
University of California, Davis
Department of Political Science

Political Science 121
The Scientific Study of War

Tuesday and Thursday 7:30-8:50am
6 Olson Hall

Spring 2016

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Office Hours: Friday 9:00-11:00am,
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1:00-2:00pm,
and by appointment

This course introduces students to the scientific study of war. We will examine a variety of arguments about the factors that influence the initiation, duration, and termination of interstate war. The course is structured around the different levels-of-analysis (i.e., monadic, dyadic, and systemic) that provide a lens through which the process of war can be examined. The course exposes students to a variety of theoretical and empirical methodologies including game theory, computational modeling, and statistics. The course will focus on helping students understand the general scientific method of theory building and empirical testing (meaning “using data”) as applied to the study of war. The goal of the course is to allow students to make sense of sophisticated theoretical arguments about war and evaluate whether those theories receive empirical support.

Suggested Prerequisites

I strongly recommend that students take POL 3 and POL 51 or, for transfer students, the POL 3 and POL 51 equivalents. While you may enroll in this course if you have taken only one of these two courses, you will likely find the course to be more difficult than if you had taken both. Attached to this syllabus is a contract, in which you will acknowledge that you may find this course to be more challenging if you have only taken POL 3 or POL 51 but not both. If you are concerned about whether or not you meet these prerequisites please let me know.

Readings

There is one required book for this course:

Sobek, David. 2009. *The Causes of War*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

This book is available in the campus bookstore, but can also be purchased online for a potentially lower price (try www.amazon.com, www.dealoz.com, or www.addall.com).

The remaining required readings consist of articles taken from scholarly journals including the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *International Organization*.

I expect you to read everything listed on the syllabus for a particular date **before** coming to class. The lectures will not duplicate the readings. Instead, the lectures will draw on the readings for background and examples, presentation of alternative viewpoints, etc. The reading load for this course is not light, but neither is it too heavy. Some of the readings are technical in nature and will take more time than others. Make sure to leave yourself plenty of time to do the readings. Starting the readings the day before class is not an optimal strategy if your goal is to obtain a good grade in this class.

The articles, lecture slides, term paper instructions, short assignments, and supplementary material will be posted on SmartSite@UCDavis.

Evaluation

Your grade for this course will consist of 3 parts:

1. Exams (50%)

There will be two exams: a mid-term exam during the scheduled class time on May 3rd and a final exam on June 9th from 3:30-5:30pm. Each exam will count as 25% of your final grade. The mid-term exam will cover all of the material in weeks 1-5 and the final exam will cover all of the material in weeks 6-10. The exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Note that the exams may cover: 1) material from the required readings, even if we do not discuss it in class, 2) material discussed in class, even if it is not covered in the assigned readings.

NOTE: Make-up exams will be given only in very extreme circumstances. Make any travel plans accordingly. Students needing to take a make-up exam must receive my approval at least two weeks before the exam date. However, be advised that for all exam retakes, in addition to receiving a different version of the multiple choice/short-answer exam you would have received in class, you may also be required to complete closed-book essay questions and a closed-book oral examination that will count toward your make-up grade. A missed exam is assigned a grade of 0. If you miss an exam due to an illness or death in the family, I will require written verification. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to make up the exam. Basically, without making arrangements for your absence two weeks in advance, you will be allowed to take a make-up exam only in the case of a sudden death in the family, a hospitalization, etc. and only if you provide documentation that verifies the circumstances that made it impossible for you to take the exam as scheduled.

2. Term Paper (35%)

You are required to complete a term paper that will count for 35% of the course grade. The term paper is due on June 2nd. I will provide a list of international conflict research topics that we will not cover explicitly in class (e.g., war expansion) and you will choose one topic to write on for your term paper. Once you have selected your topic, I will give you three scholarly articles associated with that topic. Using these articles, you will be required to write a paper that: 1) summarizes the main arguments and hypotheses of each article, 2) compares the articles' research designs, 3) discusses whether the hypotheses in each article receive empirical support, and 4) describes the data used in one of the articles. Note: You will not need to do any extra reading aside from the articles I give you for your topic. We will discuss additional details about the term paper in class. If you submit a draft of your term paper by May 17th, we will be able to provide feedback on your paper in enough time for you to make revisions before submitting the final version on June 2nd. If you submit an outline of your term paper by April 26th, we will be able to provide feedback on your outline in enough time for you to make changes before submitting a draft of your term paper by May 17th.

3. Short Assignments (15%)

There will be 3 short assignments in this course. Each of these assignments will count as 5% of the course grade. All assignments must be typed, double spaced, and no smaller than Times New Roman 12pt. font. Please include your name and student number on the assignment.

