BA Political Science Pol-M11

Seminar:
War and Peace: Rational and Nonrational Perspectives

Thu 8-10, GW2 B2900

Goals

The causes of war and the conditions of peace have always been central to international relations (IR) as a field of social-scientific research. The seminar seeks to introduce students to the study of war and peace by looking at scholarly contributions reflecting the variety of approaches and perspectives that have developed over the years. For this purpose, we will discuss classical and more recent work varying *inter alia* in theoretical orientation (realism, liberalism, etc.), level of analysis (individual, state, system), and empirical focus (inter-state war, civil war). Special attention will be paid to the “micro-foundations” of competing accounts of war and peace, where we find rationalist approaches highlighting strategic action and psychological approaches pointing to the significance of non-rational factors such as cognitive biases, small-group dynamics, and emotions in decisions about war and peace. In the final part of the seminar we will move beyond positive analyses of war and peace and discuss normative perspectives on war and other forms of large-scale collective violence.

Schedule

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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>6 April</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>13 April</td>
<td>The Study of War: Definitions, Trends, Frameworks</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>20 April</td>
<td>Rational Choice</td>
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<td>27 April</td>
<td>Power Transition Theory</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4 May</td>
<td>Democratic Peace</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>Prospect Theory: Loss Aversion, Framing, and War</td>
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<td>War and the Justice Motive</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Ascension Day</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1 June</td>
<td>Emotions and War</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8 June</td>
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<td>15 June</td>
<td>Threat Perception, Inter-group Conflict, and Genocide</td>
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<td>22 June</td>
<td>Bargaining Theory of Civil War</td>
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<td>Terrorism as Strategy</td>
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<td>Realism, Pacifism, and Just War Theory</td>
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<td>Non-paradigmatic Applications of Just War Theory: Terrorism and Private Military Companies</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>6 July</td>
<td>Conclusion: Women and Peace</td>
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*Note: The extra double session on 1 July (Sat) takes place in room GW2 B3009.*

**Requirements**

All participants are expected to read the assigned texts carefully in preparation of the sessions. Participation without reading will not be beneficial.

- 3 CP (MPL): oral presentation (15 minutes) plus written elaboration (5 pages) or small term paper (8-10 pages)
- 6 CP (GPL): term paper (15-20 pages) or oral exam (30 minutes)

Students who wish to obtain 6 CP in this seminar can reduce the expected length of the seminar paper to 12-14 pages by volunteering for an oral presentation (without written elaboration).

Note that the page numbers given above assume that the papers are formatted according to the rules laid down in the Institute of Political Science’s “Study Guide” (sec. 4.1). The expected range of pages includes the bibliography (references) and excludes the cover sheet, the table of contents, and annexes (if applicable).

Students are required to secure the instructor’s consent to their topic before they start writing. In other words, I may reject or downgrade a paper the topic of which I had not endorsed.

Papers (including elaborations of presentations) may be written in English or German and must be handed in by 30 September 2017 (both electronically and as a printout). Likewise, oral exams can be taken in English or German.

Students who intend to use the seminar as a proof of sufficient proficiency in English (as required by § 5, sec. 6 of the BA policies [Prüfungsordnung]) must hand in their papers or take the oral exam in English.

*Please note that the StudIP course site provides further information on seminar requirements and procedures as well as various other hints you may find useful. To access this information click the tab “Information” at the top of the page. (Note that the tab may be invisible if you access StudIP via its Android app. To solve the problem, access StudIP via the University of Bremen website.)*
Literature

Introductions, Overviews, Handbooks, Anthologies, Monographs


**Topics and Readings**

6 April

1 – Introduction

13 April

2 – The Study of War: Definitions, Trends, Frameworks

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


20 April

3 – Rational Choice

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


27 April

4 – Power Transition Theory

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


4 May

5 – Democratic Peace

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


11 May

6 – Prospect Theory: Loss Aversion, Framing, and War

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


18 May

**7 – War and the Justice Motive**

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


1 June

**8 – Emotions and War**

Required Reading:

Further Reading:


15 June

9 – Threat Perception, Inter-group Conflict, and Genocide

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


22 June

10 – Bargaining Theory of Civil War

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


29 June

11 – Terrorism as Strategy

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


1 July (9-13)

**12 – Realism, Pacifism, and Just War Theory**

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


**13 – Non-paradigmatic Applications of Just War Theory: Terrorism and Private Military Companies**

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


6 July

14 – Conclusion: Women and Peace

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


