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# POLI 142K: Politics and Warfare

## University of California San Diego

### Summer Session II 2024

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**Office Hours:** SSB 447, Wed 9:00-11:00am

**Sign-up:** Calendly

**Course Information:**

TTH 11:00am-1:50pm

HSS 1315

## Course Summary

This course reviews theories of international politics, interstate war and diplomacy. We will focus on different research and policy areas in international security including nuclear deterrence, credible commitments, security alliances, security dilemmas, and the role of political leaders and democracy. Some questions we will engage with include: Is war ever in the interest of states? Or can the threat of war be a useful tool in international politics? How do states credibly threaten with war to get what they want? Are democracies and autocracies inherently different in the use of this diplomacy tool? And why do some disputes escalate to war while others never do? What role do alliance networks and international institutions play in facilitating peace? Are events such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine symbolizing the failure of these mechanisms?

We will discuss these questions in the context of real world policy challenges: Russia's involvement in Ukraine, changing US Grand Strategy, nuclear threat in South Korea, defense of Taiwan, rising power of China.

## Objectives

1. **Review** the academic literature in political science as it pertains to the initiation and conduct of war, or the use of force as a tool for diplomacy
2. **Understand** and **define** key actors, concepts, and issue areas of international relations
3. **Analyze** patterns of political processes relevant for national and international actors
4. **Apply** existing theories and proposed explanations to case studies to gain a deeper understanding of real world strategic interactions

## Course Requirements

Class Participation - 20 %  
4 Weekly Quizzes - 4 x 5 %  
Mid-Term Assignment - 25 %  
Final Assignment - 35 %

### Letter Grade Ranges

A = 90-100%      B = 80-89%      C = 70-79%      D = 60-69%      F = 59%-below

### Engagement and Asynchronous Participation

This is a class that depends on your participation in exercises and discussions. You are expected to come to class fully prepared, having read all of the assigned readings. Your colleagues and I depend on your *active* and *meaningful* participation in class. Meaningful participation is both useful and respectful. Comments and questions should be well thought out and critiques of others' points should be considerate.

*Remote Learning:* Given the changing conditions for teaching and learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, I reserve the right to adapt the course to fit a hybrid or fully remote format should it become necessary. Should classes become remote during our term, classes will continue to occur as scheduled via Zoom. Regardless, materials will be available online and class participation either in-person or remotely is key to your learning in this class.

### Note on Weekly Readings

The readings are essential for your understanding of the key ideas as well as for your ability to actively contribute in this class. It is paramount that you come prepared to class, ready to engage in a discussion that rests on your knowledge of the readings. I selected a minimum amount of assigned reading material. That being said, summer courses are intense and we will be covering the content of 10 weeks in only 5 weeks time. This means that every class meeting accounts for a full week of class during the regular quarter.

*While reading ask yourself:* What main question is the author addressing? What is the answer the author provides? What has previous literature done and how is the author speaking to it (criticizing it, confirming it etc.)? Are there any debates/disagreements in the literature? Does the article focus on explanations for the onset of conflict, its conduct or resolution? How does the article further our understanding? Does the author make a convincing argument or what evidence is weak and unconvincing? What are open questions for future debate?

### Class Participation

Class participation involves engaging actively with external speakers. At least at one occasion we will welcome an external expert to speak with us on an incident of international crisis.

For that session, each student is asked to come up with at least 2 questions to pose the speaker. Questions can relate to the guest's regional or substantive expertise, historical perspectives of a particular event, theories from class, or actions and intentions of the actors involved in the incident. Use this opportunity to gain unique insight into the calculus behind international crisis and how if so they were averted.

### **Attendance Policy**

You are allowed 2 unexcused absences during the term. Any other absences will affect your grade unless they are excused by the instructor. Excused absences for reasonable cause are not included in this count.

### **Exams**

Both mid-term and final exam will be take-home exams and will be released one week prior to the deadline. For the mid-term you will be asked to review an essay that was generated via a AI text-generating tool (such as ChatGPT) using a likely essay prompt. You will then be asked to critique the AI generated essay response. When evaluating the essay, you should assess the essay for (a) correctness, (b) clarity and quality of the argument, (c) quality of sources, and (d) extent to which concepts and theories from class area adequately applied.

