

International Security

Department of Political Science
Sam Houston State University



POLS 5367.01
CRN 81038
Online Course, Fall 2021



Overview & Goals

Why do countries go to war? Are the reasons unique to each situation or are there any generalizable determinants of war? This course is a systematic exploration of these questions.

Our approach is organized around four levels of analysis. In each unit, we'll dig into the major theories and debates that shape the study of war in international relations. We'll begin by looking at features of the international system and exploring when and why the system has been more or less war-prone. Then we'll drill down to the domestic level, exploring whether certain types of countries are more or less likely to go to war. Midway through the semester, we'll pivot and look at dyads, asking whether the qualities of pairs of states make them more or less likely to go to war. Finally, we'll look at individual leaders, exploring the roles they play in war. As we move through each level, we'll pair our readings with discussions of cases and current events asking ourselves whether and how well our theories help us explain and understand the world as we find it.

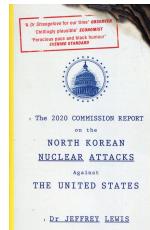
In this seminar, students will...

- ◆ Explore and analyze various theories of international war and conflict
- ◆ Apply theories to current and historical cases
- ◆ Develop a better understanding of the tradeoffs of using different levels of analysis in international relations
- ◆ Improve writing skills, particularly the ability to synthesize and apply theoretical material



Course Materials

1. Lewis (2018) *The 2020 Commission Report on the North Korean Nuclear Attacks Against the United States: A Speculative Novel*.
2. All other readings are available through Bb.



Requirements

Seminar Participation (10%)

Our primary interaction in this course will occur in our virtual classroom, the discussion board. Each week, you'll be required to post at least twice. See Bb for details.

Seminar Leadership (5%)

In one of the non-essay weeks (starting August 25), you and at least one other classmate will take the lead on the discussion board. Your job is to post an initial prompt or two within 24 hours of the start of the week and continue to advance the discussion throughout the week.

Engaging the Material (ETM) Assignments (35%)

In most weeks, you'll complete a short writing exercise (1-2 pages) forcing you to engage the material more deeply. The type of assignment will change from week to week. We'll use some of these as the basis for our discussions and they'll be useful as you pull together your thoughts for your unit and final essays.

Unit Essays (30%)

At the end of units 2 and 4, you will write a 5-6 page essay in response to a specific prompt. Please see Bb for details.

Analytical Paper on Final Case (20%)

In the final week of the course, we'll discuss the Lewis' book, *The 2020 Commission Report*, focusing on whether the theories we've discussed throughout the semester help us assess the likelihood of Lewis' hypothetical situation. As a final project, you'll pull your thoughts together in an essay of 7-10 pages. See Bb for details.

Course Policies

Deadlines

In order to avoid a penalty, all assigned work must be completed and submitted by due date/times indicated. Any assignment submitted within 24 hours of the original deadline will receive a 10% penalty. I will not accept assignments submitted more than 24 hours past the original deadline. If you anticipate any issues with this generally or for a specific assignment, please communicate with me in advance of the deadline.

It is always good practice to generate some sort of receipt when submitting assignments through Bb. Make sure the system is set up to send you an email or take a screenshot.

Determining Your Grade

Your current running total/grade will always be available on Blackboard. The final letter grade will be determined as follows per University policy. Please note that there are no D's for graduate studies! I am happy to discuss your grade at any point in the semester. If you're concerned or have questions about anything, please email me, and we'll arrange a time to discuss.

EARNED	GRADE	DENOTATION
90-100%	A	Excellent
80-89%	B	Acceptable
70-79%	C	Pass, insufficient
below 70%	F	Failure

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Zoom: <https://shsu.zoom.us/my/jasonenia>

Campus Office Hours: MW 12-1p; by appt.*

*Please note: Most weekdays, I am in my office on campus for some if not all of the day. If you need to meet in person or via Zoom outside my office hours, contact me to make an appointment.

