



# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CENTRAL TEXAS

**POLI 5316-115**  
**Conflict Studies**  
**CRN 60257 – Summer 2022**  
**6:00 – 9:00 PM Mon/Wed**  
**Founder's Hall 210**



**Dr. Jeffrey Dixon**

**Office:** Heritage Hall 204R

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

(Canvas Inbox preferred)

**Phone:** (254) 501-5871

**Office Hours:** 4:00-5:30 PM Tues-Thurs

## **Course Description**

Study the causes of international and civil conflict, historical changes in the nature of war, and predictions of future armed 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 *face to face* course, with supplemental materials made available online through the Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

## **Learning Objectives, Outcomes, and Assessment**

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

1. Students should learn to better predict armed conflict: where disputes are likely and which disputes will escalate to war.
2. Students should learn which factors cause war to expand, whether by encompassing more countries, the totalization of the war, or its expansion in time (duration).
3. Students should learn how war termination is achieved: the necessary conditions for a negotiated settlement and the factors that affect the probability of a negotiated settlement
4. Students should be able to describe Just War Theory, assess its validity, and apply it to the initiation, process, and termination of war.

5. Students should learn to dissect and evaluate academic research on conflict studies, critically examining its theoretical bases.
6. Students should learn to identify unanswered questions in conflict studies and to propose methods for answering them.

*Learning Outcomes 1-4* are 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 2-4.

*Learning Outcomes 5-6* are to be achieved through written memos critiquing each session's readings and designing a research idea to correct, supplement, or extend the work described in one or more of the session's readings.

### **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*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN: 9780742566514.

Brian Orend. 2013. *The Morality of War*. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](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*

## 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. A student who attends and does little else will receive only 10 points (40% credit). A student who constructively participates in one half of the class session will receive 18 points (72% credit). A student who constructively participates throughout the entire class session will receive 25 points (100% credit).
  - 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 four times during a three-hour 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.

- Weekly Memos (36%): At the beginning of each class session for which readings are assigned, you should submit a typed, 1-2 page (about 400-600 words) essay on the day's readings and a research idea. These memos shouldn't require outside research but if you do some, be sure to cite it properly using the APSA system (see Canvas for examples). If you only cite from the assigned readings, you don't need a works cited page; otherwise, you do.
  - For June 9-29 and July 18-25 (empirical scholarship):
    - The first half of the memo should contain two or three sentences per reading identifying its author's dependent variable, independent variables, and type of evidence, as follows:
      - Be sure that you understand each author's dependent variable (e.g. war, conflict, violence against civilians, peace, casualties, public support, etc) – that is, what they are trying to describe, predict, or evaluate. All of our authors – even the ones that merely review the state of the field in some area -- have arguments to make.
      - Specify each author's explanation(s) (independent variables) for changes in the values assumed by his or her dependent variable(s).
      - Specify the evidence/argument the author produces in favor of the explanation.
    - The second half of the memo should focus on a flaw or an unanswered question in the reading, suggest a research project (an idea/theory, how its variables might be measured, and how the idea/theory could be tested and/or falsified) to address or answer it.
    - Rubric:
      - Each half of the memo is worth half of the credit.
        - The first half is graded for clarity and descriptive accuracy. It should show that you read and understood the material.
        - The second half is graded as a miniature research design. This requires an idea, a testable hypothesis following from that idea, identification of relevant independent variables, a statement about what data would be needed, and a statement about what results would falsify the hypothesis. In principle, this can be accomplished in five sentences, but more detail is desirable, up to the 600-word limit.
      - Spelling/grammar count for up to 20% of the credit (1% deduction per error). Check the link on Canvas to at least address my personal pet peeves.
  - For July 6-13 (normative political theory):
    - Summarize the major normative arguments made by Orend and the other authors on the first page/half of the memo. Note that some of these sessions contain both empirical and normative scholarship. Don't neglect either type.
    - On the second page/half of the memo, critique one of the normative arguments from the reading, specifying and justifying a different normative approach and providing at least one normative implication of your alternative approach.
    - The rubric is identical to that for the memos on empirical scholarship, save that the second half is graded on the validity of your critique, the clarity and parsimony of your approach, and the extent to which your approach is justified by the text of the memo (think in terms of Toulmin's model of argumentation – a

claim, grounds to support the claim, and implicit or explicit warrants that connect the validity of the grounds to the validity of the claim).