The final exam will be a student-written essay response to an essay question that you can select from a menu of possible questions. Now that you identified the deficiencies of an AI generated essay in your midterm, I expect you to do it better in your own final essay.

Due dates (no later than midnight on the submission date):

- **Mid-Term (Due: Friday, August 23rd)**
- **Final (Due: Friday, September 6th)**

On Canvas, you can find useful resources on how to write essays in political science!

### **Extra Credit**

You can receive up to THREE extra credits to improve your grade! One **credit** per movie reflection on how the movie speaks to themes discussed in class and how the movie presented you with a different perspective. Responses should be around 300 words in length. Movie options:

- Vice (2018) - U.S./Middle East
- ISS (2024) - U.S./Russia/Space
- Charlie Wilson's War (2007) - U.S./Afghanistan
- The Day After (1983) - NATO/Nuclear
- Body of Lies (2008) - U.S./Middle East

- Eye in the Sky (2015) - U.S./Technology
- Oppenheimer (2023) - U.S./Nuclear
- The Spy Who Came in From the Cold (1965) - U.S./Soviet
- Thirteen Days (2000) - U.S./Nuclear/Leaders

### Late Policy

Make-up exams, quizzes, and essays will only be given under valid, documented, and extreme circumstances. If you know you will not be able to complete an assignment, please let me know before class session through email. If you are not able to contact me in advance, you must contact me as soon as possible. Life gets in the way, I understand the complexities of being a student. I can work with you but it is your responsibility to contact me if you need additional support. Should you not be able to make arrangements and find yourself forced to submit later, please consider the following:

- All assignments must be submitted by the end of the summer session (unless arrangements for a U grade have been made)
- Late submissions are penalized by one step on the grading scale per day (meaning an A- will be turned into a B+ if it is submitted one day late and so on)

### Schedule of Classes

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Class 1	Tu, Aug 6th	Introduction
Class 2	Th, Aug 8th	Anarchy and Coercive Diplomacy
Class 3	Tu, Aug 13th	Rationalist Explanations for War
Class 4	Th, Aug 15th	Alliances and War
Class 5	Tu, Aug 20th	Democracy and War
Class 6	Th, Aug 22nd	Domestic Actors
Class 7	Tu, Aug 27th	Nuclear Deterrence
Class 8	Th, Aug 29th	Leaders and War
Class 9/10	Sep 3rd, Sep 5th	Finals week: Work on final essay

\* All class readings are linked on Canvas.

## Module 1 Introduction

**Objectives:** The introductory session will lay out the structure of the course, the course rules, and assignments. We will discuss what war is and why we care to study it. And we will engage with some of the main questions surrounding war and the use of force: Before coming to class, think about the following questions: Why do states go to war? Is war inevitable or preventable? Why do states pursue military capabilities? And why do states differ in the peaceful or belligerent foreign policy they pursue?

## Module 2 International Politics: Anarchy & Coercive Diplomacy

**Objectives:** We will discuss the nature of international politics, the meaning of anarchy and how it shapes the interactions among nations and the challenges it creates. We will assess how the shadow of war shapes states' behavior as strategic actors.

### Required Readings:

- Wagner, R.H., 2010. "Chapter 1: The Theory of International Politics." In: *War and the state: The theory of international politics*. University of Michigan Press.
- Schelling, T.C., 1966. "Chapter 1: The Diplomacy of Violence." In: *Arms and Influence*. Yale University Press.

Friday, August 9th: Submit Quiz 1

## Module 3 Rational Causes of War

**Objectives:** We will discuss why rational states might go to war with each other, what the international order has to do with it, and how great powers try to avoid the security dilemma. We will discuss how states might want to maintain peace but fail to avoid war or go to war because of false assumptions.

