

PSCI 3107 A
“The Causes of War”
Monday 11:35 – 14:25

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Prof. Harald von Riekhoff
Office: Loeb B643
Office Hours: Thursday 14:00 P.M. to 15:30 P.M.
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Course Description

Objectives: The question why states and organized societal groups continue to resort to war, despite the obvious destruction to life, culture and material goods, presents a significant and perpetual puzzle to policy-makers and analysts. The 20th century has been described the most murderous in recorded history, and the 21st century has not exactly commenced on a pacific and auspicious note, even if the character of wars appears to be changing.

The principal objective of this course is to address the perpetual and challenging puzzle: “Why War?” In doing so, we will explore and assess a variety of theoretical perspectives and constructs, all attempting to explain the war phenomenon in general or the origins of some specific war.

Aims: The course is designed to give students a broad overview and critical evaluation of the relevant academic literature on the Causes of War. As well, it also seeks to provide students with the necessary analytical tools with which to explain the causes of a particular war that may interest them, whether historical, contemporary, or futuristic.

Content: To give some structure to the massive literature, the lectures and readings will be organized along three principal *levels of analysis* (or images, as Ken Waltz refers to them): i.e., the international system; the state; and the individual. Intermediate levels of analysis, such as societal groups or networks and small groups of decision-makers/policy advisors, will also be used for examining their overall behaviour, as well as their behaviour when targeted toward a specific actor. While the principal focus will be on inter-state wars, which have been the prevalent and most destructive form of warfare during the era of the Westphalian state system, we will also explore the international dimension of civil wars and the so-called “war on terrorism.”

In lectures, documentary films and class discussions, we will examine a variety of theories and constructs of the causes of war and apply them to specific historical and contemporary cases, including World War I; preventive and pre-emptive wars such as the 1967 Six-Day Arab-Israeli War; civil wars such as the case of Yugoslavia; as well as the so-called “war on terror” in the ongoing war in Iraq.

Class Format

Weekly classes will consist of a lecture on the assigned topic. The second half of the class will consist of class discussion on the assigned readings and the lecture. During most weeks we will also show and discuss a documentary film dealing with specific wars or leaders whose decisions have had an impact on war.

Course Texts and Readings

Required Texts: [both available in paperback at the Carleton Bookstore]

- 1) Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Wiley-Blackwell 2010) ,281 pp.
 - 2) Greg Cashman and Leonard Robinson, *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Rowman and Littlefield 2007), 421 pp.
- Second-hand copies of the Cashman & Robinson text should still be around.

Weekly Readings: Items marked with an asterisk [*] indicate required readings – normally 2 or 3 book chapters or journal articles per week – and are chosen from the texts and from other books and professional journals. They are essential for the lecture and for class discussion. All asterisked items are on Library Reserve and are marked **R** for a reserved book; **RC** for a reserved book chapter; most journal articles are available to Carleton students in electronic format; asterisked journal articles will also be placed on Electronic Reserve and will be marked **RJ**. Items in the Reserve Course Envelope are marked **RE**.

A complete list of all course readings on Library Reserve will be listed in the Library Catalogue under the Course Number or my name. It will also be included on the class WebCT 6 site. In addition to the required readings, students are encouraged to sample some of the additional recommended readings, which provide different perspectives, critiques or applied case studies.

Evaluation/Grading

The final course grade is composed of the following items:

- Class participation and submitted questions for class discussion 10%
- Essay Proposal 10% (Due October 18)
- Film Review 10% (Due November 22)
- Essay 30% (Due December 10)
- Final Take-Home Examination 40% (Due December 22)

- To obtain a credit for this course, students must have obtained a satisfactory GPA for their term assignments **and** have passed the final examination. Deferred final examinations will be granted only if the term work has been satisfactory.
- All written term assignments are to be handed to the instructor in class or during office hours at the indicated date.
- Where a delay has been granted, students can leave their assignments in the Pol. Sci. Department's drop-off box.

- Unless permitted by the instructor, late assignments will be deducted one grade point for every two days delay [e.g., a paper received 2 days late will have its grade reduced from a B to a B-].
- Written assignments cannot be faxed to the Pol. Sci. Department nor E-mailed to the instructor.
- I will be in my office [Loeb B 643] on the afternoon of December 10 , from 2:00-4:00 P.M. to receive the essays.
- It is NOT acceptable to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses.

Early Feedback

Grades and comments on the Essay Proposal will be available one week after the due date [i.e., on October 25] ;similarly grades for the Film Review will be available one week after its due date[i.e., on November 29].

