

PSCI 220: Crisis Diplomacy

Vanderbilt University

Spring 2015

Course Information

Time TR 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Place Stevenson Center 1206

Instructor Professor Brenton Kenkel

Email brenton.kenkel@vanderbilt.edu

Office Hours Thursdays, 12:30–2:30 p.m., Commons 324

Course Website <http://bkenkel.com/psci220>

Description

Talk is cheap in international politics. There is no world government or other central authority to keep states from lying, bluffing, and breaking promises to each other. So what is the point of diplomacy? Can talking accomplish anything that force cannot? When, if ever, are international threats and promises believable? What kinds of states or leaders are most likely to follow through on their commitments? In short, how can a state make its words *credible*?

To analyze these questions about diplomacy, we will use the tools of contemporary political science. We will use theoretical models to develop coherent explanations of whether (and why) diplomatic statements are credible, and we will consult empirical evidence to evaluate these theories' predictions.¹ The goal of the course is to learn to think through theoretical problems as a political scientist would—and to gain some useful knowledge about crisis diplomacy along the way.

¹ Obligatory caveat from a dyed-in-the-wool theorist: Not all theories make predictions, and a good theory is worth working through even if its predictions are all wrong.

Grading

Your grade in PSCI 220 will be based on:

- **Short Papers (33%).** You will write three short papers (4–6 pages each).² You will select the topic of each paper from a set of prompts that will be handed out a week before the paper is due. The due dates are listed in the schedule of readings.
- **Midterm Exam (33%).** An in-class midterm consisting of short essay questions will be held on February 24. *If you cannot be present in class on February 24, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.*

² Page lengths quoted assume a double-spaced document with 12-point text and 1-inch margins.

- **Final Exam (33%).** The final exam will be held at the time designated by the university, April 27 at 9:00 a.m.
- The last percentage point is free.

Both exams will be open-book and open-notes, but electronic devices will not be allowed. Accordingly, you may want to buy hard copies of the required books instead of e-books.

Academic Integrity

As in all courses at Vanderbilt, your work in PSCI 220 is governed by the Honor Code. I encourage you to discuss course material and assignments with your peers, but the written work you turn in must be solely your own.

I have no tolerance for plagiarism. If you turn in plagiarized work, you will receive a failing grade for the course and be reported to the Honor Council. Plagiarism is not just verbatim copying and pasting—representing someone else’s ideas as your own without citing the source is also a form of plagiarism. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an excuse or a defense. For more information about what is and is not plagiarism, refer to [the Student Handbook section on the Honor System](#), particularly the section “The Honor Code Applied to Preparation of Papers.” Always remember: *when in doubt, cite*.

Special Accommodations

If you need course accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me or with the [Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department](#) (2-4705) as soon as possible. Please also consult with me if you need to make audio or video recordings of lectures as part of a reasonable accommodation approved by EAD.

Books

The following books are required:

- Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (Pearson, 1999).³
- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale University Press, 1966).

³ The first and second editions of *Essence of Decision* differ substantially, so I require that you use the second.

Schedule

The schedule of readings is tentative and is subject to change. I will inform you at least a week in advance of any changes to the required readings.

Links to all journal articles are available in the syllabus on the course website, <http://bkenkel.com/psci220/syllabus.html>. Scans of book chapters will be made available through OAK.

In accordance with the goal of learning to think like political scientists, the readings are largely drawn from the political science literature of the past two decades. Many of these papers, like most contemporary political science research, contain some math. But don't panic! You will not be tested on mathematical concepts, and our focus will always be on theories, hypotheses, research design, and evidence—not mathematical details.



Photo from [Wikimedia Commons](#).

JANUARY 6–8: DIPLOMACY AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

- Hedley Bull, “Diplomacy and International Order,” chap. 7 in *The Anarchical Society* (Columbia University Press, 1977).

JANUARY 13–15: DIPLOMACY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

- Hans Morgenthau, “Diplomacy” and “The Future of Diplomacy,” chap. 31–32 in *Politics Among Nations*, 6th ed. (Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).
- Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Realism and Complex Interdependence,” chap. 2 in *Power and Interdependence*, 3rd ed. (Longman, 2000).
- *Recommended*:
 - Christer Jonsson and Martin Hall, “The Study of Diplomacy,” chap. 1 in *Essence of Diplomacy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

JANUARY 20–22: CRISIS BARGAINING

- James D. Fearon, “**Rationalist Explanations for War**,” *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414.
- Start reading *Essence of Decision*.