### Required Readings:

- Robert Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem," *International Organization*. (Winter 2006) pp. 169-204.
- Allison, Graham. 2015. "The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?" *The Atlantic*. [Link](#)

## Module 4 International Institutions and Military Alliances

**Objectives:** We will discuss how international institutions constrain state behavior and why honoring them matters. We will discuss the role of military alliances in preventing war or creating motivation to go to war. Guest speaker on U.S.-Korea relations (will be announced)

in class).

### Required Readings:

- Morrow, James D. 2000. "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 63-83.
- Bush, Richard. 2016. "The United States Security Partnership with Taiwan." *The Brookings Institute*.
- Drezner, Daniel. 2022. "The Perils of Pessimism: Why Anxious Nations are Dangerous Nations." *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2022.

**Friday, August 16th: Submit Quiz 2, Extra Credit Assignment 1 (optional)**

## Module 5 Democracy and War

**Objectives:** We will discuss what role democracy plays in international relations, whether democracies are inherently more peaceful or constraint, and how beliefs about democracy have shaped foreign policy, especially throughout U.S. history. Should we be worried about the downturn of democracy worldwide?

### Required Readings:

- Brands, Hal. 2022. "How to Make Biden's Free World Strategy Work." *Foreign Affairs*, May 24, 2022.
- Downes, Alexander and Lindsey O'Rourke. 2016. "You can't always get what you want: Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change Seldom Improves Interstate Relations." *International Security*, 41(2).
- Posen, Barry. "The Rise of Illiberal Hegemony: Trump's Surprising Grand Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* March/April, 2018.
- Further Recommendations: United States Signaling to China
  - NPR, 2016. US Credibility in South China Sea. [Link](#)
  - CNN, 2023. Biden's Stand on China. [Link](#)

## Module 6 Domestic Actors and War

**Objectives:** We will discuss how domestic actors, institutions, and interests shape states decision to go to war and their conduct during war. We will see how important understanding an opponents domestic politics is to understanding their foreign policy behavior, credibility, and desires.

### Required Readings:

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, et al. 1999. "An Institutionalist Explanation for the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review*, 93(4): 791-807.
- Weeks, Jessica. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, 106(2): 326-47.

**Friday, August 23rd: Submit Mid-Term, Quiz 3, Extra Credit Assignment 2 (optional)**

## Module 7 Nuclear Deterrence

**Objectives:** We live in a world with nuclear weapons whose sole purpose is to deter their use by others. We will discuss how the existence of nuclear weapons shapes incentives for war and the risk of escalation of disputes.

### Required Readings:

- Sechser, T.S. and Fuhrmann, M., 2017. "Nuclear Blackmail in International Politics." *Nuclear weapons and coercive diplomacy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kyle Beardsley and Victor Asal, 2009. "Winning with the Bomb". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 53, no. 2 pp. 278-301.
- Background Information (recommended): Nuclear Umbrella in South Korea
  - Trachtenberg, David. 2012. "US Extended Deterrence: How Much Strategic Force Is Too Little?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 6(2).
  - Lind, Jennifer, and Daryl Press. 2023. "South Korea's Nuclear Options." *Foreign Affairs*.

## Module 8 Leaders and War

**Objectives:** Some scholars argue for the importance of political leaders for foreign policy. We will discuss when and how leaders matter in the decision to go to war. Would Russia have invaded Ukraine if not for Putin? Would Chinese foreign policy differ without Xi? Will Kamela Harris or Donald Trump change how the world views and interacts with the U.S.? The answer is more complicated than you think.

### Required Readings:

- Giacomo Chiozza and H.E. Goemans. 2004. "International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still Ex Post Inefficient?" *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 604-619.
- Horowitz, Michael C., and Allan C. Stam. 2014 "How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders," *International Organization*, 68(3): 527-59

- Background Information: Foreign Policy through the Eyes of Putin and Xi
  - Hill, Fiona. Sep/Oct 2022. "The World Putin Wants: How Distortions About the Past Feed Delusions About the Future." *Foreign Affairs*.
  - Pottinger, Matt. 2021. "Beijing's American Hustle: How Chinese Grand Strategy Exploits U.S. Power." *Foreign Affairs*, 100(5).
  - Goldstein, Avery. 2020. "China's Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping. Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance." *International Security*, 45(1).