Examination

Will be a Take-Home examination, essay type. Examination questions will be handed out and discussed during the last class on December 6. They are to be returned to my office on December 22, between 2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Term Work

Class participation is based both on weekly attendance and on submission on the class web site of questions for class discussion. (Instructions will be provided)

Essay Proposal: a 2-page outline of the term essay you propose to write in which you state the chosen topic; provide a brief historical background of the disputing parties and the nature of the conflict; select at least two distinct theories or analytical perspectives -- preferably from different levels of analysis -- that you intend to use to explain the chosen conflict/war; formulate any relevant hypothesis; if necessary comment on the particular methodology you plan to use; and provide a brief list of key sources that you will use. The proposal, once marked, should be discussed with your professor and then in its amended form should serve as your guide in writing the final essay.

Film Review: A 2-3 pp. review of any 2 documentary films which were shown in class (or, with the permission of the instructor, you may select relevant documentary films which you have seen elsewhere such as on PBS) . In the review provide a brief summary of the films' content and comment on their overall quality (artistic and analytical) and how they relate to the readings and materials discussed in class.

Essay: 12-15 pp. Select a specific historical or contemporary war or conflict with which you are reasonably familiar. Expand on your initial essay proposal once it has been cleared by your instructor. Give a brief historical overview of the conflict [e.g., what type of conflict; what issues ; what participants; what outcome] . Indicate contending explanations or interpretations of the origins of the conflict; apply at least two distinct theories or analytical perspectives – preferably at different levels of analysis -- in explaining the cause of that conflict, and indicate how these distinct perspectives either contradict or complement each other. The essay, with the instructor's comments, will be returned to students via a self-addressed, stamped envelope or during a scheduled office hour early in January. More detailed instructions for the essay will be given in class.

Course Schedule and Readings

I. Introduction

Sept.13 a) **Administrative Matters; Scope of Course**

b) **Concepts and Definitions of War**

*Lawrence Freedman, "War," *Foreign Policy*, No. 137 (July/Aug. 2003), pp.16-24 **RJ**

John Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (1993), Ch. 1 "Conceptualizing War," pp.14-49 **R**

c) **Statistics and Trends of War**

*Lotta Harbom & Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1946-2009," *Journal of Peace Research* 47 (2010), pp.501-509 **RJ**

II. Theoretical Perspectives: Searching for Explanations of the Causes of War

Sept. 20

a) Levels of Analysis:

*Greg Cashman & Leonard Robinson. *An Introduction to the Causes of War*, Ch. 1, pp.1-25 *passim*.

* Jack Levy and William Thompson, *Causes of War*, Ch. 1, pp. 1-27

b)Empirical Findings at Different Levels of Analysis:

*Stuart Bremer, "Who Fights Whom, When and Why?" in John Vasquez, *What Do We Know About War* (2000), pp. 23-36 **R ; RC**

c) For posing research questions on the Causes of War, see Hidemi Suganami, *On the Causes of War* (1996), Ch.1, pp.11-42 *passim*. **R; RC**

Film: "Deadly Game of Nations" (with Gwynne Dyer) [56 minutes]

III. Applying Different Levels of Analysis :*Realist* Explanations of the Causes of War

Sept. 27 **Level I : a) The International System: Anarchy; Polarity; Balance of Power; Hegemonic War; Current State of the System**

i)System Level Theories of War:

*Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, Ch.2 "System Level Theories," pp. 28-54

ii) Balance of Power Theories:

Daniel Nexon, "The Balance of Power in the Balance," *World Politics* 61 (April 2009), pp. 330-359 **RJ**

iii) Power Transitions in the System:

Jeffrey Morton & Harvey Starr, "Uncertainty, Change and War: Fluctuations and War in the Modern Elite Power System." *Jl. of Peace Research* 38 (2001), pp.49-66 **RJ**

iv) Hegemonic War:

*Robert Gilpin, "Theory of Hegemonic War," in Rotberg & Rabb, *Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, pp. 15-37 **R, RC**

For a discussion of the structure of the current post-Cold War international system, see

*John Ikenberry, "Unipolarity, State Behaviour and Systemic Consequences,"

World Politics 61 (Jan. 2009), pp. 1-27 *passim*

Richard Haass, "The Age of Nonpolarity," *Foreign Affairs* 87 (May/June 2008), pp. 44-56

Oct. 4 Level II: a) The State (Monadic) and War: The Realist Tradition

*"War-Prone States," Ch 3 in Daniel Geller and David Singer, *Nations at War* (1998), pp.46-67 **R, RC**

