

International Relations

Master in Social Sciences
Carlos III-Juan March Institute

Spring 2025

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Office: 18.2.D15 (by appointment)

Time and place:

Thursdays, 10h–13h

Room 18.1.A01

1 Description

This is a graduate-level course on contemporary research in International Relations, focusing on conflict. IR has traditionally focused on the causes, dynamics, and consequences of aggression and cooperation between states, usually in the form of the study of war and peace. We will focus on the study of international conflict, but also on related topics that are often considered within or related to IR, such as the study of internal conflict and processes of political violence, the nature of state size and borders, the influence of the international system on domestic institutions, or processes of international diffusion of norms. We focus on recent research and on the methodological aspect of studying these topics empirically.

2 Requirements and grading

Each session will consist of a brief lecture introducing the topic and the main concepts, followed by a seminar discussion on the required readings. Students are expected to attend every week, read the required readings in advance, and actively participate in the discussion. Course grading is based on the final research paper, and failing to participate in the other activities (seminar discussions, presentation, and final workshop) will penalize.

Participation: Students are expected to participate in all seminar discussions, sharing comments, criticisms, and question. Horizontal discussion is key for learning.

Presentation: Once during the semester, each student will present one of the complementary readings in class, discussing how it relates and complements the main readings.

Final research paper: Students are expected to write a short empirical research paper (maximum 4,000 words) in one of the topics covered in the course, using empirical evidence (qualitative, quantitative, or both) to answer a research question. A proposal will be presented and discussed in the last session in class, participation in the workshop will also be taken into account. Deadline for final essay: TBD (around late May).

3 Course outline

Session 1	January 30	Introduction
Session 2	February 6	Interstate war
Session 3	February 13	State-building, nationalism, and war
Session 4	February 20	Democracy, war, and peace
Session 5	February 27	Civil wars
Session 6	March 6	Political economy
Session 7	March 13	Disaggregating and predicting conflict
Session 8	March 20	Wartime violence
Session 9	March 27	Terrorism
Session 10	April 3	Legacies of conflict
Session 11	April 10	Constructivism, norm diffusion, and TJ
<i>No class</i>	April 24	
Session 12	May 8	Research workshop

Note: Some readings might change, I will notify well in advance.

Session 1: Introduction

Complementary:

- Stephen M. Walt (1998) [International Relations: One World, Many Theories](#). *Foreign Policy* 110: 29–32, 34–46.
- David A Lake (2011) [Why ‘isms’ Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 465–480.
- John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt (2013) [Leaving theory behind: Why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for International Relations](#). *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 427–457.
- Emmanuel Adler (1997) [Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics](#). *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3): 319–363.

Session 2: Interstate war

Required:

- Kenneth N. Waltz (1959) *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press. [Chapters 2, 4, and 6.]
- Paul Huth, Christopher Gelpi, and D. Scott Bennett (1993) *The Escalation of Great Power Militarized Disputes: Testing Rational Deterrence Theory and Structural Realism*. *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 609–623.

Complementary:

- James D. Fearon (1995) *Rationalist Explanations for War*. *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.
 - Kalevi J. Holsti (1991) *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648-1989*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [esp. Chapter 1, pp. 1–24.]
 - Brett Ashley Leeds (2003) *Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes*. *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 427–439.
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Session 3: State-building, nationalism, and war

Required:

- Sascha O. Becker, Andreas Ferrara, Eric Melander, and Luigi Pascali (2020) *Wars, Taxation and Representation: Evidence from Five Centuries of German History*. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 15601.
- Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min (2006) *From Empire to Nation-State: Explaining Wars in the Modern World, 1816–2001*. *American Sociological Review* 71: 867–897.
- Agustina S. Paglayan (2022) *Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building*. *American Political Science Review* 116(4): 1242–1257.

Complementary:

- Carl Müller-Crepon, Guy Schvitz, and Lars-Erik Cederman (2024) *“Right-Peopling” the State: Nationalism, Historical Legacies, and Ethnic Cleansing in Europe, 1886-2020*. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, online first.