**Friday, August 30th: Submit Quiz 4, Extra Credit Assignment 3 (optional)**

**Finals Week: Work on your essays!**

**Friday, September 6th: Submit Final Essay**

## **Policies**

### **Class Contract**

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, we want to engage with one another in upholding key values such as honesty, transparency, respect, and integrity. Both students and instructor agree to:

- Uphold honesty as academic and personal value and to participate in this class with an honest interest, and to commit to do the work expected of you and to receive honest feedback and evaluation from the instructor
- As instructor to communicate expectations and criteria for evaluation, and as student to be transparent about individual areas of struggle and discontent
- Be mutually respectful, both between students and instructor in recognition of the dynamic imposed by the context, and for students to engage with each other in a respectful discourse even in face of disagreement
- To fulfill the class requirements with integrity and uphold the values for engagement in this class, even in face of struggle or adversity

We affirm each individual's right to dignity and strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by mutual respect for each other, value the cultural diversity of USD because it enriches our lives and the University, and we reject acts of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs, and, we will confront and appropriately respond to such acts.

We acknowledge that our society carries historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs. Therefore, we seek to foster understanding and tolerance among individuals and groups, and



we promote awareness through education and constructive strategies for resolving conflict.

In this class, we are committed to the highest standards of civility and decency toward all. We are committed to promoting and supporting a community where all people can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of abusive or demeaning treatment.

### **Inclusive Classroom Statement**

I am fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. I urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know, or you may also submit anonymous written feedback to your Undergraduate Advisor. Additional resources to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in our classroom, and beyond, may be found here:

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

<https://diversity.ucsd.edu/> 858.822.3542 — [diversity@ucsd.edu](mailto:diversity@ucsd.edu) —

<https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html>

I respect that each and everyone of us may face individual challenges while pursuing an education. Please, do not hesitate to contact me with individual concerns that might affect your performance in this class and your ability to learn. Here are some additional resources:

For concerns about food and housing: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/>

For transfer students: <https://transferstudents.ucsd.edu/resources/index.html>

For international students: <https://ispo.ucsd.edu/>

For students with dependents: <https://students.ucsd.edu/well-being/wellness-resources/student-parents/> and also <https://parents.ucsd.edu/>

For students with disabilities (seen or unseen): <https://osd.ucsd.edu/>

### **Academic Integrity**

All University policies regarding academic integrity apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For any material or ideas obtained from other sources, a reference must be given. Direct quotes from any source must be identified as such. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the Dean. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the professor states unambiguously that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

## **Student Accessibility**

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities. You are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department well in advance of any exams or assignments. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Zain Sharifi; please connect with her via the Virtual Advising Center as soon as possible. I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs.

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. If students have questions about student-related nondiscrimination policies or concerns about possible discrimination or harassment, they should contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) at (858) 534-8298, [ophd@ucsd.edu](mailto:ophd@ucsd.edu), or [reportbias.ucsd.edu](http://reportbias.ucsd.edu).

## **Religious Accommodation**

It is the policy of the university to make reasonable efforts to accommodate students having bona fide religious conflicts with scheduled examinations by providing alternative times or methods to take such examinations. If a student anticipates that a scheduled examination will occur at a time at which his or her religious beliefs prohibit participation in the examination, the student must submit to the instructor a statement describing the nature of the religious conflict and specifying the days and times of conflict.

For final examinations, the statement must be submitted no later than the end of the second week of instruction of the quarter. For all other examinations, the statement must be submitted to the instructor as soon as possible after a particular examination date is scheduled. If a conflict with the student's religious beliefs does exist, I will attempt to provide an alternative, equitable examination that does not create undue hardship for the instructor or for the other students in the class. Please see the EPC Policies on Religious Accommodation, Final Exams, Midterm Exams

## **Additional Resources**

- CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- UCSD Basic Needs

- Writing Hub
- Supplemental Instruction
- Tutoring
- CAPS Student Health and Well-Being
- Community Centers
- Remote Access