

Department of Political Science

<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

PSCI 3107 A

The Causes of War

Mondays and Wednesday 6:05- 8:55: Live TB 240

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 5-5:55 Loeb 645, Thursdays Fridays at home 2-4 by phone: 613-617-0458

Professor: Peter Atack

Office: Loeb B647

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 5-5:55 in person. Call me at home 613-617-0458 Thursdayafternoons only please.

Email: [peteratack@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:peteratack@cunet.carleton.ca) (please put PSCI3107 in subject line). Note please give me 48 hours for a reply, Monday to Friday. Note too it is a cunet account so if you send a message to a cmail account it will be lost in the ether. Sometimes the Carleton email fails to work, go astray so call me if there hasn't been a timely response.

**On being Live in the Summer:** Students are expected to attend lectures and participate in discussions in class. However, there are recordings available for the classes you might miss. Since much of your learning will in lively discussions with fellow classmates, attend.

**Welcome to the course**

One of the central questions in the field of international relations and political science has always been what causes war? Is conflict violence and war inherent in the human condition, the foundation of the nation state or a flaw in how international relations are constructed? Why do we fight? Is it human nature, domination or failures in governance that cause war?

The classic founding text for this field is Kenneth Waltz's *Man the State and War*. This course will utilize Waltz's threefold structure of how individual's character flaws, problems in how state make decisions and then issues in international relations to organize our examination of the theories of the causes of war. We will then examine cases of the breakout of war to apply these theories and assess their utility in understanding how war begins.

By the end of the course students will have a better understanding of why wars break out, what some hidden causes of war are and hopefully how to help prevent them in the future.

- Brightspace content:** Students will find 8 useful sections on the web site
1. Syllabus: Descriptions of lectures, due dates and policies for the course.
  2. Power point slides: These contain:
    - A) A list of concepts, places, terms and people.
    - B) Quotations that are used in the lecture,
    - C) Learning outcomes for the lecture.

D) Images used to illustrate the subject.

E) Summary of the central points and ideas raised in the lecture. However, since any good lecture (and lecturer) will have more to say than just the power point slides do listen to the lectures and have fun thinking.

3. Kaltura recorded lectures. I've recorded lectures to the path of the power point slides, but there is always more information, quips and the occasional joke. These are available so students can catch up if life makes them miss a class, not as a replacement for coming to lecture.

4.. A list of song titles and films about war, specifically films and songs that either sell war or especially those that criticize war..

5. Instructions and helpful hints for the assignments. These are helpful, humorous and intended to answer some FAQs.

6. Ares for some of the readings.

7. Dropboxes for the assignments. Note the cut off date will be after the due date. If you need an extension beyond the cut off date just ask. Summer courses sprint past on us all. Then there's covid that is still nasty even for those with vaccines and boosters.

8. But we are using two core textbooks available for purchase at Octopus Books in the Glebe at 113 Third Avenue, almost at the corner of Bank. They do online orders now or you can check them out in person and find some other fascinating books to stretch your mind.

**Course Texts:** Kenneth Waltz *Man the State and War* (New York, Colombia University Press, 1959),

Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Toronto, Rowman and Littlefield: 2014).

**Course Requirements:**

Participation: 10% every lecture

Proposal: 15% May 24 th

Critical interpretation of Films and Songs for and or against war.: 15%: June 5th

Research Paper: 30%: June 16th

Final Exam: 30%: During Final Exam Period

**Participation:** My experience has taught me that those who participate and attend lectures learn, grow and think. We are a nation of refugees and descendants of refugees from wars, so we each have family stories and lore we can share and learn from each other about War. So what I'm going to do is use discussion questions, problem within the lectures. Argue, debate and learn from each other. I'll simply note and reward those who speak.

**Proposal:** must include: two double-spaced pages (essay and paragraph format) explaining the proposed essay. The two page length does not include a bibliography. The proposal must include 1) a clear research question or what is it you are going to examine 2) a description of what issues you are going to examine in order to answer your question, and 3) a tentative thesis statement which is essentially the one sentence answer to your question and also 4) a bibliography with at least 8 academic sources.

Warning: a research paper proposal is not an outline.

For this course the essay will involve the application of one of the theories of the causes of war to the outbreak of a particular war. Therefore the proposal should also include a justification as to why you think this particular theory is most useful in understanding how this war came about.