Academic Integrity

[SHSU Academic Policy Statement](#)

[810213](#) reads in part: "The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsification of research data, or the abuse of resource materials on an examination or other academic work. Any student accused of dishonesty is subject to academic penalties and may be referred to the Dean of Student's office for additional disciplinary action." Please read the policy carefully, as it defines each of the forms of academic dishonesty mentioned.

I have a zero-tolerance approach to these issues: Plagiarized work and any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" on the assignment. It could also result in additional disciplinary action taken by the university. Students have a right to appeal to the department chair, then to the dean, and eventually to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The specific disciplinary procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in [Academic Policy Statement 810213](#).

If you have any questions, please ask! I am always happy to help point you in the right direction if you have questions about proper attribution and/or citation.

Religious Holy Days

[SHSU Academic Policy Statement](#)

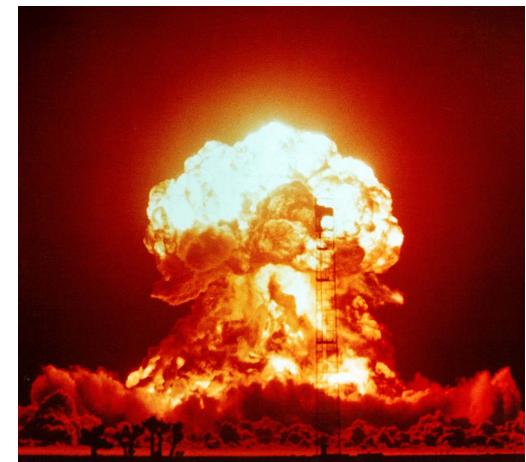
[861001](#) states: "Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other

required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time." Section 2.02 states "A student who is excused under this section may not be penalized, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or exam."

Disability Services

[SHSU Academic Policy Statement](#)

[811006](#) reads: "It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity or in employment." The policy continues, "The SHSU Section 504/ADA Coordinator for student academic-related matters is the Director of the SHSU Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), located in the Lee Drain Building Annex, SHSU Box 2091, Huntsville, Texas 77341, with telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu. SHSU and SSD promote full and equal access on the part of otherwise qualified students with disabilities to the educational and extra-curricular programs, activities, and services of the University. Students seeking academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services under Section 504 or the ADA should contact SSD. SSD makes the initial determinations regarding such requests."



Course Introduction (August 16-17)

What do we mean by the “scientific study of war”?

Readings

- Bueno de Mesquita (2014) “Evaluating arguments about international politics,” in *Principles of Int’l Politics*, pp. 35-63.
- Quackenbush (2015) “The Scientific Study of War” & “Concept in Focus: Reading Tables of Regression Results” in *International Conflict: Logic & Evidence*, pp. 3-13; 131.
- Nye & Welch (2017) “Explaining Conflict & Cooperation: Tools and Techniques of the Trade” in *Understanding Global Conflict & Cooperation*, pp. 39-80.

Optional but Highly Recommended

- Shore (2016) “How to Read, Part I: Dissecting a Text,” pp. 8-39.
- Shore (2016) “How to Read, Part II: Critiquing a Text,” pp. 40-55.

Notes

- The “optional” readings aren’t just throwaways—I still find them very useful and refer to them often!
- You might consider reading the Lewis book (see Unit 5) as soon as you can get your hands on it. I found it a fast read. If you read it early, it will give you a set of things to think about throughout the course. Also, at the end of the semester—when things are typically much busier—you’ll only have to “revisit” it rather than read it for the first time.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 8/17 Make sure you’ve engaged with all material in the pre-week folder and introduced yourself on the discussion board.