Assignments (including the Term Paper) are due at **the beginning** of the class period on the date they are due. For electronic assignments, you must upload your assignment to the SmartSite web page for this course and bring a hard copy to class with you on the day it is due. If you know you are going to miss class when an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to upload your electronic document and to get the hard copy of your assignment to the TA (handed to them in person, put in their mailbox, or put in the Department of Political Science drop box) before class time.

Assignments (including the Term Paper) will be marked down one half letter grade for each 24 hour period in which they are late, starting at the beginning of class on the day on which they are due, whether or not you attend class and including weekends, holidays, school breaks, etc. For example, an assignment due at 7:30am on Tuesday but turned in anytime after 7:30am Tuesday and before 7:30am on Wednesday will be marked down one half letter grade. Those assignments turned in between Wednesday at 7:30am and Thursday at 7:30am will be marked down one letter grade. I will only make an exception to this policy if: 1) you contact me in writing at least 2 weeks in advance to discuss a conflict, or 2) you provide documentation of a severe illness or family emergency that prevented you from completing the assignment on time. Additionally, no matter how many days have passed, assignments will not be accepted for any amount of credit once the graded assignments are returned.

Grades

The TA's alone will be responsible for grading the exams, term paper, and short assignments, and their grading decisions are final. I will stay in close contact with the TA's throughout the quarter, and they will consult me on any issues that arise. But I will not override their grading decisions.

You may appeal a grade by submitting a written request in two forms, both electronically and hard-copy. Appeals are due within one week of receiving the grade in question. Your written appeal should explain, in logical and concise terms, why you believe you should have received a different grade. The TA's will take all grade appeals seriously, but be warned that once you appeal a grade the TA's will reconsider that grade with an open mind, and re-grades can happen in either direction. If this reevaluation reveals that you deserved a higher grade than you received, your grade will be changed. But if this process reveals that you deserved a lower grade than you received, your grade will also be changed (down). If your original grade is deemed correct, your grade will remain the same.

Extra Credit

You will have an opportunity to obtain extra credit in this course. You can obtain extra credit by participating in a Political Science Research Study. If you participate in a research study then 2% will be added to your final grade in the course. This means that after accounting for your grades on the assignments, exams, and term paper, you can receive up to an additional 2% added to your final grade. This would mean that instead of having 88% as your final grade for the course you would have 90%, which is the difference between a B+ and an A-. More details will be announced in class.

I strongly encourage you to participate. Not only is it a good opportunity to receive exposure to how political scientists carry out their research but you will also have 2% added to your final grade.

Disabilities

UC Davis encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. I am strongly committed to the same policy. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you need to contact the Student Disability Center at 530-752-3184 as soon as possible to identify and document your specific needs. Additionally, it is your responsibility to contact me privately immediately at the beginning of the quarter so we can discuss how to accommodate your needs. Do not wait until just before an assignment deadline or an exam to inform me of a disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

Academic Dishonesty¹

UC Davis and the Department of Political Science take violations of academic dishonesty seriously, as do I. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe. In cases of a violation

¹Much of the text in this section has been directly obtained from the sections of the Princeton University website on Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities: <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/rrr>.

of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines. Academic integrity cases will be sent to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless I clearly state otherwise. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. See the following link for tips on how to avoid plagiarism:
<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>.

In general, every time you use another person's idea, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use the idea. Every time you use a specific phrase, even if the phrase is only two words long (e.g., "the fourth branch of government" (Fred, 1984) or "streams of policymaking" (Leroy, 2016)), you must put the phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. Citations should be based on the Chicago Manual of Style. See the following link for citation guidelines: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org>.

In an examination setting, unless I give explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices (including the internet!), or of any attempt to give assistance, whether or not the one doing so has completed his or her own work. Other violations include, but are not limited to, any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in regard to an examination, such as tampering with a graded exam or claiming another's work to be one's own. Violations shall also consist of obtaining or attempting to obtain previous examinations, term papers, or assignments, copies of the examination papers or the questions to appear thereon, or to obtain any illegal knowledge of these questions.

