



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CENTRAL TEXAS

POLI 4316

Conflict Studies

Section 110 – Fall 2020

6:00 - 8:45 PM Wednesdays

Founder's Hall 208 or WebEx on Canvas



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Office Hours (select a time slot via WebEx):

4:00-5:30 PM Mon/Wed, 5-5:30 Tues

Course Description

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

Course Overview

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 demonstrating your engagement with the readings.

Modality

This course is a *hybrid* course, meeting face-to-face and synchronously on WebEx for an equal number of sessions, with supplemental materials made available online through the Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]. **Face-to-face meetings** are scheduled for **Sept 16, Sept 23, Sept 30, Oct 21, Oct 28, Nov 4, Nov 18, and Dec 2**. **All other sessions** will be conducted over **WebEx** on Canvas.

Learning Objectives, Outcomes, and Assessment

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

1. How can we predict the onset of armed conflicts and wars? 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 – and should -- 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? What makes postwar peace secure?
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, processes, 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 Question 1 and a second question randomly selected from the remaining three on the list). Further information about assessment is provided under Grading below.

Required Readings

The following books are required and available for purchase at the bookstore. You are under no obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbooks may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

Greg Cashman. 2013. *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*. 2nd Ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 9780742566514.

Brian Orend. 2013. *The Morality of War*. 2nd Ed. Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press. ISBN 9781554810956.

The other required readings are available on Canvas.

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal. We strongly recommend the latest versions of *Chrome* or *Firefox* browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

You are required to have reliable access to a computer with a broadband internet connection and a working microphone for this course. All course readings are in the commonly-used *pdf* format and can be opened with Adobe Acrobat Reader or many other free programs.

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953. For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor (preferably using Canvas itself, but email will also work, albeit perhaps not as quickly).

Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Email: 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

Grading

Grading (90/80/70/60, rounded to the nearest percentage):

- Academic Integrity Exercise: This consists of watching a brief lecture, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. 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.*****

- **Rubric: You will fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity Exercise!**
- Participation (32.5%): This will be graded on a simple system that expects students to earn 25 points per session for full credit and allows room for a few points of extra credit per session as well. A student who attends (face to face or via WebEx, as appropriate for the session in question) and does little else will receive 10 points (40% credit). A student who constructively participates (whether in person or remotely) in one half of the class will receive 20 points (80% credit). A student who constructively participates throughout the entire class session will receive 30 points (120% credit, a modest extra credit opportunity).
 - Constructive participation means making comments or asking questions that demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the week. It also means actively engaging in any in-class exercises.
 - As the amount of class time devoted to lecture increases, the amount of participation expected from students decreases proportionally. A good rule of thumb is to be sure to contribute something relevant (even just a question that shows engagement with the course material) at least twice in a session that has no lecture or structured in-class exercise.
 - Late arrival (virtual or in-person) or leaving early reduces your credit in proportion to the percentage of the session you missed, rounded to the next highest 10% of the credit. While I do not (yet) require cameras to be turned on, if it becomes apparent that you are repeatedly ducking out for lengthy periods of class (bathroom breaks and the like aren't a problem), you will need to have your camera on during WebEx sessions.

- Weekly Memos (36%): The course relies on brief (about 400-500 words) weekly written assignments to engage the student in the readings and to assess how well the student has processed and integrated those readings.

- *Rubric:*

Grade	Thesis and Structure	Textual Support	Style
A	Answers the question (i.e. makes an argument required by the prompt) and drives the rest of the memo	Each element of the argument is supported by properly-cited textual support. Counter-arguments are addressed and defeated.	Few if any spelling or grammar errors. Paragraphs have topic sentences.
B	Answers the question, but some of the memo ignores it	Each element of the argument is supported by textual evidence, but major sources of evidence are ignored. OR The evidence used is insufficient to support one or more of the claims in the memo. OR Much of the support consists of direct quotes without interpretation.	About one spelling/grammar error per page; paragraphs lack topic sentences.
C	Does not match up with every element of the question, or the memo is a set of arguments that proceed without logical order	The evidence, when taken as a whole, fails to support the memo's thesis, with necessary steps in the argument being assumed instead of demonstrated. Much relevant evidence is omitted; irrelevant evidence may be present. Textual references lack specificity. Counter-arguments are ignored.	Paragraphs are poorly designed and there is at least one spelling or grammar error per paragraph.
D	Does not match up with most elements of the question; the memo is little more than a "data dump"	At least one major element of the memo's argument has substantial evidence that supports it. However, textual references are generally vague or irrelevant.	Spelling/grammar errors are found in every other sentence. Paragraph structure is poor.
F	The memo is devoid of structure	The answer in the memo fails to demonstrate a grasp of the relevant concepts or to interpret or critique them.	There is one spelling/grammar error per sentence, and paragraphs are not used properly.