JANUARY 27–29: DETERRENCE

- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, chapters 1–3.
- *Recommended*:

- Daniel Ellsberg, “The Crude Analysis of Strategy Choices,” *American Economic Review* 51, no. 2 (1961): 472–478.
- Bruce M. Russett, “The Calculus of Deterrence,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 7, no. 2 (1963): 97–109.

FEBRUARY 3–5: SPIRAL MODELS AND THE SECURITY DILEMMA

- Robert Jervis, “Deterrence, the Spiral Model, and Intentions of the Adversary,” chap. 3 in *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1976).
- Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978): 167–214.
- *Recommended:*
 - Charles L. Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited,” *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (1997): 171–201.
 - Andrew Kydd, “Game Theory and the Spiral Model,” *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 371–400.

FEBRUARY 10–12: CASE STUDY — THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

First short paper to be assigned Tuesday, February 10.

- Finish reading *Essence of Decision*.

FEBRUARY 17–19: TESTING RATIONAL DETERRENCE THEORY

First short paper due Tuesday, February 17.

- Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, “What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 496–526.
- Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable,” *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (1990): 336–369.
- Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, “Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference,” *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990): 466–501.

FEBRUARY 24: MIDTERM EXAM

FEBRUARY 26: CONSTRUCTING ALLIANCES

- Stephen M. Walt, “Explaining Alliance Formation,” chap. 2 in *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1987).
- *Recommended:*

- Mancur Olson Jr. and Richard Zeckhauser, “An Economic Theory of Alliances,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 48, no. 3 (1966): 266–279.
- Brian Lai and Dan Reiter, “Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816–1992,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 2 (2000): 203–227.

MARCH 10–12: KEEPING ALLIANCE COMMITMENTS

- James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000): 63–83.
- Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G. Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, “Reevaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 5 (2000): 686–699.

MARCH 17–19: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY

Second short paper to be assigned Tuesday, March 17.

- Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427–460.
- Brett Ashley Leeds, “Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation,” *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 4 (1999): 979–1002.

MARCH 24–26: AUDIENCE COSTS

Second short paper due Tuesday, March 24.

- James D. Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577–592.
- Jack Snyder and Erica D. Borghard, “The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound,” *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (2011): 437–456.
- *Recommended:*
 - Kenneth A. Schultz, “Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises,” *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (1998): 829–844.

MARCH 31–APRIL 2: DOMESTIC POLITICS AND ALLIANCE COMMITMENTS

- Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, “Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations,” *International Organization* 50, no. 1 (1996): 109–139.
- Brett Ashley Leeds, “Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties,” *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (2003): 801–827.
- *Recommended:*
 - Erik Gartzke and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Why Democracies May Actually Be Less Reliable Allies,” *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004): 775–795.
 - Brett Ashley Leeds, Michaela Mattes, and Jeremy S. Vogel, “Interests, Institutions, and the Reliability of International Commitments,” *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 2 (2009): 461–476.

APRIL 7–9: MAKING PEACE

Third short paper to be assigned Tuesday, April 7.

- Joseph Farrell and Matthew Rabin, “Cheap Talk,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 10, no. 3 (1996): 103–118.
- Andrew Kydd, “Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 4 (2003): 597–611.
- Burcu Savun, “Information, Bias, and Mediation Success,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2008): 25–47.
- *Recommended:*
 - Katja Favretto, “Should Peacemakers Take Sides? Major Power Mediation, Coercion, and Bias,” *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 2 (2009): 248–263.
 - Kyle C. Beardsley, “Pain, Pressure, and Political Cover: Explaining Mediation Incidence,” *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 4 (2010): 395–406.
 - Shawn Ling Ramirez, “Diplomatic Flexibility in the Shadow of an Audience: The Double-Edged Sword of Private Mediation” (working paper, Emory University, 2013).

APRIL 14–16: KEEPING PEACE

Third short paper due Tuesday, April 14.

- Virginia Page Fortna, “*Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace,*” *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003): 337–372.
- Suzanne Werner and Amy Yuen, “*Making and Keeping Peace,*” *International Organization* 59, no. 2 (2005): 261–292.
- *Recommended:*
 - J. Michael Greig and Paul F. Diehl, “*The Peacekeeping–Peacemaking Dilemma,*” *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (2005): 621–645.

APRIL 27: FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be held on Monday, April 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.