discussions by initially responding to many questions with "Are you asking X, Y, or Z?" This isn't evasion or stalling – rather, understanding the nuances of an argument is a prerequisite to analyzing it.

Second, students should have the ability to challenge and dissect arguments made by the course materials, fellow students, or myself. There are some students who are looking for "the way it is" to be handed to them from on high. I aim to challenge those students by presenting concrete, unsolved puzzles, and then presenting a number of possible solutions, requiring them to compare the evidence for each. Since the questions I ask in class are usually open questions within the discipline of political science, there are no easy answers. When I open a class discussion, gage with students doing discussion exercises, or grade homework assignments, I play "devil's advocate" for each student or group, taking a different position as I interact with each student. It is therefore disappointing when students simply parrot back what they believe the professor wants to hear. Their own thoughts count.

Just as important as the ability to analyze an argument is the ability to construct and defend one, choosing one among several imperfect explanations as the "best bet" for explaining a phenomenon or the superior normative framework. There are some students who are very good at critiquing existing explanations, but who then use this skill as an excuse to avoid argument altogether: "None of these explanations are perfect, so it's all just a matter of opinion." I push students to weigh the strengths and flaws of each competing explanation and identify the one which is most likely to be correct. For empirical questions, I require them to devise some way in which their preferred explanation could be tested. For normative

questions, I require them to apply their framework to difficult moral questions. In sum, I try to combine the focus on argument dissection that one finds in academic debate with the focus on puzzle-solving that one finds in science and philosophy.

### *Writing Skills and Quantitative Reasoning*

As a former debater and debate coach, I appreciate the importance of being able to write and speak clearly. Of course, one of the most important ways to accomplish this is by assigning writing (and, in some courses, speaking) activities that require effective argument. In order to help students proofread their work, I set up a page on the Canvas course site illustrating the most common student grammatical errors: word mix-ups, sentence fragments, agreement of subject and verb, and improper comma or apostrophe usage. I am then able to simply write the number of the error next to it on the page so that the student can look up the error and the solution. This technique allows me to focus my comments on the thesis, structure, and style of students' essays.

Political science is indeed a social science, and that means that sometimes we use numbers. Quantitative reasoning is being able to think critically about and explain these numbers. You may or may not be able to do the math yourself, but I seek to teach you to explain what happens in the math to others. Having even the most rudimentary ability to interpret statistics and equations puts you a step ahead of many humanities and even some social science students. Moreover, being a thoughtful participant in politics means being able to learn from quantitative evidence and detect the misuse of the same. In this course, we will learn to interpret tables of statistics to double-check the claims being made by the authors of quantitative studies.

### *Moral Development*

One goal of a liberal arts education is to render students more capable of self-reflection and positive development. Moral education is essential to this process, yet may be the most difficult task facing an educator. Students must first be convinced that the ethical life is the best life. Fortunately, most students already have a set of values, albeit sometimes under-examined and often inconsistent ones. The task of the professor is to challenge their moral beliefs in such a manner that students have to choose between competing values and become more consistent in their moral judgments. It is not the task of the professor to ensure that students adhere to a particular value system or ideology; instead, the ideal professor will challenge students of any ideology and make them more consistent in their judgments.

For this to be possible, students need to recognize their own underlying assumptions (often their religious faith, combined with a cynical view of human behavior) that make a system of values possible. They must then be able to defend the connections between those assumptions and their value choices. In short, political science needs to be seen as part of a broader liberal arts curriculum which prepares students to do justice (as students understand it) in the world. Otherwise, we risk training sophists who simply use their skills to manipulate others.

### *Subject Mastery*

Finally, each class I teach has a certain "core" of material I expect students to master. This material is the necessary data for intelligent discussion of the questions posed by the course.

Mastery is different than memorization; it means being able to apply the material to an unanticipated question or situation. Accordingly, units are structured around great unanswered questions or moral dilemmas. The nature of these questions determines the type of class presentation. In this class, I typically tackle a puzzle using the seminar format so that we can understand the meaning and limitations of the work we read. The final exam is primarily based on the readings we discuss, and serves as an incentive to describe, analyze and synthesize the course materials.

