

Carleton University  
Department of Political Science

Winter 2019

PSCI 3107 B  
The Causes of War  
Wednesdays 11:35-2::25  
Office Hours Wednesdays 3-5, Thursdays 12-1  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-5, Thursday 12-1  
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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 and hopefully how to help prevent them in the future.

**cuLearn content.** Students will find 4 useful sections on the web site

1. 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 come and have fun thinking.
2. A list of song titles and film about war, specifically films and songs that either sell war or especially those that criticize war..
3. Instructions and helpful hints for the assignments.
4. Readings. 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.

**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 Class  
Proposal: 15% February 13th  
Critical interpretation of Films and Songs for and or against war. 15%: March 13th  
Research Paper: 30%: April 3rd  
Final Exam: 30%: During Final Exam Period

**Participation:** While attendance will be noted at the discretion of the lecturer, participation requires thoughtful and learned contributions to class discussions that reflect course readings. Attendance is required to understand the course. Students are expected to attend at least two thirds of the lectures. Those who are silent even if usually present will not achieve high marks for this component. **Due: every lecture and all weeks.**

**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 including at least one book. 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: February 13th**

**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 culearn, 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: March 13th**

**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: April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**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 Lecture1, Wednesday January 9th: 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 2 Lecture 2, Wednesday January 16th: 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 3 Lecture3, Wednesday January 23rd : 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 4 Lecture 4, Wednesday January 30th: 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 5 Lecture 5, February 6th Dyads or state to state conflict cycles.**

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 6 Lecture 6, Wednesday February 13<sup>th</sup>): International Systems: Realism Anarchy, Balance of Power**

Is there something inherent in the state of international relations that leads to war? Is 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 o 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  
**Research Proposal due!**

**Week 7 February 20th Reading week: No classes no office hours. Contact by email.**

**Week 8 Lecture 7, Wednesday February 27<sup>th</sup> : International Systems II: The Political Economy of War.**

Are system wide wars a sign of a changing of the guard of hegemonic powers? Were WWI and WWII the result o 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 interestdo they project hegemonic values as well?

**Week 9 Lecture 8, WednesdayMarch 6<sup>th</sup>: 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.

**Week 10 Lecture 9, Wednesday Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup> 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: TBA**

**Critical Reading of war culture Due!**

**Week 11 Lecture 10, Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup> 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 TBA

**Week 12 Lecture 11, Wednesday, March 27th: 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.

**Week 13 Lecture 12, Wednesday April 3rd, 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.

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

**Research Paper is due**

**Academic Accommodations**

**Late Penalties and extensions:** Extensions are given out at the discretion of the instructor for personal, family or health reasons. You must request extensions in person during office hours or by email ahead of the due date. Otherwise papers will be penalized at the rate of 1 mark per day or ½ % point of the final mark. **Note that while the instructor is compassionate about late papers, university regulations require all course work be submitted by the end of classes. Failure to complete all course requirements will result in a mark of F.**

**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 **March 12, 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](http://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 should only ever be handed directly to the instructor. If you use 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. Papers will only be collected on Thursdays and Fridays from the mailbox, so they must be delivered by Wednesday or Thursday. **Note that essays handed in to the drop box tend to get lost (usually because students fail to include the instructor’s name, course number, students name or use the right departmental drop box) so please hand it in in person to the instructor only..** For essays not returned by the exam 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. Failure to hand in any of the term assignments will result in an F for the course. 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](mailto:carletonpss@gmail.com), visit our website at [poliscisociety.com](http://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.