Other Requirements:

___ Memo is double-spaced and between 400-500 words (up to 50% reduction for insufficient length, 3% if not double-spaced, 1% per 50 words over 500).

___ Essay uses APSA citation system, including an APSA-formatted works cited page *if any outside sources are used* (up to 10% reduction if neither is provided; 5% if internal citations aren't used or are not APSA format)

___ The overwhelming majority of the essay is the student's own words rather than direct quotes (even properly cited ones) from other sources. (Proportional reduction for anything over 10% quotes)



- Final Exam (31.5%): There will be a single exam on the last day of class. It will consist of Question 1 and another question randomly selected from Questions 2-4 (all on the first two pages of the syllabus). The exam will be open notes (including your memos and all class handouts) and open book. The rubric used consists of the leftmost two columns of that used for memos, replacing “memo” with “essay.” Naturally, much more evidence is required on the exam than on any particular daily memo.

POLI 4316 Course Rubric

Item	Points	Percent
Academic Integrity Exercise	* Required to pass!	0% *
Participation (13 sessions’ worth)	325 (25 per session)	32.5%
Weekly Memos (12)	360 (30 per memo)	36%
Final Exam	315	31.5%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	1000	100%
895+ = A 795-894=B 695-794=C 595-694=D 594 or lower = F		

Course Policies

Attendance and Excused Absences

Attendance is required, as per Participation above. In the case of foreseeable absences, students must inform the instructor *prior to the absence*. Send me an email stating the dates(s) you will be missing and the reason(s). You should also hand me a written note with this information in class. Failure to contact the instructor *prior to class* will normally rule out any sort of make-up, but in the case of documented emergencies, the absence may be excused if the emergency is reported as soon as is reasonably possible.

Make-Up Work, Late Work, and Incompletes

- Each memo is due by 6 PM on the day of class for which it is assigned. Late memos lose 20% of the credit they would otherwise receive per day, beginning with -20% a few minutes after class begins.
- The final exam will be posted by noon on December 7 and will remain available until exactly 11:59 PM on December 10. Allow three hours for the final exam, so be sure to start it before 9:00 PM if you wait until the last day.
- For every *excused* absence, the missed participation must be made up. Contact the professor for the make-up work, and email it to the professor by its due date.
- There will be no incompletes in this class, barring actual hospitalization or unforeseen deployment after the withdrawal deadline has passed. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.

Regrades

The instructor is not perfect, and if you believe part or all of a written assignment has been graded incorrectly, you need only return it **within one week** of the posting of comments and grades on Canvas with a *brief* note specifying the part(s) to be regraded. The specified parts will be compared to the key again. After a week has passed, I can no longer be sure that you will be graded to the same standards as those used for all the other students, so work will not be regraded after this period. For participation regrades, I make my participation data available during the break and

after the class so you can see how you are doing. If I failed to credit you with some or all of your participation, point it out to me after class (knowing what you said or asked would be helpful). Assuming it meets the requirements for constructive participation, the participation grade will be changed on the spot. Requests for regrades of participation must be made on the evening we have class so I can still remember what you said.

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, working with others in an unauthorized manner, 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 referred 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.

For more [information regarding the Student Conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), see [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html].

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a report](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

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

- *Violations:* There are many forms of academic misconduct. 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 assignments 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 remediation in the case of clearly inadvertent violation.
 - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam/QLR element, 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 the strongest possible sanctions to the TAMUCT administration.

University Policies

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the [Drop Request](#) Dynamic Form through Warrior Web.

