PSCI 3107A
The Causes of War
Monday 8:35 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Brian C. Schmidt
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Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12, Wednesday 1-3
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Course Description and Objectives

From its inception to the present day, the study of war has been a major preoccupation of the field of International Relations. One of the primary justifications for establishing a separate field of International Relations was that no other academic discipline made the study of war its central focus. There are a number of valid reasons for studying war, but perhaps most fundamentally is the fact that sovereign states frequently do engage in systematic, large-scale interstate warfare. The twentieth century, for example, has been described as the most murderous in recorded history with an estimated 187 million battle-related deaths. And while the character of war might be changing, the twenty-first century has so far not been a peaceful one.

The fundamental objective of this course is to familiarize students with a number of different theoretical perspectives on the origins of large-scale inter-state war. Throughout the semester, we will attempt to answer the question “why war”? There literally is enough literature about the cause of war to fill a considerable portion of a library. To help sort through the literature, the course will employ Kenneth Waltz’s levels of analysis framework for understanding the causes of war. Our investigation of the cause of war will focus on the role of individuals, domestic politics, and the international system.

In addition to examining theories that focus on the cause of war, we will also examine a few specific case studies such as World War I, World War II, and the Iraq War. The research paper that you are responsible for will result in you becoming an expert in a specific war of your choosing. We will also review a number of videos to illustrate some of the major themes of the course and to consider additional cases.

Course Texts

There are three required texts for the course. All of the texts are available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore. The required texts as well as the other assigned readings have been placed on reserve in the library (reserve readings are indicated on the syllabus with an R). All of the articles and book chapters can be accessed on-line through the Carleton University library website (http://catalogue.library.carleton.ca) and through ARES, which can be found on the CUlearn site for this course.
Students are expected to complete all of the assigned reading prior to attending class. Your ability to complete the course successfully is dependent on reading and understanding all of the assigned material.


**Course Requirements**

Your final grade will be determined on the following basis:

- Short Quizzes 15%
- Research Paper Proposal (October 16) 10%
- Research Paper (November 27) 35%
- Final Exam (December 10 - 22) 40%

**Explanations**

**Short Quizzes:** There will be approximately 3 - 5 unannounced short quizzes. The questions will be based on the assigned reading for that day. If you do not know the answer, submit a piece of paper with your name on it, because you will at least receive some credit. There are no make-up quizzes and only those with a medical note or family emergency will be excused. If you arrive late or leave early, you may miss the quiz. Your overall quiz average will constitute 15% of your grade.

**Paper proposal:** You are required to turn in a 3-4 page paper proposal that clearly indicates the specific war that you have selected to research. You should identify the main combatants and attempt to ascertain the main issues that led to the war – what was this war all about? You should provide some of the background information concerning your war (a brief historical description of the conflict). A provisional bibliography of books and articles that you will be consulting should be included in your proposal.

The paper proposal is due on October 16, 2017. Students must have their paper proposal and war accepted before they can turn-in a final paper. In the event that your proposal is not accepted, you will have seven days to re-submit a new proposal. After that time, a penalty of one letter-grade per day will be imposed (B+ to B).

**Research Paper:** You are required to write a 12 - 15 page research paper, in which you describe a war of your choice, review contending explanations of this war’s origins, and relate these explanations to the theories covered in the course. You must select and utilize two different theories of war and apply them to the war you have chosen to research. The paper is due in class on November 27, 2017. In order to receive credit for taking the course, you must submit a research paper; if you do not submit a research paper you will automatically fail the course. A more detailed description of the paper assignment is attached to this syllabus.
You are responsible for personally handing me your paper in class on November 28. The Political Science drop box is intended to collect late assignments only if you have extenuating circumstances and are unable to submit the paper directly to me in class. Please be aware that the drop box is emptied every weekday at 4 p.m. and all items collected at that time are date-stamped with the day’s date. All papers handed-in after 4 p.m. on November 27 will be considered late and will be downgraded one letter-grade category per day (e.g. a B+ paper, one day late, will receive a B) and this includes weekends.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will test your knowledge of all the major theories, ideas, concepts, and wars that we have studied throughout the term. The exam is comprehensive and will include all of the material covered in the course syllabus. You are responsible for all of the material that has been assigned in the course outline, discussed in the lectures, and found in the various movies that we will be viewing. The exam will consist of short-answer, identification questions and essay questions. More information about the exam will be provided at the end of the semester. The exam will take place during the university-scheduled exam period (December 10 – 22).

**Other Guidelines**

- To obtain credit in this course, students must meet all of the course requirements. Failure to complete all of the assignments will automatically result in a failing grade for the course.

- Late assignments will be downgraded one letter-grade category per day. For example, a B+ paper, one day late, will receive a B.

**Course Schedule** *(R) on reserve in the library*

**Week 1 (September 11)**  
Course Introduction  
Video: Deadly Game of Nations

**Week 2 (September 18)**  
Explaining and Understanding War  
Waltz, Preface, ch. 1.
Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, ch. 1

**Week 3 (September 25)**  
Image I: Individuals as the Cause of War  
Waltz, chs. 2 and 3

Video: Inside the Mind of Adolf Hitler
Week 4 (October 2)  Rational and Irrational Decision-making

Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chs. 5-6.
John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War, 10th ed.* (Thomson Wadsworth, 2008) ch. 10 (R)

Video: Fog of War

Week 5 (October 9)  No Class

Week 6 (October 16)  Image II: Domestic Politics and War

Waltz, ch. 4.
Levy and Thompson, ch. 4.