UNIT 1: War as a Function of the International System (August 18-September 14)

1.1 What is the nature of the international system? What incentives does it create around conflict & cooperation? (August 18-24)

Readings

- Nye (2009) “The Peloponnesian War,” in *Understanding International Conflicts*, 13-20.
- Morgenthau (1948, 1978 5th edition) *Politics Among Nations*, 3-15; 27-39; 167-177.
- Herz (1950) “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma” *World Politics* 2(2): 157-180.
- Waltz (1979) *Theory of International Politics*, 79-128.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 8/21 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
8/24 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
8/24 Submit ETM 1 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

1.2 Does anarchy incentivize states to behave offensively or defensively? Comparing the flavors of neorealism (August 25-31)

Readings

- Jervis (1978) “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30(2): 167-214.
- Van Evera (1999) “Offense, Defense & the Security Dilemma,” in *Causes of War*, 117-192.
- Lynn-Jones (1995) “Offense-defense Theory and its Critics,” *Security Studies* 4(4): 660-691.
- Mearsheimer (2014) “Anarchy & the Struggle for Power” in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 29-54.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 8/26 Discussion leaders’ initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT.
8/28 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
8/31 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
8/31 Submit ETM 2 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

1.3 Which type of international system is most stable? Which is most peaceful? The debate over polarity (September 1-7)

Readings

- Deutsch & Singer (1964) “Multipolar Power Systems & International Stability,” *World Politics* 16(3): 390-406.
- Waltz (1964) “The Stability of a Bipolar World,” reprinted from *Daedalus*, 319-342.
- Mearsheimer (2014) “The Causes of Great Power War” in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 334-359.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 9/1 Discussion leaders’ initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT.
9/4 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
9/7 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
9/7 Submit ETM 3 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

<p>1.4 What happens when relative power capabilities change? Power transition and hegemonic stability theories (September 8-14)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhamey & Kugler (2020) "A Hierarchical Approach," in <i>Power, Space & Time</i>, pp. 1-18. Kugler & Organski (1989) "The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation," in <i>Handbook of War Studies</i>, 171-194. Gilpin (1988) "The Theory of Hegemonic War," <i>The Journal of Interdisciplinary History</i> 18(4): 591-613. Yves-Heng Lim (2015) "How (Dis)Satisfied is China? A Power Transition Theory Perspective," <i>Jnl of Contemporary China</i> 24(92): 280-297. 	<p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/9 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT. 9/11 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT. 9/14 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT. 9/14 Submit ETM 4 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.
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UNIT 2: War as a Function of State Characteristics (September 15-October 5)

2.1 How much does regime type matter? Are democracies inherently more peaceful? (September 15-21)

Readings

- Small & Singer (1976) "The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes, 1816–1965," *Jerusalem Jnl of Int'l Relations* 1(4): 50–69.
- Mansfield & Snyder (1995) "Democratization & the Danger of War," *Int'l Security* 20(1): 5-38.
- Levy (2008) "Preventative War and Democratic Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 52(1): 1-24.
- Quackenbush & Rudy (2009) "Evaluating the Monadic Democratic Peace," *Conflict Management & Peace Science* 26(3): 268-285.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 9/16 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/18 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/21 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/21 Submit ETM 5 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

2.2 Does internal conflict breed external conflict? (September 22-28)

Readings

- Oakes (2012) "The Causes & Consequences of Diversionary War," and "A Diversionary War," in *Diversionary War*, 12-44; 75-99.
- Powell (2014) "Regime Vulnerability and the Diversionary Threat of Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(1): 69-196.
- Walt (1992) "Revolution and War," *World Politics* 44(3): 321-368.
- Gleditsch et al. (2008) "Fighting at Home, Fighting Abroad: How Civil Wars Lead to International Disputes," *Jnl of Conflict Resolution* 52(4): 479-506.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 9/23 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/25 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/29 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 9/28 Submit ETM 6 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/5 Essay #1 due via Bb at 11PM CDT.

2.3 Is there a relationship between nationalism and war? (September 29-October 5)

Readings

- Van Evera (1994) "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18(4), pp. 5–39.
- Miller (2013) "The State-to-Nation Balance and War," in *Nationalism and War*, pp. 73-96.
- Hutchinson (2018) Does Nationalism Cause War?

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 10/2 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/5 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/5 Essay #1 due via Bb at 11PM CDT.