**Due Date: May 24**

**Critical interpretation of popular culture of war:** must be 5-6 pages, double spaced and paginated. One of the crucial lessons of the course is that popular culture has reflected the case for and against war. Taking either one of the songs or films listed on Brightspace, comment on how this song or film critically or uncritically reflects the values of war. It is permissible to use either a music video or film not listed as long as it's easily available online. However documentaries would not be suitable for this assignment. How has popular culture in this instance helped to push forward the agenda for or against war? Are there silences that reveal our own hidden assumptions about war? What does this song or film tell us about the causes of war and its consequences **Due date: June 5th**

**Research Paper:** must be 12-15 pages in length. Essays should be double-spaced. Essays should include a title page, page numbers and bibliography. For this course the essay will involve the application of one of the theories of the causes of war to the outbreak of a particular war. This involves applying a theory and then using it to gain understanding of how a conflict degenerated into war by intention or miscalculation. **Due date: Friday June 16th**

**Final Exam:** will be conducted during the final exam period on the content of the course. The purpose of the exam is for the student to be able to discuss their understanding of the issues rather than simply be tested on specific readings. During the Exam period.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Week 1 Lecture 1 Monday May 8th: Introduction to the Course.**

What are the causes of war? Are they inherent to our nature as human beings or do they spring from the individual flaws of human beings? Do wars spring from the structure of nation states? Or are wars a disease caused by failings at the international level to regulate conflicts? Who benefits and who pays for war?

A review of the structure of the course and the methods we will be using to examine its issues.

Review of course requirements or what students must do.

### **Required Reading**

Kenneth Waltz, *Man the State and War*. Chapter 1 Introduction

### **Theories on the Causes of War**

#### **Week 1 Lecture 2: Wednesday May 10th , Why we fight? Individuals as a cause of war.**

Is aggression and war part of human nature?

Can the decision to go to war be attributed to psychological flaws in individual leaders?

**Required readings:** Kenneth Waltz, *Man the State and War*. Chapter 2.

Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapter 2, 3.

#### **Week 2 Lecture 3, Monday 15th: Social Psychology: Can the structure of decision making and group pressure lead to war?**

How can we structure decision making to ensure that different points of view are heard to prevent bad decisions about declaring war? Can wishful thinking lead to irrational decisions and ignoring the consequences of war.

**Required readings:** Kenneth Waltz, *Man the State and War*. Chapter 3.  
Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapter 4

### **Week 2 Lecture 4, Wednesday 17th: State Level 1**

Does the type of government in a state affect the chances of that state going to war? Does its economic structure increase or decrease the probability of war? Do democracies go to war or do they always cooperate with each other? Is there a correlation between business cycles and war? How are wars caused by internal conflicts within states?

**Required Reading:** Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapter 5 , 6

### **Week 3 Victoria day Holiday Monday May 22nd**

**Week 3 Lecture 5 Wednesday May24th : Dyads or state to state conflict cycles. Research proposal due.**

The Serbs are always coming: how wars can be caused by a shared .history of violence, distrust and border conflicts. Are wars the result of predictable conflict spirals? Can deterrence models and game theory offer a way to prevent conflicts?

Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapters7,8,9.

### **Week 4 Lecture 6 Monday May 29th: International Systems: Realism Anarchy, Balance of Power**

Is there something inherent in the state of international relations that leads to war? Does the lack of an international sovereign authority lead us to the war of all against all as Hobbes predicted? Is realpolitik a self fulfilling prophecy? Are nation states only after self interest or is self interest a reflection of the national biases of that nation?

**Required readings:** Kenneth Waltz, *Man the State and War*. Chapter 6&7.  
Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapter 10

### **Week 4 Lecture 7, Wednesday May 31st: International Systems II: The Political Economy of War.**

Greg Cashman, *What Causes War 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* Chapter 11.

Are system wide wars a sign of a changing of the guard of hegemonic powers? Were WWI and WWII the result of the decline in power and capability of the British Empire and the unwillingness of the USA to perform its proper function of the World's policeman? Does the cycle of ascending and descending powers point towards difficult times ahead as the USA wanes and China waxes? Do hegemonic powers project more than economic self interest do they project hegemonic values as well?

**Week 5 Lecture 8: Monday June 5th Case Studies Begin: The Great War**

How did conflict cycles lead to the escalation of conflicts that lead to the outbreak of war on July 20th 1914? How much blame can be apportioned to British Foreign Secretary and the Kaiser? Was it war by timetables or a naval arms race that led to war?

Required Readings: Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson *An Introduction to War* Chapter 2.