Week 7 (October 23)  Reading Week -- No class

Week 8 (October 30)  Democracy and War/Dyadic Interactions

Levy and Thompson, chs. 3, 4 (104-117)

Week 9 (November 6)  Realism and War

Waltz: chs. 6 and 7

Week 10 (November 13)  Structural Realism and War

Levy and Thompson, ch. 2
Copeland, Ch. 6.

Week 11 (November 20)  Dynamic Differentials Theory

Copeland, Introduction, chs. 1-2

Video: Six Days in June

**Week 12 (November 27)**  **World War I and World War II**

Copeland, chs. 3-5
Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, chs. 1-2

Video: The First World War 1914-1918

**Week 13 (December 4)**  **The Iraq War: Preventive or Pre-emptive?**

Stoessinger, chs. 8-9

Video: The World According to Bush

**Week 13 (December 8)**  **Conclusion – Why War?**

Waltz, ch. 8
Levy and Thompson, ch. 8.
Research Paper Assignment

The writing assignment asks you to choose and study a war that you find interesting. Since the course focuses on theories of inter-state war, you are strongly encouraged to select an international war rather than an intra-state war. If you are unsure of which war to study, please come and see me early in the semester. After you have selected a war, your paper should do the following three things:

• Describe the essential facts of the case that you have selected. Who fought whom? When? Where? Over what? What were the main circumstances that led to the outbreak of the war you have selected? What were the immediate conditions? What were the underlying causes? If you select a protracted war, you should focus on a specific phase of the war; the origins of the conflict.

• Select, discuss, and elaborate two different theories of the cause of war. What do these theories focus on to explain the outbreak of war? What variable does the theory isolate? What is the theoretical argument being made to explain war? You must identify the authors of the theories that you are using. Who are the authors associated with each theoretical interpretation? Be sure that you identify at least two distinct theoretical interpretations of the war’s origins, and the chief author(s) associated with each of them. You need to select two contrasting theories of war and apply them to your specific case.

• Apply the two theories to the war that you have selected to research. How well do the theories that you have selected help to explain your war? This part of the assignment requires you to be familiar with some of the historical literature on your war. You need to review the historical literature on the origins of your chosen war. What are the major contending interpretations of the outbreak of the war? Who are the authors associated with each interpretation? Consider to what extent the interpretations identified in the literature that you have been reading correspond to the different theoretical perspectives covered in the course. Does your war confirm, or disconfirm, or otherwise speak to claims, hypotheses, propositions, theories or accounts of the cause of war that you have encountered during the semester? How do the theories that you have selected help to explain your war? Is one theory more relevant or superior to the other? You need to apply the theories that you have selected to your specific case and assess how well the historical details of the war can be explained by each of the two different theories. In your evaluation, please be sure that you make reference to specific authors.

Examples of some of the theories that you may select:

Misperception
Prospect Theory
Diversionary War Theory
Power Transition Theory
Defensive Realism
Offensive Realism
Democratic Peace Theory
Just War Theory
Nationalism and War
Marxist theories of imperialism
Enduring rivalries
Feminist theories of war
Further instructions and details:

While I will be looking to see that you have covered each of the three things listed above, there is a great deal of freedom in how you actually write the paper. But be sure to avoid the tendency of turning the paper into simply a historical narrative of the events of your chosen war. History is never neutral and you should strive to identify the theoretical and analytical framework of the books and articles that you have selected. You might want to provide contrasting factual accounts of the war that correspond to the different theoretical perspectives that you are utilizing. You will likely have to be creative in this exercise and determine how the theories that we have discussed in class actually relate to the war you have selected. How do you appraise one theoretical account as being superior to another? As you work on this assignment, please keep in mind that it is both a historical and theoretical enterprise. And once again, I am looking for two contrasting theoretical explanations of the war that you have chosen to study.

Writing is a very important skill and you should strive to write the best paper that you can. The paper should adhere to all of the rules and requirements of written composition. Paragraph development, grammar, punctuation, spelling, citations, title page, overall appearance are all important and will be taken into account when I grade your paper. Edit and proofread your paper before submitting it. Do not let yourself lose crucial points because of spelling and punctuation errors.

It is extremely important to cite properly the sources you draw upon for facts and/or interpretation. You need to document all quotations and scholarly borrowing from other authors by careful footnoting. To avoid plagiarism, do not paraphrase or cite passages from other published sources without giving full credit to them. When you quote from an author be sure that you use quotation marks and cite the work and page number where the quotation can be located (beware, I do check). This should not be a mystery. A good writing manual will explain all the procedures for documenting a research paper. Take a careful look at the exemplary endnote format used in Copeland’s *Origins of Major War*.

While web sources might be helpful to you, be sure that you are clear about the source of the material. If you do use a web source, be sure that you document it properly. This is an academic exercise and you should be consulting scholarly books and journal articles. When you do make reference to a particular source, you should strive to identify the author(s) (e.g. According to A.J.P. Taylor, “international anarchy was an underlying reason for the outbreak of WW II.”). In addition to identifying the relevant theories to understand the war you have selected, you will need to support your theories with the facts of your case. How does theory help us to understand the specific historical details of your chosen case? Identifying and utilizing the best sources for understanding your war is crucial to a successful paper. This is often a time consuming process and you should begin it early.
Academic Accommodations

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside
B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Grading:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>80-84</td>
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<td>50-52</td>
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**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Carleton E-mail Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit [https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencessociety/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencessociety/) or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.