- Harris Mylonas (2012) [The politics of nation-building: Making co-nationals, refugees, and minorities](#). Cambridge University Press (chapters 1–2).
 - Mark Mazower (2002) [Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century](#). *American Historical Review* 107(4): 1158–1178.
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Session 4: Democracy, war, and peace

Required:

- William Dixon (1994) [Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts](#). *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 14–32.
- Lars-Erik Cederman (2001) [Back to Kant: Reinterpreting the Democratic Peace as a Macrohistorical Learning Process](#). *American Political Science Review* 95(1): 15–31.
- Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward (2006) [Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization](#). *International Organization* 60(4): 911–933.

Complementary:

- Christopher Layne (1994) [Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace](#). *International Security* 19(2): 5–49.
 - Michael D. Ward and Kristian S. Gleditsch (1998) [Democratizing for Peace](#). *American Political Science Review* 92(1): 51–61.
 - John R. Oneal, Bruce Russett, and Michael L. Berbaum (2003) [Causes of Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885–1992](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 47(3): 371–393.
 - Jon Pevehouse and Bruce Russett (2006) [Democratic International Governmental Organizations Promote Peace](#). *International Organization* 60(4): 969–1000.
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Session 5: Civil wars

Required:

- James D. Fearon and David Laitin (2003) [Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War](#) *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75–90.
- Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010) [Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis](#). *World Politics* 62(1): 87–119.

Complementary:

- Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis (2000) [International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis](#). *American Political Science Review* 94(4): 779–802.
 - Barry Posen (1993) [The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict](#). *Survival* 35:1: 27–47.
 - Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Nils B. Weidmann (2011) [Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison](#). *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 478–495.
 - Stathis Kalyvas and Laia Balcells (2010) [International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict](#). *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 415–429.
 - Chaim Kaufmann (1996) [Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars](#). *International Security* 20:4: 136–175.
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Session 6: Political economy

Required:

- Erik Gartzke (2007) [The Capitalist Peace](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 166–191.
- Vally Koubi, Gabriele Spilker, Tobias Böhmelt, and Thomas Bernauer (2014) [Do natural resources matter for interstate and intrastate armed conflict?](#) *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 227–243.
- Nicolas Berman, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner, and Mathias Thoenig (2017) [This Mine is Mine! How Minerals Fuel Conflicts in Africa](#). *American Economic Review* 107(6): 1564–1610.

Complementary:

- Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti (2004) [Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach](#). *Journal of Political Economy* 112(4): 725–753.
- Oeindrila Dube and Juan F. Vargas (2013) [Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia](#). *The Review of Economic Studies* 80(4): 1384–1421.
- Graeme Blair, Darin Christensen, and Aaron Rudkin (2021) [Do Commodity Price Shocks Cause Armed Conflict? A Meta-Analysis of Natural Experiments](#). *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 709–716.

- Philip Hunziker and Lars-Erik Cederman (2017) [No extraction without representation: The ethno-regional oil curse and secessionist conflict](#). *Journal of Peace Research* 54(3): 365–381.

Session 7: Disaggregating and predicting conflict

Required:

- Güneş Murat Tezcür (2016) [Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Participation in an Ethnic Rebellion](#). *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 247–264.
- Nils W. Metternich, Cassy Dorff, Max Gallop, Simon Weschle, and Michael D. Ward (2013) [Antigovernment Networks in Civil Conflicts: How Network Structures Affect Conflictual Behavior](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 892–911.
- Jason Lyall (2009) [Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya](#). *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331–362.

Complementary:

- Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein (2008) [Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436–455.
- Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky and Stathis N. Kalyvas (2011) [Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 201–218.
- Monica D. Toft and Yuri M. Zhukov (2015) [Islamists and Nationalists: Rebel Motivation and Counterinsurgency in Russia's North Caucasus](#). *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 222–238.
- Samuel Bazzi, Robert A. Blair, Christopher Blattman, Oeindrila Dube, Matthew Gudgeon, and Richard Peck (2022) [The Promise and Pitfalls of Conflict Prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia](#). *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 104(4): 764–779.