## Course Schedule – Check Canvas for any Updates or Announcements

Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings
Aug 30	Introduction	➤ None
Sept 6	Causes of War: Origins and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cashman, "The Individual Level of Analysis: Human Aggression" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Cioffi-Revilla, "Ancient Warfare: Origins and Systems" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Rasler and Thompson, "War-making and State-making" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Pinker, Excerpts from <u>The Better Angels of Our Nature</u> (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ <b>Academic Integrity Exercise Due</b></li> </ul>
Sept 13	Causes of War: The Structure of the International System of Territorial States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Levy and Thompson, "System-Level Theories" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Blainey, "The Mystery of Wide Wars" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Kang, "Alliances: Path to Peace or Path to War?" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Geller, "Nuclear Weapons and War" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Hensel, "Territory: Geography, Contentious Issues, and World Politics" (Vasquez)</li> </ul>
Sept 20	Causes of War: Interstate vs. Civil Wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Valeriano, "Becoming Rivals" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Diehl and Goertz, "The Rivalry Process" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Valeriano, "Arms Races: A Cause or Symptom?" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Prins, "Interventions/Uses of Force Short of War" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Dixon, "What Causes Civil Wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Sept 27	Inhibitors of War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oneal and Russett, "The Kantian Peace" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Mitchell, "Norms and the Democratic Peace" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Mousseau, "A Market Capitalist or a Democratic Peace?" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Gibling, "The Implications of a Territorial Peace" (Vasquez)</li> </ul>
Oct 4	The Process of War: Theories of Law and Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Downes, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Morrow, <u>Order within Anarchy</u>, Chapters 1-3</li> </ul>
Oct 11	The Process of War: Evidence on Law and Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Morrow, <u>Order within Anarchy</u>, Chapters 4-8</li> </ul>
Oct 18	The Process of War: Battles and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lehmann and Zhukov, "Until the Bitter End? The Diffusion of Surrender Across Battles" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Pillar, "The Diplomatic Response to Military Activity" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Weisiger, "Learning from the Battlefield: Information, Domestic Politics, and Interstate War Duration" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Greig, "Rebels at the Gates: Civil War Battle Locations, Movement, and Openings for Diplomacy"</li> </ul>
Oct 25	War Termination: Theories and Correlates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dixon, "General Theories of War Termination" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Wittman, "How a War Ends: A Rational Choice Model" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Dixon, "Emerging Consensus" (Canvas)</li> </ul>

Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings
Nov 1	War Termination: Bargaining and Preventing Recurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Goemans, "War Termination" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Fortna, Excerpts from <u>Peace Time</u> (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Fortna and Howard, "Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Nov 8	Ethics: <i>Jus ad Bellum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Orend, <u>The Morality of War</u>, Chapters 1-3</li> </ul>
Nov 15	Ethics: <i>Jus in Bello</i> and <i>Jus Post Bellum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Orend, <u>The Morality of War</u>, Chapters 4-7</li> </ul>
Nov 22	No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>
Nov 29	Ethics: Critiques of Just War Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oppenheim, "National Interest, Rationality, and Morality" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Orend, <u>The Morality of War</u>, Chapters 8-9</li> <li>➤ Wilcox, "Gender, Just War, and the Ethics of War and Peace" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ <b><u>Optional book critique due</u></b></li> </ul>
Dec 6	The Future of War and the Need for Peace Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Vasquez, "What Do We Know About War?" (Vasquez)</li> <li>➤ Sarkees and Dixon, "The Waning of Intra-state War? The 'Decline of War' Thesis Revisited" (Canvas)</li> <li>➤ Wallensteen, "Future Directions in the Scientific Study of Peace and War" (Vasquez)</li> </ul>
Dec 13	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Review using the syllabus description of the exam.</b>