Level II: b) Dyadic Interactions of States

i) Overview:

*Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, Ch. 3 "The Dyadic Interactions of States," pp.55-70, pp. 71-77 *passim*.

ii) Parity/Preponderance; Rivalry:

*Daniel Geller and David Singer, *Nations at War*, Ch.4 "War-Prone Dyads," pp.68-85 **R**
T.V. Paul, "Why Has the Indo-Pakistan Rivalry Been so Enduring? Power Asymmetry and Intractable Conflict," *Security Studies* 15 (Oct.-Dec. 2006), pp. 600-631

iii) Realist Path to War -- Territorial Disputes, Alliances, Arms Races; Crises:

John Vasquez, "Re-examining the Steps to War" in Manus Midlarsky, *Handbook of War Studies II*, pp. 371-406

Christopher Sprecher & Volker Krause, "Alliances, Armed Conflict and Cooperation," *Jl of Peace Research* 43 (July 2006), pp. 363-369 **RJ**

The entire issue of this journal is devoted to the role of alliances in IR.

Film: "Nice Guys Finish First" [50 min.]

October 11 Thanksgiving Holiday [no war week]

Oct. 18 Level II: c) Society and War – Realist, Liberal-Internationalist and Other Perspectives

i) Domestic Instability; Imperialism; Expansion; Diversionary Wars:

James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (1984), Ch.5 "The Primacy of Domestic Politics," pp. 109-145 *passim*. **R**

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 4 "The State and Societal Level," pp. 83-103

Jack Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," in Rotberg and Rabb, *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, pp.79-99 **R; RC**

ii) Democratic Peace:

*Levy and Thompson, on "Democratic Peace" pp. 104-117

*Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, "Understanding Victory: Why Political Institutions Matter," *International Security* 28 (Summer 2003), pp. 154-167 **RJ**

Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, "From Democratic Peace to Kantian Peace," in Manus Midlarsky, *Handbook of War Studies II*, pp. 93-128 **R**

Oct. 25 Level II: d) Decision-Making at the Sub-State Level

i) Rational Decision-Making:

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 5, pp. 130-133

ii) Bureaucratic Politics; Organizational Process:

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 6, pp. 162-180

For the classic distinction between the rational actor, bureaucratic politics and organizational process models, see Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 53 (1969)

iii) Small Group Decision-Making; Groupthink:

*Levy and Thompson, pp. 180-182

Irving Janis, "Escalation of the Vietnam War," in John Ikenberry, *American Foreign Policy* (1989), pp. 506-535 **R**

v) Crisis Decision-Making:

*Ole Holsti, "Theories of Crisis Decision Making," in R. Matthews *et al.*, *Conflict and Conflict Management* (1989), pp.67-83 **RC**

For an excellent case study of war decision-making under high risk, see Ari Levy and Glen Whyte, "Crucial Decision-Making under High Risk: Japan's 1941 Decision for War," *Jl. of Conflict Resolution* 41 (Dec. 1997), pp. 792-811 **RJ**

Film: "The Fog of War" (Interview with Robert McNamara) [107 min; to be cut]

November 1 Level III: Decision-Making at the Individual Level

i) Human Psychology and War:

For a Jungian perspective, see Anthony Stevens, *The Roots of War and Terror* (2004), Ch. 2 "Us vs Them," pp. 28-57 **RC**

ii) Cognitive Dimensions: Beliefs; Images; and Misperception:

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 5, pp. 127-157

Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception," in Rotberg and Rabb, *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, pp. 101-126 **R**

iii) Leaders' Personality and War:

*Stephen Dyson, "Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decision," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2 (July 2006), pp. 289-306 **RJ**

or

Kevin Woods *et al.*, "Saddam's Delusions," *Foreign Affairs* 85 (May/June 2006), pp. 2-20. **RJ**

For leaders' risk acceptance or aversion, see Jack Levy, "Prospect Theory, Rational Choice and International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (1997), pp.87-112

Film: "Inside the Mind of Adolf Hitler" [50 min]

IV. Applying Theories to Selected Case Studies of War

Nov. 8 a) World War I (1914-1918)

i. Historical Review of Causes:

*Cashman & Robinson, Ch.2 . pp. 27-68 *passim.*;pp.68-87

ii. Structural Explanations -- Balance of Power; Rigid Alliances:

*Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts*, Ch. 3, "Balance of Power and World War I," pp. 66-87 [in the most recent 7th edition] **R; RC**

iii) Catalysts or Trigger Mechanisms of War:

