

## Causes of War and Peace

Political Science 337

Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Carolyn Shaw  
Class: M/W 9:30 – 10:45; HH 219  
Office hours: MW-Th 11:00 – 1:00; T/Th 9:00-11:00 or by appt.  
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I will be available for IM during my office hours if that is more convenient than coming to my office.

- \* This course is a *further studies* course in general education. In order to receive general education credit as a further studies course, a political science *introductory* general education course (PS 121, PS 220 or PS 226) is a prerequisite.

### Overview of the Course

This course examines the underlying and immediate causes of war as well as the potentials for peace in conflicts around the world. The course is divided into four broad segments: Elements of Conflict, Causes of Conflict, Dynamics of Conflict, and Resolution of Conflict. Case studies of actual conflicts will be used to introduce specific concepts within each segment. Some theoretical underpinnings of conflict and conflict resolution will also be introduced.

The learning objectives for this class are for students to:

1. understand the elements of conflict such as who the players are and what they want
2. understand the complexities of why conflicts get started, how (and why) they escalate or de-escalate, and how and why outsiders get involved
3. understand how and why conflicts end, and whether they are likely to stay that way
4. apply their understanding of these different elements of conflict in order to explain new conflict situations.

We will begin each section of the course with small group discussion of real cases of conflict used to explore and illustrate key concepts. These sessions will be followed by a more in-depth discussion building on the sample cases.

### Requirements

Students are expected to **attend class regularly**. Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the semester. Four recorded absences are allowed before points will be deducted from the attendance grade. Students are **expected to participate in class** by engaging in small group discussions, making comments and asking questions. There will be an opportunity at the beginning of most classes for students to discuss current events in international politics, as well as numerous other chances to present and defend different points of view.

We will have regular class discussions. Students are expected to **finish the assigned readings before class** in order to contribute to and benefit from these discussions. If you are keeping up with current events in the news, this is a very good time to discuss them and see how they illustrate the concepts raised in discussions of other real world case studies.

Students are expected to read all of the assigned readings and to be able to **apply their understanding of the concepts** introduced in the readings and in class **to new case studies**. The assigned readings are all very relevant and apply directly to the concepts we are exploring in the class.

Students will **take four 'skills tests'** on the concepts introduced in the case studies and elaborated upon in class discussions and lectures. The details are discussed below.

There are **two writing projects** for the course to encourage students to think critically about conflict situations around the world and to develop their writing skills. The details of these assignments are discussed below.

### Honors Components

Students taking this class for honors credit will complete the work describe above, as well as additional theoretical readings assigned by Prof. Shaw. We will try to meet as a small discussion group once a week or once every other week. In addition, the optional revisions on the assigned papers are *required* for Honors students.

### Required Reading

All readings and video content is posted on the class Blackboard site (Bb). These materials are designed to be engaging and directly relevant to ongoing and historical conflicts around the world. They will include documentaries, YouTube videos, newspaper articles, various scholarly webpages, and other sources. It is my hope that by presenting you with such a wide and accessible variety of materials that they will capture your attention in a different way than traditional textbooks.

### Supplemental Reading

*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*, or other daily international news (links also available on Bb).

### Grading

Skills Tests	400 pts	100 points for each test (x 4)
Research Project		
Part I	200 pts	
Part II	200 pts	
Class Discussion / Attendance	100 pts	
Facebook project	50 pts	
Reflection Paper	50 pts	

\*\* All Assignments / Tests must be turned in by 9:00 am on the day they are due. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Extensions will only be given when a student has a documented medical excuse or extreme emergency as determined by the instructor. These must be communicated in a timely manner.

A = 930 - 1000 points

A - = 900 - 939

B+ = 850 - 899

B = 800 - 849

C+ = 750 - 790

C = 700 - 749

D+ = 650 - 699

D = 600 - 649

F = 599 or below

Success in this 3 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend on average 9 hours per week studying for the course, with three of those hours spent in class, for a total of 135 hours.

### WSU Blackboard (Bb)

This course is facilitated by Blackboard, an online web aid accessible to all WSU students. The Blackboard page for this course contains a copy of the syllabus, the writing assignments, study guides, class handouts, current course grades, and web links to a variety of topics on conflict resolution. In order to access this site ([www.blackboard.wichita.edu](http://www.blackboard.wichita.edu)) you need your student id number and pin number.

**All written work for this class must be submitted through Bb. If you have technical trouble with submission, send your work to me as an email attachment. I will always confirm receipt of email assignments. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please re-send it.**

### Class Discussion

Because this is a seminar-style class, your active participation is essential to the success of this course. Assessing and grading class participation is not a science, but I make every effort to ensure that assessments are as fair, reasonable and transparent as possible.

