PSC 645 Conflict Processes

Course Syllabus
Spring 2013

Classroom: 502 Park Hall
Class schedule: Tuesday 1-3:50 p.m.
Office hours: TR 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Office: 505 Park Hall

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Course description
This advanced graduate seminar is required for all Ph.D. majors in international relations and it will be assumed that, prior to taking this course, students have successfully completed PSC 504 Core Seminar in International Politics. It provides an in-depth coverage of the evolution of international conflict (causes, escalation, ending & peace-building) from several theoretical angles. We will discuss major theories that link conflict to power distributions, strategic bargaining, domestic regime type (democratic peace and beyond), alliances, and political geography. The readings include a selection of classic seminal writings as well as more recent studies in each area.

Reading materials
All required readings for the course consist of selected book chapters and journal articles. If not available through the UB electronic journal holdings (http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/e-resources/ft.html), they can be accessed on UBLearns for this course (marked with *UBLearns in the schedule below). You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download all materials.

Course Requirements
Final grades will be based on three components: class participation (20%), two short papers (30%), and a final exam (50%).

- **Class participation**: Students are expected to complete the assigned readings each week according to the topic covered. For this part of the grade, students will be expected to perform consistently well both when participating on a voluntary basis as well as when called upon to discuss the readings. Class participation will count for 20% of the final grade.

- **Two short papers**: Beyond regular attendance and active participation in class discussion, each student is expected to make two brief (10-15 minute) in-class presentations on the weekly topics, followed by a discussion guided by the presenter, which should be based on a short paper to be e-mailed to me by 4 p.m. one day before the scheduled class for that topic.
Any papers attempted to be submitted after 4 pm will automatically default into F grade. These papers and presentations should highlight the principle points of all the week’s readings, provide the points of comparisons across the readings (similarities, differences, etc.), and critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. They should not be simple summaries of the readings or annotated bibliographies; suggestions on how to analytically and critically evaluate the readings will be detailed in an additional handout. If there is an “overview” article, it provides the context for a better understanding of the required readings to be discussed in your paper (that is, do not cover in any major details the “overview” articles). The papers should be approximately 6 pages double-spaced; the 7th page should list the total of six talking points for discussions that are clearly grounded in the specific readings (that is, they need to refer to specific pages from the readings, but without using up space with quotes). As for their in-class presentations, they are meant to help focus the class discussion on the week’s topic readings. Each short paper/presentation will count for 15% of the overall course grade, for a total of 30%.

- **Final exam:** The take-home final exam is similar in format to the comprehensive exams in international relations, although it will be shorter and with an extended time of one week. It will be distributed in class on April 24 and will be due by 4 p.m. on May 1. Although both hard copy and electronic versions are preferable, an electronic version is required and must reach me by e-mail by the deadline. The final exam will count toward 50% of the final grade.

Written assignments (short papers & final exam) should follow the Chicago Style Manual: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

**Excused Absences and Deadline Extensions**
This is a graduate-level seminar, and students are expected to be regularly prepared for and attend all classes. If the student is seeking an excused absence, s/he must notify me at least one day before the absence and provide full documentation no later than by the end of the second working day after the absence. The deadline extensions for short papers and the exam will not be granted, except ONLY in documented cases of serious illness. Otherwise, the failures to submit short review papers and the exam by the deadline will be graded F. The same applies for a failure to present a short paper and guide the discussion in class as scheduled. I will not grant an Incomplete grade for the course.

**Plagiarism Statement**
As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another person. In accordance with the definition, a student is committing plagiarism if s/he copies the work of another person and turn it in as his/her own, even if s/he should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. I will not tolerate any form of plagiarism and any case of scholastic dishonesty will result in an automatic grade F for the course. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism
and general academic dishonesty issues, please consult the UB pages and policy on these issues as a starting point, such as: http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml, http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/academic_integrity.pdf, and http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/plagiarism.html.

**Students with Disabilities Policy**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester.

**Copyright Statement**
Unless otherwise noted, the handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, web pages, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

**Scholarly Journals**
Students should be familiar with the primary journals in international relations:
- *International Studies Quarterly*
- *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *International Organization*

specialized in the conflict area, additionally:
- *Conflict Management and Peace Science*
- *International Interactions*
- *International Security*
- *Journal of Peace Research*
- *Security Studies*

and articles on international politics in more general journals in the discipline:
- *American Political Science Review*
- *American Journal of Political Science*
- *Journal of Politics*
- *World Politics*
- *British Journal of Political Science*

All these journals should be perused regularly and, if unfamiliar with some of them, a good start would be to read those articles that are relevant for the topics in this course.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1: January 15
COURSE INTRODUCTION
No readings.

Week 2: January 22
GENERAL OVERVIEW

General Theoretical Issues

Conceptualizing Conflict Processes

Historical Patterns

Week 3: January 29
STRUCTURAL AND DYADIC POWER BALANCES/SHIFTS

Week 4: February 5
STRATEGIC BARGAINING AND DETERRENCE I


Week 5: February 12
STRATEGIC BARGAINING AND DETERRENCE II

Overview: Danilovic, Vesna, and Joe Clare. 2010. [see the previous week]


Week 6: February 19
ALLIANCE FORMATION


Week 7: February 26
ALLIANCE RELIABILITY AND CONFLICT


Week 8: March 5
TERRITORIAL ISSUES AND THE ‘STEPS TO WAR’


**Week 9: March 12**
NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

**Week 10: March 19**
DOMESTIC REGIME TYPE I


**Week 11: March 26**
DOMESTIC REGIME TYPE II

Overview: Chan, Steve. 2010. [see the previous week]


Week 12: April 2
NO CLASS – THE INSTRUCTOR IS AT THE ISA CONFERENCE

Week 13: April 9
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND MEDIATION


Week 14: April 16
MAKING AND KEEPING PEACE


Week 15: April 23
STUDENT READING SELECTIONS
Each student will select and present in class one article published in the past 4-5 years (ca. 2008-2013) in the listed journals on p. 3 of this syllabus. The article needs to be related directly to one or more topics in this course and its selection justified on the grounds of its theoretical relevance and research contribution to the select body of literature covered in this course. I have to be notified about the article selection by April 9 at the latest. An article proposal has to be accompanied by a brief paragraph justifying the selection (your view – not the author’s abstract - on what kind of contribution it makes to which specific topic(s) in this course, and how).

Take-home exam will be given in class on April 23 --- it is due by 4 p.m. on April 30

~Have a Good Summer~