

POLSCI 3Q03 – THE CAUSES OF WAR

Winter 2019

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Course Description

This course will examine theoretical perspectives on the causes of war and conditions for peace between and within political communities. We will explore past and current debates regarding the origins and reasons for war, examine the theories related to war and apply these theories in the critical analysis of case studies of war and violent conflict. The causes of war and violent conflict will be discussed and analyzed using the Individual, the Substate, the State, The Dyadic, and the International system levels of analysis. The course will further focus on the implications that the knowledge of the causes of war has for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- Explore the basic historical background of the study of war and peace, its scope, relevance, fundamental concepts, and current debates and dilemmas.
- Expose students to the interdisciplinary approach to war and peace studies taking into consideration the ideas, theories and concepts relevant to the study of war.
- Apply critical thinking in the analysis of war, violence, and peace and explore practical applications of academic research on war.
- Consider the potential of individuals and groups to address war and promote peace.
- Examine the multiple challenges presented by war and identify potential solutions to overcome those challenges. Highlight directions for future research and practice in war and peace studies.
- Develop and practice presentation skills, expressing and supporting ideas, as well as defending clear positions on potentially controversial issues.
- Become proficient at writing essays and develop effective strategies for working on a group project.

Required Materials and Texts

- Cashman, Greg (2014) What Causes War? Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Additional readings for this course include academic and research articles, case studies, as well as online materials which are noted in the course outline. These resources and study materials are available through McMaster library, online or on Avenue to Learn (A2L).

Class Format

Active learning instructional strategies will be used to engage with the course material, promote academic knowledge acquisition, encourage interdisciplinary understanding, as well as practice individual and collective reflexivity. In addition to lectures, we will

discuss current events and news stories relevant to the course, complete exercises that challenge you to apply theory to practice, and engage in small group discussions.

I will introduce new material in an informal lecture with ample opportunity for questions and discussion. Lectures will highlight key concepts and arguments of the readings and additional material. Participatory action learning methods will be used to supplement lectures. We will aim to include group discussions and active learning activities based on a set of discussion questions. To prepare for the discussion, you should attempt to take a personal stance about the relevant reading or concept and be prepared to back your stance with clear arguments, examples and case studies. Please also dedicate some time during the week to learn about the current news and come to class prepared to share a news story on the topic of the day.

In addition, this course includes weekly 50-minute tutorials. Each tutorial group will contain a maximum of 25 students. Tutorials provide you with an invaluable opportunity to explore, question and critically discuss ideas and arguments introduced in class in a way that is not possible in large lectures. Lectures, discussions, readings and tutorials form an essential part of this course and students are encouraged to actively participate in these learning activities.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Reflective Essay – 15%, due February 1
2. Midterm test – 20%, February 15
3. Group Project and Presentation – 25%
4. Final Exam – 25%, April 2019
5. Tutorial and Class Participation – 15%

Course Evaluation – Details

Reflective Essay (15%), due February 1

Students will be asked to choose a war of interest to them and write a reflective paper based on their selected war case study. This reflective essay assignment (800-1000 words) should include the following:

- A statement of your own proposed definition and understanding of war. This understanding should be articulated in relation to the course concepts covered during the first few weeks of class. Please refer to four peer-reviewed academic resources that discuss war in regards to your chosen war case study.
- An explanation of how and why you have come to this definition of war and how your chosen war case study illustrates this definition.
- The discussion of one theory that relates to your case study. Please reflect on (1) how this theory helps explain the causes of this war, and (2) what aspects of this war cannot be explained by this theory.

- It is required to follow an APA style in this assignment.

The completed reflective essay is due on February 1.

Midterm test (20%), February 15

A mid-term test will be held In-Class on Friday, February 15th. This test will cover some of the fundamental facts, concepts and approaches introduced in the first part of our course. A midterm study guide explaining the test in detail will be provided on A2L and discussed in class.

Group Project and Presentation (25%)

Each tutorial will be divided in groups of approx. five students. Each group will choose a war case study and work on a research project together. Please reflect on: (1) the causes of the war you chose, and (2) the conditions for peace within the chosen case study. The group project includes two parts: a short research essay and a presentation; all members of each group are responsible for both parts of the group project. Each member of the group gets the same base grade for this assignment. However, extra points may be added or deducted depending on the individual group members' participation and performance in this project. Students are encouraged to collaborate to ensure that each member participates equally in preparation and presentation of this assignment.

Part I - Research Essay (15 %)

Each group will research and write a short essay (1300-1500 words) on the topic they chose. The essay must include: (1) a section introducing the case study, (2) the main body of the essay focusing on the causes of a specific war and the conditions for peace, (3) conclusion, (4) list of references. Please be specific and concise. Your discussion must engage with the materials discussed in the course as well as other credible resources. This essay provides a theoretical support for the Part II. Research essay is due April 2.

Part II – Presentation (10 %)

Each group will create a PowerPoint presentation or a video for educational purposes presenting their research. The purpose of this product is to offer a summary of the research essay, and to create awareness about the causes of war and the conditions for peace by examining a specific case study. The main product of the project will be an educational piece that can be presented outside the classroom in order to inform and educate others on the issues pertaining to war and peace.

The groups will have the opportunity to present group projects during week 12. The groups will have 5 minutes to present their material and there will be 5 minutes for questions and answers. Some groups will present during the tutorial,

others – during class. The selection of groups to present either in class or during tutorial will be random.

Tutorial and Class Participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend weekly classes and tutorials and actively participate in class and tutorial discussions. You will be marked on how well your comments reflect an engagement with the course material, not merely on how often you speak. Attendance is mandatory and will be considered in the participation grade as it is necessary to attend the class to be able to participate in it. Please let your TA know if illness or other emergencies keep you from attending a tutorial. Your TA will provide you with a more extensive description of his/her expectations.