Your participation mark is based largely on the frequency and quality of your involvement in each week's class, with emphasis on quality. In evaluating participation I look for evidence that you have done the readings with sufficient attention to sustain discussion. You should always be prepared to succinctly summarize what you have read; be able to identify authors with their arguments; and to offer your own thoughtful and well-reasoned opinion on an author's argument. In short, you should demonstrate that you know what you have read, have thought about it, and can articulate an opinion on it.

A maximum of 3 points will be assigned for discussion days:

1 point—if you are present and physically occupying space in the room

2 points - if you make a contribution to discussion in the form of a question or comment

3 points- if you are actively engaged and providing constructive contributions, such as those that spur further discussion or debate, and particularly insightful comments or questions, such as those that reveal especially sound or nuanced understanding of the material.

When calculating the final participation grade, I will drop the lowest weekly score. I am happy to discuss your participation performance at any time.

I do consider the relative difficulty and quantity of the material, as well as students' prior exposure to the material. I do not expect brilliant insight every week on every topic. It is far more

important to demonstrate that you have completed the readings and thought critically about them. I recognize that you are human and occasionally cannot do all the reading, or are unable or unwilling to participate in a particular class. Some slack is built in to account for this (i.e., the lowest weekly grade is dropped).

### Skills Tests

The skills tests will be take-home essay exams due roughly every 3 weeks over the materials covered in each segment of the class. Students will pick a conflict of their own choosing and use it to discuss the key concepts that we have covered in class. The strongest essays are usually 3-5 pages. Test questions will be made available before class on Wednesdays and completed tests will be due by 9:00 am on the following Monday (before class).

### Reflection Paper

Students will write this paper after engaging in a role-play exercise on conflict resolution. The purpose is for students to reflect on the process as well as the outcome of the negotiations and consider how their experience relates to other negotiation processes that have been discussed in class. You must be in class on April 13 and 15 in order to write this paper.

Paper due on: Mon April 20.

### Research Project

Students will select a specific conflict/war for their research project. This assignment will be broken up into two parts. The first part will cover the historical background to the war. The second part will examine the efforts at resolution and the future prospects for peace in the region. Length: approximately 15-20 pages (total) Each part is approx. 8-10 pgs. Bibliography should include at least 10 sources from a variety of materials.

PART I due in class on Mon March 23

(Optional revisions to Part I due Monday April 6).

PART II due in class on Mon April 27.

(Optional revisions to Part II due Friday May 15 @ noon).

- \* OPTIONAL revisions [REQUIRED for Honors Students]: It is my firm belief that writing is a life skill that only improves with practice. I endeavor to provide constructive feedback to students on all of their written work in order for them to improve their writing skills. Students have the option of revising all of their writing assignments for a better grade if they choose to. IF you choose to turn in revisions, you must also turn in your original paper. The better of the two grades will be recorded for the class.

### Facebook Project

Students will join a special Facebook group with partners from universities in other countries. Each week (for 8 weeks) you will post a photo linked to a concept in international relations and explain why the image you picked comes to mind when you think of that concept. Ex: Freedom > picture of an American flag, someone dancing in a park, or an open jail cell. This project is designed to give students a chance to explore a variety of perspectives on some of the main concepts in international relations. Students will gain personal insights by reflecting on their own understandings of key terms and by sharing these with others. Students will also gain an appreciation of the variety of meanings behind concepts that may be personally or culturally based.

### Study Tips for Studying the Cases

Read carefully and critically. Not every article tells the full story, nor are they bias-free. As you read the “facts” about historical conflicts, ask yourself: Why did the conflict occur? Why was settlement not possible? It is likely that each author presents some but not all of the reasons, or does not directly answer these questions. Use the background of each conflict to think more analytically about the causes of war and peace.

### Academic Freedom / Respect for Others

Each student is expected to participate in class discussions. In any class that includes discussion of political ideas, there are bound to be many differing points of view. Students may not only disagree with each other, but may also have disparate views from the instructor on sensitive and volatile topics. It is my hope that these differences will enhance class discussion and create an atmosphere where students and instructor alike will be encouraged to think and learn. Therefore, be assured that your grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs or ideas expressed in class or your assignments. Rather, we will all respect the views of others when expressed in classroom discussions.