[<https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/casAuthentication.ashx?InstID=eaed95b9-f2be-45f3-a37d-46928168bc10&targetUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2FSubmit%2FForm%2Fstart%2F53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612>].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic 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.

Professors are Mandatory Reporters

Texas State Law S.B. 212 states that:

- "An employee of a postsecondary educational institution who, in the course and scope of employment, witnesses or receives information regarding the occurrence of an incident that the employee reasonably believes constitutes **sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking** and is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident shall promptly report the incident to the institution's Title IX coordinator or deputy Title IX coordinator"
- Further: "A person **commits an offense if the person is required to make a report...and knowingly fails to make the report.** ... A postsecondary educational institution shall **terminate the employment** of an employee whom the institution determines in accordance with the institution's disciplinary procedure to have committed [such] an offense."

Student Resources

- **Warrior Shield (Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas)**
 - Warrior Shield 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 Warrior Shield through their myCT email account.
 - Connect to Warrior Shield by 911Cellular [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in Warrior Shield, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.
- **University Library:** 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 85,000 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 A&M-Central Texas 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 24 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 A&M-Central Texas 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 Library website [<http://tamuct.libguides.com/index>].
 - *For Fall 2020, all reference service will be conducted virtually. Please go to our Library website [<http://tamuct.libguides.com/index>] to access our virtual reference help and our current hours*
- **Academic Accommodations**
 - At Texas A&M University-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 Office 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 Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion Canvas page (log-in required) [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717>]
 - Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students
 - Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related

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. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit Student Affairs [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html>]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].

- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. Texas A&M University-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.
- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all Texas A&M University - Central Texas students, on a remote online basis. Visit the Academic Support Community in Canvas to view schedules and contact information. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors will return at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111 in the Fall 2020 semester. Student success coaching is available online upon request.
 - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, success coaching, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 501-5836, visit the Office of Student Success at 212F Warrior Hall, or by emailing studentsuccess@tamuct.edu
 - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas except writing support. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** The University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free service open to all TAMUCT students. For the Fall 2020 semester, all services will be online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours online Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. The UWC is also offering hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.
 - Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. 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. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

- Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via WOnline [<https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.

University COVID-19 Policies

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University-Central Texas has adopted policies and practices to minimize virus transmission. All members of the university community are expected to adhere to these measures to ensure their own safety and the safety of others. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses, course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.) and co-curricular programs:

- Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction. Students required to quarantine must participate in courses and course-related activities remotely and must not attend face-to-face course activities. Students should notify their instructors of the quarantine requirement. Students under quarantine are expected to participate in courses and complete graded work unless they have symptoms that are too severe to participate in course activities.
- Face Coverings— Face coverings must be worn inside of buildings and within 50 feet of building entrances on the A&M-Central Texas Campus. This includes lobbies, restrooms, hallways, elevators, classrooms, laboratories, conference rooms, break rooms, non-private office spaces, and other shared spaces. Face coverings are also required in outdoor spaces where physical distancing is not maintained. The university will evaluate exceptions to this requirement on a case by case basis. Students can request an exception through the Office of Access and Inclusion in Student Affairs.
 - If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the Office of Student Conduct. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day's class remotely for all students.
- Physical Distancing—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in the course and course-related activities.
- Classroom Ingress/Egress—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
- The university will notify students in the event that the COVID-19 situation necessitates changes to the course schedule or modality.

Amendments

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

by uploading a revised syllabus to the course on Canvas. If I need to do so, I will use the Announcements feature of Canvas to inform students of the change(s).

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

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?" 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." While informing students is part of my responsibilities, I also 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, engage with students doing discussion exercises, or even 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 for evaluating its ethical implications. 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." This is illustrated by Russian dissident Gary Kasparov (2017):

"The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth. Modern dictatorships have become far more sophisticated still in how to achieve their ends. They learned that

by constant bombardment, your senses become overwhelmed. You start to doubt, to shrug your shoulders, to tune out, and that makes you vulnerable. Instead of pushing one lie, one fake, they can push a dozen, or a hundred, and that's pretty good odds against one lonely truth. They win when you say: 'Who can be sure what really happened?'"

I press 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 debate with the focus on puzzle-solving that one finds in science and philosophy.