Students are expected to come to each class and tutorial prepared to share a short news story on the topic of the day.

Final Exam (25%), April 2019

The final exam will include the material covered in the second part of the course (after the midterm). It will consist of short answer questions and one essay question that will require students to explain the various concepts and theories we have learned in class. Short answer questions will require explicating one concept or topic discussed in the course and its relevance. An essay question will ask you to critically analyze the concepts discussed in the course. I will provide a list of the review topics in advance.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 8 and 11)

Introduction to the Course

Course Objectives and Methods of Assessment, Keys to Success

Readings: None

Notes: No tutorials this week

Week 2 (January 15 and 18)

Thinking about War, Levels of Analysis and the first level: the Individual

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 1: Empirical Theory and the Causes of War. 1-12.
- Cashman, Chapter 2: The Individual Level of Analysis: Human Aggression. 13- 48.
- Gat, Azar. (2009) "So Why Do People Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of War." *European Journal of International Relations*. 15(4): 571-599.

Notes: First tutorial

Week 3 (January 22 and 25)

The Individual Level of analysis continued: psychological explanations of war

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 3: The Individual Level of Analysis: Psychological Explanations for War. 49-114.
- Winter, David. (2005) "[Things I've Learned about Personality From Studying Political Leaders at a Distance.](#)" Journal of Personality. 73(3): 557- 584.

Week 4 (January 29 and February 1)

Substate Level of Analysis

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 4: The Sub-state Level of Analysis. 115- 168.
- Levi, Werner. (1960) "On the Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace." The Journal of Conflict Resolution. 4(4): 411-420.

Notes: Reflective Essay Due February 1

Week 5 (February 5 and 8)

The State Level of analysis

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 5: The State Level of Analysis: Political, Economic, and Demographic Factors. 169- 198.
- Immanuel Kant. [Perpetual Peace.](#)

Week 6 (February 12 and 15)

The State Level of analysis continued

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 6: The State Level of Analysis: Internal Conflicts, Nationalism and War Weariness. 199-236.
- Ross, Michael. (2006) "A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War." Annual Review of Political Science. 265-300.
- Newman, Edward. (2004) "The 'New Wars' Debate: A Historical Perspective Is Needed." Security Dialogue. 35(2): 173-189.

Notes: Midterm test – February 15 (in class)

Week 7 (February 18-24)

No Class – Reading Week

Week 8 (February 26 and March 1)

The Dyadic Level of analysis

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 7: The Dyadic Level of Analysis: The Nature of Dyads -- Really Bad Dyads and Pretty Good Dyads. 237 -277.
- Cashman, Chapter 8: The Dyadic Level of Analysis: International Interactions. 279-317.

Week 9 (March 5 and 8)

The Dyadic Level of analysis continued

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 9: The Dyadic Level of Analysis: Game Theory, Bargaining and Deterrence Theory. 319- 369.
- Sagan, Scott D., "The Perils of Proliferation Theory: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons", *International Security* 18, 4 (1994).
- Vasquez, John. (1995) "Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality." *Journal of Peace Research*. 32(3): 277-293.

Week 10 (March 12 and 15)

The International System Level of analysis

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 10: The International System Level of Analysis: Realism, Anarchy and the Balance of Power. 371- 406.
- Antunes & Camisão, "[Realism](#)" in [McGlinchey, Walters & Scheinpflug, International Relations Theory](#)

Week 11 (March 19 and 22)

The International System Level of analysis continued

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 11: The International System Level of Analysis: Power Dynamics, Cyclical Theories, and Historical-Structural Theories of War. 407-454.
- Lazar, Seth. (2016) "[War](#)." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Week 12 (March 26 and 29)

Constructivism

Readings:

- Cashman, Chapter 12: Constructivism: A Digression. 461-474.
- Theys, "Constructivism" in McGlinchey, Walters & Scheinpflug, International Relations Theory, <http://www.e-ir.info/2017/11/30/beginners-textbook-international-relations-theory/>
- Cashman, Chapter 13: Conclusion. 477-488

Week 13 (April 2 and 5)

Notes:

- Group Essay due April 2
- In-class group presentations
- Final tutorial

Week 14 (April 9)

Concluding the course

Notes: No tutorials this week

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

- Detailed instructions to course assignments will be provided to students on Avenue to Learn.
- Essays are to be submitted electronically on Avenue to Learn by 11:59 pm on the due date.
- Please use APA style.
- 5% will be deducted from the grades of Written Assignments for every 100 words in excess of or below the prescribed limit.
- You must retain copies of all work submitted, both in hard copy and digital form. As you work on your assignment, please back-up computer files on a regular basis because neglecting to perform backing up is not an acceptable reason for failing to hand in your work.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-

MARK	GRADE
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

- Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% for every day or part day late (including weekend days). It is under the instructor's discretion to accept papers submitted more than one week late.
- Unless extreme circumstances arise, no extensions will be given after the deadline of an assignment.
- I understand that students sometimes are unable to complete an assessment for legitimate medical or compassionate reasons. If you find yourself in such a situation, please contact me as soon as possible. Once I have been made aware of the situation, I can take steps to help you stay on track in the course and to ensure that you are not unduly penalized.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first

and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility

Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Instructor's Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is based on an approach to learning as a mutual, participatory and continuous process. As an instructor I encourage students to think critically and to develop connections between theoretical knowledge and practical experience within their field of study. I strive to create a learning environment that is safe for expressing students' opinions, engaging in respectful debate and open to learn from each other. The students' participation in discussions is strongly encouraged and is seen as a key tool of gaining and sharing knowledge.