### Incompletes

An incomplete grade will only be given in the case of a documented medical or other emergency. To request an incomplete grade, a student must see me in my office and explain their need for an incomplete and fill out the necessary form. In most cases, it is in the student’s best interest to complete the assigned course work on schedule.

I will not withdraw students from the class. It is the students' responsibility to monitor their progress in the course and to initiate withdrawal procedures on their own if necessary. To withdraw from a class, students must do it officially through the Registrar, and the Tuition and Fees Office.

### Scholastic Dishonesty

As described in the Student Catalog, scholastic dishonesty constitutes a violation of college rules and regulations and is punishable according to the procedures outlined in the Catalog. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam, plagiarism, and collusion. Plagiarism includes use of another author’s words or arguments without attribution. Collusion is defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements. If a student commits any of these actions, I will seek disciplinary action in the form of an academic penalty, including a course grade of ‘F’.

<b>DATES</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Cases: * some cases may be subject to change</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
Jan 21 (W)	Introduction			
Jan 26 (M)	Elements of conflict	Actors	Syrian Civil War, current	<b>Bb Readings</b>
Jan 28 (W)	Elements of conflict	Actors		
Feb 2 (M)	Elements of conflict	Interests and Issues	Israeli-Gaza conflict	<b>Bb Readings</b>
Feb 4 (W)	Elements of conflict	Interests and Issues		<b>Skills Test 1 available (on Bb)</b>
Feb 9 (M)	Causes of conflict	Structures (System Level factors)	US/USSR Cold War, 1950s	<b>Skills Test 1 Due by 9:00 am (on Bb) Bb Readings</b>
Feb 11 (W)	Causes of conflict	Structures (System Level factors)		
Feb 16 (M)	TBD			
Feb 18 (W)	TBD			
Feb 23 (M)	Causes of conflict	Resources and Things (Tangibles)	South Sudan	<b>Bb Readings</b>
Feb 25 (W)	Causes of conflict	Resources and Things (Tangibles)		
March 2 (M)	Causes of conflict	Perceptions/ Fear/ Identity (Intangibles)	Bosnia, 1990s	<b>Bb Readings</b>
March 4 (W)	Causes of conflict	Perceptions/ Fear/ Identity (Intangibles)		<b>Skills Test 2 available (on Bb)</b>
March 9 (M)	Dynamics of Conflict	Escalation / De-escalation	Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962	<b>Skills Test 2 Due by 9:00 am (on Bb) Facebook post: Globalization Bb Readings</b>
March 11 (W)	Dynamics of Conflict	Escalation / De-escalation		
March 16 (M)	<b>Spring Break</b>	NO CLASS		<b>Facebook post: Power</b>
March 18 (W)	<b>Spring Break</b>	NO CLASS		
March 23 (M)	Dynamics of Conflict	Unilateral/ multilateral strategies	Colombia	<b>Research Paper Part I Due Facebook post: Security Bb Readings</b>
March 25 (W)	Dynamics of Conflict	Unilateral/ multilateral strategies		
March 30 (M)	TBD			<b>Facebook post: Cooperation</b>
April 1 (W)	TBD			

April 6(M)	Dynamics of Conflict	Third Party involvement	Afghanistan 1980s	<b>Optional Part I Revisions Due</b> <b>Facebook post: Development</b> <b>Bb Readings</b>
April 8 (W)	Dynamics of Conflict	Third Party involvement		<b>Skills Test 3 available (on Bb)</b>
April 13 (M)	Role Play Exercise			<b>Skills Test 3 Due by 9:00 am (on Bb)</b> <b>Facebook post: Refugees</b>
April 15 (W)	Role Play Exercise			
April 20 (M)	Role Play De-Briefing			<b>Reflection Paper due by 9:00 am</b> <b>Facebook post: Democracy</b>
April 22 (W)	Resolution of Conflict	Victory	Six-Day War, 1967	<b>Bb Readings</b>
April 27 (M)	Resolution of Conflict	Stalemate	Kashmir	<b>Research Paper Part II Due</b> <b>Facebook post: Terrorism</b> <b>Bb Readings</b>
April 29 (W)	Resolution of Conflict	Stalemate		
May 4 (M)	Resolution of Conflict	Negotiation / Mediation	Cambodia	<b>Bb Readings</b>
May 6 (W)	Resolution of Conflict	Negotiation / Mediation		<b>Skills Test 4 available (on Bb)</b>
May 11 (M) <b>8:00 AM FINAL</b>		TBD		<b>Skills Test 4 Due (on Bb) by 5:00 pm</b>
May 15 (F) @ noon				<b>Optional Part II Revisions Due</b>