- 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.

o *Rubric:*

Grade	Thesis and Structure	Support
<b>A</b>	Answers the question (i.e. makes an argument required by the prompt) and drives the rest of the essay	Each element of the argument has support from the course materials (typically a brief mention of an author/theory or even a specific page, but not lengthy direct quotes). Counter-arguments are addressed and rebutted (i.e. shown to be invalid or to have less evidentiary support than the thesis).
<b>B</b>	Answers the question, but some of the essay ignores it	Each element of the argument is supported by some course material, but important and relevant sources of evidence are ignored. OR The evidence used is insufficient to support one or more of the claims necessary to support the thesis. OR Much of the support consists of direct quotes without interpretation.
<b>C</b>	Does not match up with every element of the question, or the essay is a set of arguments that proceed without logical order	The evidence, when taken as a whole, fails to support the essay's thesis, with necessary steps in the argument being assumed instead of demonstrated. Much relevant evidence from the course is omitted; irrelevant evidence may be present. Counter-arguments are ignored.
<b>D</b>	Does not match up with most elements of the question; the essay is little more than a "data dump"	At least one major element of the memo's argument has some substantial evidence from the course that supports it, but most of the argument is mere assertion without reference to supporting evidence from the course.
<b>F</b>	The essay is devoid of structure	The essay fails to demonstrate a grasp of the relevant course concepts or to analyze/synthesize them.

### POLI 5316 Course Rubric

Item	Points	Percent
Academic Integrity Exercise	* Required to pass!	0% *
Participation (13 sessions' worth)	325 (25 per session)	27%
Weekly Memos (13)	520 (40 per memo)	43%
Final Exam	355	30%
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>100%</b>
Extra Credit Crisis Exercise (On Canvas)	25	+ 2.5%
1074+ = A    954-1073=B    834-953=C    714-833=D    713 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.
- For every *excused* absence, the missed participation must be made up. The make-up work is simply a more in-depth essay than the usual memo (about twice as long, raising multiple issues or questions regarding each assigned reading for the session).
- 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 receiving the graded assignment back from the instructor, together 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 for that evening's session 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. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. 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), [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 or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) each displays 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://federation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpld=https://eis-prod.ec.tamuct.edu:443/samlSso&SpSessionAuthnAdapterId=tamuctDF&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612]

Faculty 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. Once you submit the completed 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."

### Important University Dates (Summer 2022)

June 1, 2022	Educator Preparation Program (Teacher and Principal) Application Deadline
June 13, 2022	Deadline for Scholarship Applications for the Fall Semester
June 22, 2022	Priority Deadline for International Student Admissions Applications
July 1, 2022	School Counselor Program Application deadline (Fall)
July 22, 2022	Priority Deadline for VA Certification Request (Fall)

### Student Resources

- **University Writing Center:** Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (A&M–Central Texas) is a free service open to all A&M–Central Texas students. For the Summer 2022 semester, the hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday in Warrior Hall 416 (with online tutoring available every hour as well) with satellite hours available online only Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and most Saturdays from 12:00-3:00 p.m.
  - 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 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/) at [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your favorite tutor.

- **Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas (SAFEZONE):**

SafeZone provides a public safety application that gives you the ability to call for help with the push of a button. It also provides Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate emergency information quickly via push notifications, email, and text messages. All students automatically receive email and text messages via their myCT accounts.

- Downloading SafeZone allows access to push notifications and enables you to connect directly for help through the app. You can download SafeZone from the app store and use your myCT credentials to log in. If you would like more information, you can visit the [SafeZone](http://www.safezoneapp.com) website [www.safezoneapp.com].
- To register SafeZone on your phone, please follow these 3 easy steps:
  1. Download the SafeZone App from your phone store using the link below:
    - [iPhone/iPad](https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756): [https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756]
    - [Android Phone / Tablet](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp) [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp]
  2. Launch the app and enter your myCT email address (e.g. {name}@tamuct.edu)
  3. Complete your profile and accept the terms of service

- **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 400,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 96,000 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 virtually through WebEx, Microsoft Teams or in-person at the library. [Schedule an appointment here](https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956) [https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956]. 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) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index]

- **Access & Inclusion / 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 Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity 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](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) 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/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) 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. A&M-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 A&M-Central Texas students, both virtually and in-person. Student success coaching is available online upon request. If you have a question, are interested in becoming a tutor, or in need of success coaching contact the Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion at (254) 501-5836, visit the Warrior Center at 212 Warrior Hall, or by emailing [WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu](mailto:WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu).
  - To schedule tutoring sessions and view tutor availability, please visit [Tutor Matching Services](https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT) [https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT] or visit the Tutoring Center in 111 Warrior Hall.
  - Chat live with a remote 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.

### 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 by uploading a revised syllabus for the course to Canvas.

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

I strive to provide my students, including graduate 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 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/Disciplinary 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.