**Cultural Critique due.**

**Week 5 Lecture 9, Wednesday June 7th: The War in the Pacific**

Was Pearl Harbor inevitable or was it the result of miscalculation? Was this war the result of a changing power balance in East Asia or was it the result of groupthink on the part of the Japanese Armed Forces?

**Required Reading:** Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson *An Introduction to War* Chapter 3.

**Week 6 Lecture 10: Monday June 12th Vietnam: The Path To War**

“The savage wars of peace” draw great powers into war they cannot win, wars they cannot then escape. How did the US and Lyndon Johnson make the errors that led the US into a war that could not be won.

Required reading :

Anderson, P.A. (1987) “What do Decisionmakers do When They Make Foreign policy.” In *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*. Ed C.F. Herman C. W. Kegley and J.N. Rosenau. 284-308 (Boston: Allen and Unwin.)

**Week 6 Lecture 11 Wednesday June 14th: Avoiding War: Cuban Missile Crisis and the End of the Cold War.**

These are two case studies of how to manage crises and how to deescalate arms races and other conflicts. The Cuban Missile crisis: or how to avoid Armageddon. Gorbachev and collective security or how to end an arms race and move away from conflict.

• Janis, Irving L. “Groupthink among policy makers.” In *Sanctions for Evil*, ed. Nevitt Sanford and Craig Comstock (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971),

**Week 12 Lecture 12: Friday June 16th The War in Iraq**

How did we return to unwinnable wars and wars launched under false pretences? How the invasion of Iraq was sold, and how they missed the consequences. This lecture will also include a section on America’s four lost wars since 2001, Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and the War against Isis, on how despite new technologies, the USA has lost control.

Required reading: Required Readings: Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson *An Introduction to War* Chapter 2.  
Kaufman Chaim, 2004. "Threat Inflation and the Marketplace of Ideas." *International Security* 29:1 5-48  
Paul Rogers, *Losing Control* 4th ed. (London, Pluto Press, 2021). Chapter 7 and 8.

## **Research Paper is due**

### **Course policies:**

**Copying or recycling previously submitted work:** A large part of the learning process of any course comes from framing a research question, conducting research on your topic thinking through and constructing an argument and then writing and composing papers. Using work previously submitted in whole or in part for other courses cheats the student of this learning process.

**For this course and its assignments, using work already submitted for other courses is unacceptable, forbidden and subject to penalty if caught.**

However, there are some possible exceptions to this rule. For example, you may have tackled a topic in a previous year for a different level course. Now with the benefit of more learning, new ideas, theories and information you might want to re-examine the issue. Only if there is a new argument, new information and all new writing would it be acceptable to revisit an old subject. Please consult with the instructor for permission first if you want to revisit a topic.

Or you may be writing an honours research paper and want to explore a part of your broader question for this course's essay. Just ensure that you are taking the subject further and farther than you have gone elsewhere, and that you don't accidentally repeat yourself by just lightly editing part of your honours research paper.

The instructor for the course assesses whether recycling has taken place or not. If the instructor determines that you have copied a previously submitted paper, penalties can range from a zero to a failing grade on the assignment. However, the more severe academic penalties of failure for the course, suspension or expulsion cannot be assessed since this offense lies outside of the university's academic integrity policy.

**Late Penalties:** We are all struggling to get used to this brave new world of live classes again. Therefore reasonable accommodations and extensions will be available to all students for assignments. Just email or speak to the professor. There is an official late penalty of 1 % per day for late papers without permission. **Note university regulations require that all course work be handed in by end of classes or June 16th.**

## Appendix

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### **Covid-19 Pandemic Measures**

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](#) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

**Feeling sick?** Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton's [symptom reporting protocols](#).

**Masks:** Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, we continue to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. We are aware that personal preferences regarding optional mask use will vary greatly, and we ask that we all show consideration and care for each other during this transition.

**Vaccines:** While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](#) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University's COVID-19 website](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact [covidinfo@carleton.ca](mailto:covidinfo@carleton.ca).

### **Student Mental Health**

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

### **Emergency Resources (on and off campus):**

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

### **Requests for Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy accommodation:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

**Religious accommodation:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).



***Accommodation for student activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

### **Sexual Violence Policy**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

### **Plagiarism**

Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;

- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

### **Intellectual property**

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Lecture recordings remain the property of the Professor.

### **Submission and Return of Term Work**

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

### **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:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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 Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

### **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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

### **Official Course Outline**

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.