Writing Skills

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 other courses, speaking) activities that require effective argument. In order to help students proofread their work, I post a document on Canvas illustrating the most common student grammatical errors: word mix-ups, sentence fragments, agreement of subject and verb, and improper comma or apostrophe usage.

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 nature") 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. For example, if we train students in the study of armed conflict, we should also train them in the ethics of armed conflict, be they realist, pacifist, the criteria of just war theory, or something else. Moreover, they should understand how their moral attitude toward war is connected to other ethical beliefs in their lives.

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. The learning outcomes of the course reflect the knowledge of the subject I expect students to have by the end of the course.

Course Schedule

Date & Modality	Topic	Required Readings	Prompts
Aug 26 WebEx	Paradoxes of War	- None	None
Sept 2 WebEx	Defining and Tracing the Origins of War	- Cashman, Chapters 1-2 - Cioffi-Revilla, "Ancient Warfare: Origins and Systems" (Canvas)	Define war. Given your definition and the evidence from the readings, is war better explained as an inevitable product of human nature or as an invented political institution?
Sept 9 WebEx	The System Level of Analysis: Structures of Anarchy, Racism, and Gender	- Cashman, Chapter 10 - Henderson, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory" (Canvas) - Sjoberg, "Anarchy, Structure, Gender, and War(s)" (Canvas)	What are the structural characteristics of the interstate system?
Sept 16 Classroom	The System Level of Analysis: Global Wars	- Cashman, Chapter 11	What systemic conditions (system-level variables) cause great power wars?
Sept 23 Classroom	Dangerous Dyads	- Cashman, Chapters 7-8	What are the “top three” best-supported causes of dyadic war, given the evidence from today’s readings?
Sept 30 Classroom	Rationality and War	- Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War" (Canvas) - Cashman, Chapter 9 - Gartzke and Poast, "Empirically Assessing the Bargaining Theory of War: Potential and Challenges" (Canvas)	When is dyadic war a <i>rational</i> choice for <i>both</i> sides?

Date & Modality	Topic	Required Readings	Prompts
Oct 7 WebEx	States and War	- Cashman, Chapters 5-6	Most of the interstate wars in the interstate system have been fought by a relative handful of states. What are the domestic and state-level characteristics of such “fightaholics?”
Oct 14 WebEx	Individuals, Groups, and War	- Cashman, Chapters 3-4	Which is more important to the understanding of war – the attributes of ordinary people, or the attributes of foreign policy elites?
Oct 21 WebEx	Ethical Approaches to War: Just War Theory, Realism and Pacifism	- Orend, Chapters 1, 8, and 9	Critique just war theories and pacifism from a realist perspective OR critique just war theories and realism from a pacifist perspective. Be sure to indicate which variants of realism or pacifism you are defending/critiquing.
Oct 28 Classroom	Can Resort to War Be Just?	- Orend, Introduction and Chapters 2-3	Can any war be “just,” or are Orend’s criteria for <i>jus ad bellum</i> impossible to meet?
Nov 4 Classroom	How Wars are Waged: Practical and Ethical Constraints	- Downes and Cochrane, “It’s a Crime, but is It a Blunder? The Efficacy of Targeting Civilians in War” (Canvas) - Orend, Chapters 4-5	To what extent should states and soldiers refrain from targeting civilians? OR Could any war – has any war – ever been waged in a just manner?
Nov 11	No Class: Veterans Day	- None	None
Nov 18 Classroom	Every War Must End	- Lutmar and Lesley Terris, “War Termination” (Canvas) - Wittman, “How a War Ends: A Rational Model Approach” (Canvas) - Orend, Chapters 6-7	What factors determine how and when wars end? OR What rules should states and their leaders follow when making peace after interstate war?
Nov 25	No Class	- No Class: Thanksgiving Break	None

Date & Modality	Topic	Required Readings	Prompts
Dec 2 Classroom	Civil War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement" (Canvas) - Cederman and Vogt, "Dynamics and Logics of Civil War" (Canvas) - Dixon, "Emerging Consensus: Results from the Second Wave of Statistical Studies of Civil War Termination" (Canvas) 	What are the theoretically-relevant empirical differences between interstate wars and civil wars?
Dec 9 WebEx	Final Exam	None	None