Session 8: Wartime violence

Required:

- Stathis Kalyvas (2006) [The Logic of Violence in Civil War](#). Cambridge University Press, 2006. Chapters 1 (16–31) and 7 (173–209).

- Laia Balcells (2010) [Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 54(2): 291–313.
- Nils B. Weidmann (2011) [Violence “from above” or “from below”? The Role of Ethnicity in Bosnia’s Civil War](#). *The Journal of Politics* 73(4): 1178–1190.

Complementary:

- Dara K. Cohen (2013) [Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence \(1980–2009\)](#). *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 461–477.
- Robert Braun (2016) [Religious Minorities and Resistance to Genocide: The Collective Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust](#). *American Political Science Review* 110(1): 127–147.
- Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew A. Kocher (2007) [How ‘Free’ is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem](#). *World Politics* 59(2): 177–216.

Session 9: Terrorism

Required:

- David Lake (2002) [Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty First Century](#). *International Organization* 56(1): 15–29.
- Luis de la Calle and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca (2011) [What We Talk About When We Talk About Terrorism](#). *Politics & Society* 39(3): 451–472.
- Robert Pape (2003) [The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism](#). *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343–361.

Complementary:

- Andrew. H Kydd and Barbara F. Walter (2006) [The Strategies of Terrorism](#). *International Security* 31(1): 49–80.
- Burcu Savun and Brian J. Phillips (2009) [Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism](#). *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(6): 878–904.
- Barbara F. Walter (2017) [The Extremist’s Advantage in Civil Wars](#). *International Security* 42(2): 7–39.
- Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir and Zachariah Mampilly (2015) “Introduction.” In: [Rebel governance in civil war](#). New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-20).

Session 10: Legacies of conflict

Required:

- Christopher Blattman (2009) [From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda](#). *American Political Science Review* 103(2): 231–247.
- Noam Lupu and Leonid Peisakhin (2017) [The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 61(4): 836–851.
- Arturas Rozenas and Yuri M. Zhukov (2019) [Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin’s ‘Terror by Hunger’](#). *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 569–583.

Complementary:

- Volha Charnysh and Leonid Peisakhin (2021) [The Role of Communities in the Transmission of Political Values: Evidence from Forced Population Transfers](#). *British Journal of Political Science* 52(1): 238–258.
- Summer Lindsey (2022) [Conflict, Protection, and Punishment: Repercussions of Violence in Eastern DR Congo](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 66(1): 187–204.
- Robert A. Blair, Manuel Moscoso-Rojas, Andrés Vargas Castillo, and Michael Weintraub (2022) [Preventing Rebel Resurgence after Civil War: A Field Experiment in Security and Justice Provision in Rural Colombia](#). *American Political Science Review* 116(4): 1258–1277.

Session 11: Constructivism, norm diffusion, and TJ

Required:

- Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) [International Norm Dynamics and Political Change](#). *International Organization* 52(4): 887–917.
- Hunjoon Kim (2012) [Structural determinants of human rights prosecutions after democratic transition](#). *Journal of Peace Research* 49(2): 305–320.
- Hunjoon Kim and Kathryn Sikkink (2010) [Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 54(4): 939–963.

Complementary:

- James Lebovic and Erik Voeten (2006) [The Politics of Shame: The Condemnation of Country Human Rights Practices in the UNHCR](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 50(4): 861–888.
- Kathryn Sikkink and Carrie Booth Walling (2007) [The Impact of Human Rights Trials in Latin America](#). *Journal of Peace Research* 44(4): 427–445.
- Tricia D. Olsen, Leigh A. Payne and Andrew G. Reiter (2010) [The Justice Balance: When Transitional Justice Improves Human Rights and Democracy](#). *Human Rights Quarterly* 32(4): 980–1007.

Session 12: Research workshop

No readings. Presentation of research projects and workshop discussion.
