
■ War & Power in International Politics

Instructor: Kyle Mackey
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PLSC: (380J)

Gen. Eds.: (N)
Course Material: ([Blackboard](#))
Course Dates: (January 07–25)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended for undergraduate students as an advanced course on the scientific study of war, the interaction between states in international politics. We will explore how power relations shape bargaining and compromise between states, and how domestic political institutions influence state behavior. More specifically, this course will address the following topics: power relations and the causes of war, war onset and escalation, military threats and coercive diplomacy, crisis bargaining and compromise, political survival and domestic institutions, war duration and settlements. The primary goal of this course will be to teach students how to critically assess competing explanations for war and state behavior in the modern international system.

READINGS

Readings for the course will consist of selected chapters from books and a set of articles (listed by week below). Articles and selected chapters will be posted in the appropriate topic folder in the **Course Documents** section on [Blackboard](#). Required books will not be posted on [Blackboard](#). The readings listed below use the following abbreviations:

- (B): Available online on Blackboard
 - (R): Book is required for class
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REQUIRED BOOKS

1. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 2. Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Read the syllabus!**

The syllabus is for the benefit of the class, and informs you of required readings, grading expectations, course policies, how to contact me, required assignments, and any other general information pertaining to this class.

- **Grading Scale:**

Students will be assessed according to the following Binghamton University grade scale:

A (93–100)	A– (90–92)	B+ (87–89)	B (83–86)	B– (80–82)
C+ (77–79)	C (73–76)	C– (70–72)	D (66–69)	F (< 65)

- **Grading:**

Most important to the course is keeping up with the reading material and being able to assess and compare the theoretical arguments you encounter in the literature. So the most important thing you must do is keep up with the readings and the posted lectures. Grades for the class will be based on:

Final Paper Proposal	◇	10%
Review Papers (2)	◇	15% ea.
Online Participation (3 wks.)	◇	10% ea.
+ Final Paper	◇	30%
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Total	◇	100%

- **Late Assignments:**

Students will be expected to fully understand the implications of turning in their assignments late. There are no excuses that will be accepted for late assignments. If an emergency arises, creating a situation where an assignment cannot be completed by the deadline, students are required to submit the work they have at the time of the emergency. Send me an email with the assignment as an attachment (kmackey1@binghamton.edu). I will judge the quality of the work, given the emergency that has occurred. Absent of an emergency, **all** late assignments will be penalized according to the following procedure:

Up to 1 hour past deadline	◇	1/2 letter grade (e.g. B+ = B–)
Each additional hour	◇	1 letter grade (e.g. B+ = C+)
8 hours past deadline	◇	Will not be accepted (will be given a 0)

- **Incomplete Assignments:**

Failure to complete any of the assignments for the course implies more than just a zero for that assignment. Students are required to complete all assignments, even if they will receive no credit after the assignment was submitted past the deadline. Failure to submit all assignments (late or on time) will result in a grade of **F** for the entire course, regardless of your overall grade in the class.

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Review Papers (2):**

Each student will write 2 review papers during the semester. You may write on any of the readings you prefer to write about. However, note that the expectation is that you elaborate on what you are writing about in each review, so don't write on all the readings (ideally 1-2,

and no more than 3). With the reading(s) you select, you will write a critical review of no less than 2 pages, and no more than 3 pages (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1 inch margins, double space).

These assignments are due to me electronically by 5pm (Eastern Standard Time) on January 19th and January 26th (see formal assignment deadlines section below). On Blackboard, upload your review papers within the **Assignments** section. This is a Turnitin assignment, so you must upload each paper to the Turnitin link in the assignments folder (link is called **Review Paper**). Each review paper constitutes 15% of your final grade. It will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtfulness, and how effectively it evaluates the reading(s) assessed. A guideline for the review papers will be distributed on [Blackboard](#).

- **Final Paper Proposal:**

Students are expected to submit a final paper proposal that provides a brief, but detailed, description of the following:

1. The research question
2. The historical case you are framing the paper around
3. Where the paper fits in the literature
4. What you are arguing and assessing
5. Broader merit of this research project

This assignment will consist of no more than a 2^{1/2} page, but no less than 1^{1/2} page paper (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1 inch margins, double space) with a separate page for any cited references. This paper is an actual paper, and is not considered to be an outline. Failure to take this assignment seriously will result in significant delays on writing the actual final paper (which is a bad thing in a 3 week course). Students will not be able to proceed with their final paper without (1) turning in the paper proposal, and (2) my approval. Students will turn in their paper proposal by **January 12th** at 5pm Eastern Standard Time, and will know if they can proceed with their paper topic by **January 14th**. Submit the paper proposal in the **Final Paper Proposal** folder in the **Assignments** section on [Blackboard](#). In that folder you will submit the assignment to the Turnitin link. A more detailed assignment guide will be posted in the assignments folder on Blackboard, but see also the assignment guidelines for the final paper to get a better understanding of what is expected for the assignment.

- **Online Participation (3 Weeks):**

Discussion is essential to this class. However, you may have noticed this is an online course! Therefore, discussion is slightly different, as is participation. Students are expected to post 2 questions every week, respond to at least 3 students that reply to their questions, and reply to 3 question posts by other students. If nobody responds to your questions, you will not be penalized for not replying to responses. You are required to post one question by Tuesday and a second question by Thursday for each week. All replies to students posting in response to your questions and your actual responses to other students are due by 5pm Eastern Standard Time on Saturday each week. A more detailed criteria for online discussion posts will be posted on [Blackboard](#) in the **Assignments** folder. You can find the forum for weekly discussion in the **Discussion** tab on Blackboard. Post required participation in the appropriate week folder.