UNIT 3: War as a Function of International (Dyadic) Interactions (October 6-26)

3.1 Are neighboring states more likely to go to war? Contiguity & territorial disputes (October 6-12)

Readings

- Vasquez (1995) "Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction or Territoriality," *Jnl of Peace Research* 32(3): 277-293.
- Hensel and Goemans (2021) "Territorial Issues," in Mitchell & Vasquez eds. *What Do We Know About War? 3rd ed.*, 12-15.
- Mohan (2016) "Ideology, Territorial Saliency, and Geographic Contiguity: The Beginning of India–Pakistan Rivalry," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 16(3): 371-407.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 10/9 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/13 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/13 Submit ETM 7 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

3.2 Does regime type matter more in the context of a dyad? Democracy reconsidered (October 13-19)

Readings

- Sobek (2009) "The Democratic Peace," in *The Causes of War*, 84-106.
- Mousseau (2021) "The Liberal Peace," in Mitchell & Vasquez eds. *What Do We Know About War? 3rd ed.*, 141-157.

Important Dates & Deadlines

- 10/14 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/16 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/19 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT.
- 10/19 Submit ETM 8 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.

<p>3.3 If both countries have nuclear weapons, is war more or less likely? (October 20-26)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schelling (1966) "The Nuclear Contribution to Terror and Violence," in <i>Arms & Influence</i>, 18-26. • Trachtenberg (1991) "Strategic Thought in America, 1952–1966," in <i>History and Strategy</i>, 3–46. • Waltz (1990) "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 84(3): 731–745. • Fuhrmann (2021) "Nuclear Weapons," in Mitchell & Vasquez eds. <i>What Do We Know About War?</i> 3rd ed., 103-119. • Schelling (2009) "A World Without Nuclear Weapons," <i>Daedalus</i> 138(4): 124-129. 	<p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10/21 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT. 10/23 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT. 10/26 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT. 10/26 Submit ETM 9 assignment by 11:59PM CDT.
<h3 style="background-color: #f2e0aa; padding: 5px;">UNIT 4: War as a Function of Individuals (October 27-November 9)</h3>	
<p>4.1 Are humans simply aggressive animals? The nature vs. nurture dispute applied to violence (October 27-November 2)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashman (2014) "The Individual Level of Analysis, Part I: Human Aggression," in <i>What Causes War?</i>, 2nd ed., 13-48. 	<p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10/28 Discussion leaders' initial posts/threads posted by 11:59PM CDT. 10/30 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT. 11/2 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT. 11/2 Submit ETM 10 assignment by 11:59PM CDT. 11/9 Essay #2 due via Bb at 11:59PM CDT.
<p>4.2 How much weight should we give to the psychology and personality of individual leaders? (November 3-9)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyman & Pollack (2001) "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In" <i>Int'l Security</i> 25(4): 107-146. • Stoessinger (2008) "The Temptations of Victory: Korea," in <i>Why Nations Go to War</i>, 63-99. • Stoessinger (2008) <i>Why Nations Go to War</i>, 385-400. • Yarhi-Milo (2018) <i>Who Fights for Reputation?</i>..., 1-18; 19-43. 	<p>Notes</p> <p>➡ Begin to read/revisit the Lewis book for our discussion next week.</p> <p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/6 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT. 11/9 Second post due by 11:59PM CST. 11/9 Essay #2 due via Bb at 11:59PM CST.
<h3 style="background-color: #f2e0aa; padding: 5px;">UNIT 5: Analyzing a Fictional Case Involving DPRK (November 10-23)</h3>	
<p>5.1 Bringing everything together to analyze a fictional nuclear attack on the United States (November 10-23)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewis (2018) <i>The 2020 Commission Report on the North Korean Nuclear Attacks Against the United States: A Speculative Novel</i>. 	<p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/14 First discussion board post due by 11:59PM CDT. 11/23 Second post due by 11:59PM CDT. 12/8 Final essay due via Bb at 11:59PM CST.
<h3 style="background-color: #f2e0aa; padding: 5px;">Course Conclusions (November 29-December 8)</h3>	
<p>Concluding Thoughts (November 29-December 8)</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashman (2014) "Conclusion," in <i>What Causes War?</i>, 2nd ed., 477-489. 	<p>Important Dates & Deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12/8 Final essay due via Bb at 11:59PM CST.