For graduate students, the ability to see the field as a whole is also important. On comprehensive exams, students will need to connect multiple courses together. As an example, a student who is asked to identify what causes war would want to integrate material from this course, a coherent perspective on International Relations from that course, and perhaps some theories or standards of evidence and analysis from POLI 5300 and 5301. Accordingly, the material in this course draws connections between theory, methods, and the substantive causes, processes, and consequences of armed conflict. Each part of the discipline is connected to every other part of the discipline, and therefore developing a coherent, defensible view of the field and what it teaches us is of great importance.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings / Videos	Make-Up Prompts
Jun 6	Paradoxes of War	- None	None
Jun 8	Defining and Tracing the Origins of War	- Cashman, Chapters 1-2 - Cioffi-Revilla, "Ancient Warfare: Origins and Systems" (Canvas) - Helbling, "War and Peace in Societies without Central Power: Theories and Perspectives" (Canvas)	Define "war." Is the behavior you describe better explained as an <i>inevitable</i> product of human nature or as an <i>invented</i> political institution?
Jun 13	The System Level of Analysis I: Implications of Anarchy	- Waltz, <u>A Theory of International Politics</u> , Excerpts (Canvas) - Cashman, Chapter 10 - Wagner, <u>War and the State</u> , Excerpts (Canvas) - Sjoberg, "Anarchy, Structure, Gender, and War(s)" (Canvas)	To what extent is an anarchic international system responsible for interstate wars?
Jun 15	The System Level of Analysis II: Hierarchy and Systemic Wars	- VIDEO: "The Onset of General Wars in Europe" (Canvas) - Cashman, Chapter 11 - Copeland, <u>The Origins of Major War</u> , Excerpts (Canvas) - Lee, "Falling Down: An Empirical Test of Dynamic Differentials Theory 1500–1999" - Lebow, "Contingency, Catalysts, and Nonlinear Change" (Canvas)	What causes the "general wars" or "major wars" sometimes fought between coalitions of great powers?
Jun 20	Dangerous Dyads?	- Cashman, Chapters 7-8 - Blainey, "The Mystery of Wide Wars" (Canvas) - Owsiak and Vasquez, "Peaceful Dyads: A Territorial Perspective" (Canvas)	What are the three best-supported causes of dyadic interstate war, given the evidence from today's readings?
Jun 22	Rationality, Bargaining, and War	- Cashman, Chapter 9 - Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War" (Canvas) - Wittman, "How a War Ends: A Rational Model Approach" (Canvas) - Gartzke and Poast, "Empirically Assessing the Bargaining Theory of War: Potential and Challenges" (Canvas)	When is dyadic interstate war a <i>rational</i> choice for <i>both</i> participating states?

Date	Topic	Required Readings / Videos	Make-Up Prompts
Jun 27	States and War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VIDEO: “The Russo-Ukrainian War” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Cashman, Chapters 5-6</li> <li>- Gallop and Greene, “Polarisation, Accountability, and Interstate Conflict” (Canvas)</li> </ul>	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?”
Jun 29	Individuals, Groups, and War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cashman, Chapters 3-4</li> <li>- <b>EXTRA CREDIT CRISIS EXERCISE (On Canvas) DUE by June 30</b></li> </ul>	Which is more important to the understanding of war – the personal characteristics of foreign policy elites, or how these elites are organized inside governments?
July 4	NO CLASS	- None	Happy Independence Day!
July 6	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.
July 11	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?
July 13	How Wars are Waged: Practical and Ethical Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orend, Chapters 4-5</li> <li>- Gregory, “Calibrating Violence: Body Counts as a Weapon of War” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Green, “The Commander’s Dilemma: Creating and Controlling Armed Group Violence” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Fiala, <u>The Just War Myth: The Moral Illusions of War</u>, Chapter 1 (Canvas)</li> </ul>	To what extent should states and soldiers refrain from targeting civilians, from both strategic and ethical points of view?
July 18	Every War Must (Eventually) End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lutmar and Lesley Terris, “War Termination” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Quackenbush, “Outcomes and Consequences of War” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Orend, Chapters 6-7</li> </ul>	What factors determine how and when wars end? OR What rules should states and their leaders follow when making peace after interstate war?

Date	Topic	Required Readings / Videos	Make-Up Prompts
July 20	Civil Wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trinn and Wencker, “Integrating Quantitative Research on Violent Intrastate Conflict” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Bartusevičius and van Leeuwen, “Poor Prospects—Not Inequality—Motivate Political Violence” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Cederman and Vogt, “Dynamics and Logics of Civil War” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Walter, “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement” (Canvas)</li> </ul>	What are the theoretically-relevant empirical differences between interstate wars and civil wars?
July 25	Is War on the Way Out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mueller, “War Has Almost Ceased to Exist” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Gat, “Is War Declining – and Why?” (Canvas)</li> <li>- Braumoeller, <u>Only the Dead: The Persistence of War in the Modern Age</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)</li> </ul>	To what extent has warfare declined over the past few generations -- and why?
July 27	Final Exam	None	None