- **Final Paper:**

Students will be required to submit a final paper that will focus on applying some of the topics discussed in this course to a particular historical case. The paper will be expected to have a foundation of argument and evidence, but will focus on taking a historical situation and applying some of the arguments discussed in this course to analyze what happened. The paper will be no less than 8 pages, and no more than 10 pages (Times New Roman, 12pt, 1 inch margins, double space), and students will submit a copy to the Turnitin link on Blackboard. An assignment sheet will be posted on [Blackboard](#) under the **Assignments** folder that discusses the final paper in greater detail. The final paper is due on January 23rd, 5pm (Eastern Standard Time).

FORMAL ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

Due Date	Assignment
01.12	Final Paper Proposal*
01.12	Online Participation (1)
01.19	Review Paper (1)*
01.19	Online Participation (2)
01.23	Final Paper*
01.26	Review Paper (2)*
01.26	Online Participation (3)

* Submit assignment to Turnitin

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	January	Description
1	07	Introduction, Epistemology & War
2	08–09	Introduction to Strategic Interaction
3	10–11	Bargaining Theory & War
4	14–15	Crisis, Signaling & Diplomacy
5	16–17	Political Survival & Domestic Institutions
6	18–21	Bargaining Power & War
7	22–25	War Termination

READING SCHEDULE

Topic 1: Introduction, Epistemology & War

◇ Monday, January 07

1. Please read the course syllabus and assignment guidelines posted on [Blackboard](#).
2. Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Wiley-Blackwell. Chapter 1. [\(B\)](#)

Topic 2: Introduction to Strategic Interaction◇ **Tuesday, January 08**

1. Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Wiley-Blackwell. Pgs. 55–70. ^(B)
2. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pgs. 6–13, 20–29. ^(R)

◇ **Wednesday, January 09**

1. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pgs. 39–53. Focus on pgs. 42–47, skim 39–41 & 48–53. ^(R)

Topic 3: Bargaining Theory & War◇ **Thursday, January 10**

1. Muthoo, Abhinay. 2000. A Non-Technical Introduction to Bargaining Theory. *World Economics* 1(2):145–166. ^(B)

◇ **Friday, January 11**

1. Reiter, Dan. 2003. Exploring the Bargaining Model of War. *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1):27–43. ^(B)

Topic 4: Crisis, Signaling & Diplomacy◇ **Monday, January 14**

1. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3. ^(R)

◇ **Tuesday, January 15**

1. Slantchev, Branislav L. 2011. *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 and pgs. 51–62. ^(B)

Topic 6: Political Survival & Domestic Institutions◇ **Wednesday, January 16**

1. Lake, David A. and Robert Powell. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4. ^(R)

◇ **Thursday, January 17**

1. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapter 6. ^(B)

Topic 6: Bargaining Power & War◇ **Friday, January 18**

1. Schelling, Thomas C. 1956. An Essay on Bargaining. *The American Economic Review* 46(3):281–306.^(B)

◇ **Monday, January 21**

1. Slantchev, Branislav L. 2003. The Principle of Convergence in Wartime Negotiations. *American Political Science Review* 97(4):621–632. **Read only:** 626–630 (*Discussion to Conclusion*).^(B)
2. Slantchev, Branislav L. 2003. The Power to Hurt: Costly Conflict with Completely Informed States. *American Political Science Review* 97(1):123–133. **Read only:** 127–131 (*Discussion to Conclusion*).^(B)

Topic 7: War Termination◇ **Tuesday, January 22**

1. Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1–3.^(R)

◇ **Wednesday, January 23**

1. Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 5.^(R)

◇ **Thursday, January 24**

1. Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 6.^(R)

◇ **Friday, January 25**

1. Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 7.^(R)

GUIDELINES & INFORMATION

- **Plagiarism & Cheating:**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious matters that, should they occur, will be pursued to the limits of University rules. Moreover, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course. For details regarding the University's policy on cheating and plagiarism and academic dishonesty more generally, see the University Handbook. Students are required for the course to retain all course material for all course work for at least two weeks after grades are received.

- **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities should register with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (607.777.2686), University Union (Room 119), ssd@binghamton.edu. Extra time and necessary arrangements can be made in conjunction with that office and the instructor.

- **Course Website:**

Please visit the course website on [Blackboard](#). I'll update it weekly with electronic versions of the chapters from books that are not listed as *required* for the course, as well as assigned journal articles.

- **Syllabus:**

The online version of the syllabus is the official syllabus for this course as it is updated periodically. I reserve the exclusive right to alter the syllabus if I feel such changes are necessary for the class. Visit the course website to view the most recent version of the syllabus (updated date is located at the lower right corner of the document). You will be notified in your Binghamton email of any changes to the syllabus. **You** as the student are responsible for having the most updated copy of this document, and I will make sure you are notified of any changes.

- **Internet Access & Assignments:**

Failure to complete an assignment because of a faulty or lacking internet signal will not be excused. Assignment dates and times are posted well in advance, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you will have adequate access to Blackboard during those and other times required to fulfill discussion requirements if necessary. All writing assignments are to be submitted through Turnitin, and students are required to hold evidence of paper submissions until two weeks after the final day of the class. Each time you submit to Turnitin, an electronic receipt is emailed to you—no receipt means something went wrong, so check your email after you submit to the Turnitin link. No evidence from Turnitin means the assignment will be treated as an incomplete assignment. **Remember, this is an online course. When in doubt, cover your bases when it comes to ensuring that you completed the assignments.**

- **Extra Credit:**

No extra credit assignments will be provided for this course, and I will not respond to requests for extra credit.