## Appendix: Books available for book critiques

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Brecher, Michael	A Study of Crisis	Physical
Ikenberry, G. John	After Victory	Ebook
Gowa, Joanne	Allies, Adversaries, and International Trade	Physical
Shriver, Donald W., Jr.	An Ethic for Enemies	Physical
Khong, Yuen Foong	Analogies at War	Physical
Kirshner, Jonathan	Appeasing Bankers	Physical
Walzer, Michael	Arguing About War	Ebook
Paul, T. V.	Asymmetric Conflicts	Physical
Gowa, Joanne S.	Ballots And Bullets	Ebook
Leng, Russell J.	Bargaining and Learning in Recurring Crises	Physical
Lebow, Richard Ned	Between Peace and War	Physical
Levy, Jack.	Causes of War	Physical
Poulatova, Chaditsa	Children in Armed Conflict	Ebook
Barnett, Michael N.	Confronting The Costs Of War	Ebook
Legro, Jeffrey	Cooperation Under Fire	Physical
Peterson, Susan	Crisis Bargaining and the State	Physical
Thayer, Bradley	Darwin and International Relations	Ebook
Reiter, Dan	Democracies At War	Ebook
Ray, James Lee	Democracy and International Conflict	Physical
Auerswald, David P.	Disarmed Democracies	Ebook
Liberman, Peter	Does Conquest Pay?	Ebook
Maoz, Zeev	Domestic Sources of Global Change	Physical
Homer-Dixon, Thomas F.	Environment, Scarcity, And Violence	Ebook
Diehl, Paul F.	Environmental Conflict	Ebook
Conge, Patrick J.	From Revolution to War	Ebook
Sjoberg, Laura	Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War	Ebook
Reuveny, Rafael	Growth, Trade & Systemic Leadership	Ebook
Reiter, Dan	How Wars End	Ebook
Cederman, Lars-Erik, et al	Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War	Professor
Walzer, Michael	Just and Unjust Wars	Physical
Welch, David A.	Justice and the Genesis of War	Physical
Owen, John M.	Liberal Peace, Liberal War	Physical
Kaufman, Stuart J.	Modern Hatreds	Physical
Maoz, Zeev	National Choices and International Processes	Physical
Geller, Daniel S.	Nations at War	Physical
Weart, Spencer R.	Never at War	Physical
Gilbert, Paul	New Terror, New Wars	Physical
Quester, George H.	Offense and Defense in the International System	Physical
Regan, Patrick M.	Organizing Societies for War	Physical

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Holsti, K. J.	Peace and War	Physical
Horton, Lynn	Peasants In Arms	Ebook
Papayoanou, Paul A.	Power Ties	Physical
Tammen, Ronald L. (ed)	Power Transitions	Physical
Mansfield, Edward D.	Power, Trade, and War	Physical
Lemke, Douglas	Regions of War and Peace	Ebook
Lipson, Charles	Reliable Partners	Physical
Patchen, Martin	Resolving Disputes Between Nations	Physical
Colaresi, Michael P.	Scare Tactics	Physical
Hudson, Valerie et al	Sex and World Peace	Ebook
Huth, Paul K.	Standing Your Ground	Ebook
Smith, James D. D.	Stopping Wars	Physical
Grosscup, Beau	Strategic Terror	Ebook
Niou, Emerson M. S.	The Balance of Power	Physical
Huth, Paul K.	The Democratic Peace And Territorial Conflict In The Twentieth Century	Ebook
Lango, John W.	The Ethics of Armed Conflict	Ebook
Rasler, Karen A.	The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490-1990	Physical
Haas, Mark L.	The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989	Physical
Barbieri, Katherine	The Liberal Illusion	Ebook
Avant, Deborah D.	The Market for Force	Physical
Munkler, Herfried	The New Wars	Physical
Vasquez, John A.	The Power of Power Politics	Ebook
Kadera, Kelly M.	The Power-Conflict Story	Ebook
Holsti, K. J.	The State, War, and the State of War	Physical
Schroeder, Paul W.	The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848	Physical
Whitman, James Q.	The Verdict of Battle	Ebook
Marshall, Monty G.	Third World War	Physical
Brunk, Gregory G.	Understanding Attitudes About War	Ebook
Morgan, T. Clifton	Untying the Knot of War	Physical
Keen, David	Useful Enemies	Physical
Diehl, Paul F.	War and Peace in International Rivalry	Ebook
Goemans, H.E.	War and Punishment	Physical
Wagner, R. Harrison	War and the State	Ebook
Harkavy, Robert E.	Warfare and the Third World	Physical
Kelly, Raymond C.	Warless Societies and the Origin of War	Physical
Cashman, Greg	What Causes War?	Physical
Call, Charles	Why Peace Fails the Causes and Prevention of Civil War Recurrence	Ebook
Stam, Allan C.	Win, Lose, or Draw	Physical
Kacowicz, Arie M.	Zones of Peace in the Third World	Physical