Perhaps most importantly, lying to or purposely misleading me or the TA's shall also constitute a serious violation of academic integrity.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic
March 29 (T)	Course Introduction
March 31 (R)	Studying War Scientifically: Statistical Methods Sobek (Introduction, Chapter 1) Bremer, Stuart A. 1992. "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 36(2): 309-341.
April 5 (T)	Studying War Scientifically: Computational Modeling Cederman, Lars-Erik. 2003. "Modeling the Size of Wars: From Billiard Balls to Sandpiles." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 97(1): 135-150.
April 7 (R)	No Class: Professor Joyce out of town
April 12 (T)	Studying War Scientifically: Game Theory
April 14 (R)	Studying War Scientifically: Game Theory (continued)
April 19 (T)	Domestic Politics and War: Monadic Sobek (Chapter 2) Fearon, James D. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 88(3): 577-592.
April 21 (R)	Domestic Politics and War: Monadic (continued) Tomz, Michael. 2007. "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach." <i>International Organization</i> 61(4): 821-840.
	Assignment #1 Due
April 26 (T)	Power and War: Dyadic Sobek (Chapter 3) Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." <i>International Organization</i> 49(3): 379-414.
	Term Paper Outline Due (optional)

- April 28 (T) **Power and War: Dyadic (continued)**
Reed, William, David H. Clark, Timothy Nordstrom, and Wonjae Hwang. 2008. "War, Power, and Bargaining." *Journal of Politics* 70(4): 1203-1216.
- May 3 (T) **MID-TERM EXAM**
- May 5 (R) **Domestic Politics and War: Dyadic**
Sobek (Chapter 4)
Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 93(4): 791-807.
- May 10 (T) **Domestic Politics and War: Dyadic (continued)**
Dorussen, Han and Hugh Ward. 2008. "Intergovernmental Organizations and the Kantian Peace: A Network Perspective." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(2): 189-212.
- May 12 (R) **Studying War Scientifically: Advanced Game Theory**
Assignment #2 Due
- May 17 (T) **Trade and War: Dyadic**
Sobek (Chapter 5)
Reed, William. 2003. "Information and Economic Interdependence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47(1): 54-71.
Draft of Term Paper Due (optional)
- May 19 (R) **Trade and War: Dyadic (continued)**
Gartzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 166-191.
Assignment #3 Due

- May 24 (T) **Power and War: Systemic**
 Sobek (Chapter 6)

 Braumoeller, Bear F. 2008. "Systemic Politics and the Origins of Great Power Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 77-93.
- May 26 (R) Joyce, Kyle A. "The Cascading Dynamics of War Expansion."
- May 31 (T) **Conclusion**
 Sobek (Chapter 9)

 Beck, Nathaniel, Gary King, and Langche Zeng. 2000. "Improving Quantitative Studies of International Conflict: A Conjecture." *American Political Science Review* 94(1): 21-35.

 de Marchi, Scott, Christopher Gelpi, and Jeffrey D. Grynawiski. 2004. "Untangling Neural Nets." *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 371-378.

 Beck, Nathaniel, Gary King, and Langche Zeng. 2004. "Theory and Evidence in International Conflict: A Response to de Marchi, Gelpi, and Grynawiski." *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 379-389.
- June 2 (R) **Conclusion (continued)**
 Term Paper Due
- June 9 (R) **FINAL EXAM: 3:30-5:30PM**

Contract

By signing below, I, _____, student ID# _____, affirm that I
PRINT FIRST AND LAST NAME _____ PRINT STUDENT ID# _____

have read and understood the syllabus that precedes this contract. In particular, I understand the following key facts (initial by each):

INITIALS I acknowledge that if I have taken only POL 3 or POL 51 (or the equivalent courses) but not both, I am likely to find this course to be more challenging than if I had taken both POL 3 and POL 51.

INITIALS If I turn in an assignment after the start of class on the assigned due date, my personal grade for that assignment will be penalized at the rate of one half letter grade for each 24 hours after the deadline, including weekends, holidays, school breaks, etc.

INITIALS If I miss the midterm exam or the final exam, I will not be able to retake it unless A) I make mutually-suitable arrangements with the TA at least two weeks in advance, or B) I miss the exam due to extreme circumstances (such as a hospitalization or a death in the family) that I document to the instructor's personal satisfaction.

INITIALS If I need any accommodations for a disability (physical, learning, or otherwise) that may impact my performance in this class, it is my responsibility, first, to contact the Student Disability Center at 530-752-3184 at the beginning of the course to identify and document my needs and, second, to communicate my documented needs to the instructor and the TA as early as possible in the quarter and well in advance of any exam or assignment deadlines.

INITIALS I will have committed a violation of academic integrity and an incident report detailing my violation will be sent to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs if any of the following are true:

- I cheat on an exam in any way or assist someone else in cheating
 - I intentionally mislead the instructor, a TA, or another college administrator
 - I include another author’s ideas in my writing without properly citing that author’s work, even if a direct quotation is not used
 - I include another author’s coined word or set of multiple words in my writing without properly citing that author’s work