*William Thompson, "A Streetcar Named Sarajevo: Catalysts, Multiple Causation Chains and Rivalry Structures," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (2003), pp. 453-474 **RJ** *passim.*

iv. Psychological and Cognitive Factors – Stress and Misperceptions:

Stephen Van Evera, "Why Cooperation Failed in 1914," in Ken Oye, *Cooperation under Anarchy*, pp. 80-117 **RC**

v. Flawed Military Strategies and Faulty Crisis Decision-Making

Jack Snyder, "The Cult of the Offensive in 1914," in Robert Art and Ken Waltz,
The Use of Force (5th ed. 1999), pp. 113-129 **R**
Re-read Ole Hosti, "Theories of Crisis Decision-Making [from Oct. 25 readings] **RC**
Film: *The Great War: the Great Explosion* [60 min]

Nov.15 b) Preventive & Pre-emptive Wars: The Case of the Six-Day War (1967)

i. The Preventive/Preemptive War Trap:

*Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War* (1999), Ch. 3 "Jumping the Gun," pp.35-72 *passim*.

R

For the effect of power shifts on preventive war plans, see Stephen Van Evera's Ch. 4

"Windows of Opportunity and Vulnerability," pp. 73-104 **R RC or**

Dale Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (2000), "Introduction," pp. 1-10 **R**

Hakan Tunç, "Preemption in the Bush Doctrine," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5 (Jan. 2009),
pp.1-16 **RJ**

ii. The Case of the Six Day (1967) War between Arabs and Israel

*Cashman & Robinson, Ch. 4, "The Six Day War," pp. 155-205 *passim*

Film: "Six Days in June" Part I. [60 min]

Nov. 22 c) Civil Wars : "Greed; Need and Creed".

i. Overview and Trends:

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 7, "Civil War," pp. 186-204

Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars have the same Causes?"

Jl. of Conflict Resolution 45 (2001), pp.259-282 **RJ**

ii. Ethnic Minorities/ Identity Conflicts:

*Lars-Eric Cederman *et al.*, "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis,"

World Politics 62 (Jan. 2010), pp. 87-119 *passim*. **RJ**

iii. Economic Causes and Natural Resources:

*Paul Collier, "The Market for Civil War," *Foreign Policy* 136 (May/June 2003),
pp.40-45 **RJ**

Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler, "Resource Rents, Governance and Conflict," *Jl. of*
Conflict Resolution 49 (Aug. 2005), pp.625-633 **RJ**

iv. International and Transnational Dimensions of Civil War:

Kristian Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War," *Jl. of Peace*

Research 44 (2007), pp. 293-309 **RJ**

v. Case Study: The Civil War(s) in Yugoslavia

John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War* (9th ed. 2005), Ch. 5 "From Sarajevo to
Kosovo," pp. 235-255 **R or**

Raymond Taras and Rajat Ganguly, *Understanding Ethnic Conflict* (2nd.ed. 2002),
Ch.9 "The Breaking Up of Yugoslavia," pp. 235-255 **R**

Film: "The Death of Yugoslavia" [55 min.]

Film Review Due

Nov. 29 d) “War on Terror”: The Case of the US War in Iraq

i. Terrorism and War:

*Marc Sageman, “The Next Generation of Terror,” *Foreign Policy* 165 (March/April 2008), pp. 37-42 **RJ**

ii. U.S. War in Iraq:

*Cashman & Robinson, Ch. 7 “The Iraq War,” pp. 297-363 *passim*

*David Mitchell and Tansa Massoud, “Anatomy of Failure: Bush’s Decision-Making Process and the Iraq War,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5 (July 2009), 265-286 **RJ**

Brian Schmidt & Michael Williams, “The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neocons vs Realists,” *Security Studies* 17 (April/June 2008), pp.191-220

John Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, “An Unnecessary War,” *Foreign Policy* 134 (Jan./Feb, 2003), pp.51-59 **RJ**

For a detailed account of the U.S. decision process to go to war against Iraq, see Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (2004)

Film: “*Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War*” [60 min]

December 6

V. Course Review

*Levy and Thompson, Ch. 8 “Conclusion,” pp. 205-219

*Cashman & Robinson, Ch.8 “Conclusion,” pp. 365-383 *passim*.

Handing out of Take-Home Examination Questions

Essay Due on December 10

Take-Home Examination Due on December 22

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 15, 2010 for December examinations and March 11, 2011 for April examinations**.

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 include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor 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. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

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.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

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 in the after-hours academic life 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, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, 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.

