CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF WAR: THEORY AND METHOD

This course explores the causes of modern war, with a focus on preventable causes. Course readings cover theoretical, historical, and methodological topics. Major theories of war are explored and assessed in the first few weeks of the class, asking at each stage "are these good theories?" and "how could they be tested?" Basic social scientific inference--what are theories? what are good theories? how should theories be framed and tested?--and case study methodology are also discussed. The second half of the course explores the history of the outbreak of a number of major wars. We use these cases as raw material for case studies, asking "if these episodes were the subject of case studies, how should those studies be performed, and what could be learned from them?"

Course requirements: Students will be asked to write 2 short papers (7-10 typed doublespaced pages) and two 1-page exercises. One of the 7-10 page papers will be a case study; the other can be a case study or can be an assessment of theories of the causes of war. The 1-page exercises are due Sept. 25 and Oct. 16; the papers are due at times TBA.

This is a graduate course open to undergraduates by permission of the instructor only.

Recommended for purchase at the MIT Coop:


Also at the COOP, but only recommended:


None of Cashman is assigned but it is a useful basic synopsis of much of the literature. Turabian is a style reference that you should own and obey.

All other readings will be available as course notes that can be purchased from the Technology Copy Center in the basement of building E-52, except some that will be handed out in class.

Readings in books available in the COOP bookstore are denoted below with a "BK"; course notes readings are denoted below with a "C"; handouts are denoted with an "H".
I.  INTRODUCTION: FRAMING, TESTING & USING THEORIES

Sept. 11:  **Hypotheses, Laws, Theories and Case Studies** (85 pages)


II.  HYPOTHESES ON THE CAUSES OF WAR (5 Weeks)

Sept. 18, 25: Propositional inventories on war, and military causes of war.

A.  Propositional inventories on war (160 pages):


I also recommend that you take a look at Gregg Cashman, *What Causes War?*, available at the MIT COOP textbook section for this course as a recommended reading. A good basic synopsis.

B.  Hypotheses on military power-factors as causes of war (i.e. theories addressing the fine-grained structure of power) (120 pages):

C 1. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale, 1966), pp. 221-251 ("The Dynamics of Mutual Alarm.") The classic statement of "stability theory"--"war is more likely when the side moving first gains an advantage."


Oct. 2: Hypotheses on systemic power factors, and hypotheses on national misperception.

A. Hypotheses on systemic power factors (i.e. theories addressing the gross structure of power) (162 pages):

C 1. Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 161-176 ("Structural Causes and Military Effects"). Pages 176-193 are also included in your coursenotes, but you can skim them quickly; I include them just to give you the whole chapter for your files.

C 2. Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 156-185 ("Equilibrium and Decline") and 186-210 ("Hegemonic Change and War."). In pages 156-186 Gilpin argues that dominant states are often overtaken by challengers; in pages 186-210 he argues that these power-transitions cause war.


B. Hypotheses on national misperception: hypotheses from psychology; and structural & societal theories of misperception.

>>Hypotheses from psychology (43 pages):


C 2. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1976), pp. 58-84. Some argue that using carrots solves conflicts while using sticks provokes them, others say the opposite (warning against appeasement). How can this dispute be resolved? Does Jervis say enough to resolve it? Note: pages 85-113 are also included in your coursnotes but you can skim them quickly; I include them just to give you the whole chapter for your files.

The existing literature on misperception from the psychology paradigm asks if policy makers make the cognitive errors of ordinary people. Do we need work on whether some political systems select elites in ways that over-represent certain psychological disorders--e.g., narcissism, compulsive-obsessive disorder, megalomania, paranoia--that have effects on state perceptions and foreign policy behavior?

>>Societal theories of misperception: militarism, nationalism, defects in academe and the press (27 pp.):

BK1. Van Evera, "Primed for Peace," pp. 204-211 (on militarism and hyper-nationalism.)


Note: to keep your files complete I include the whole piece in your coursenotes (pp. 63-79) but you needn't bother with pp. 63-68, 75-79.


C. Systemic theories of misperception: "the system makes states fool each other."

C 1. James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," International Organization, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995). I include the whole article in your coursenotes (pp. 379-414) but please read only pp. 390-401 (on "war due to private information and incentives to misrepresent").

Note: no class Oct. 9 (Columbus day holiday).

Oct. 16: Hypotheses on domestic political & social structure: democracy, revolution, culture, gender, democracy, social equality & social justice, minority rights & human rights, prosperity, economic interdependence, capitalism, communism, imperial decline and collapse, cultural learning, religion as a cause of peace and war (246 pp.):


OR


7. John Mueller, "The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons: Stability in the Postwar World," in Lynn-Jones, Cold War and After, pp. 45-69. War has been delegitimized, much as slavery was before it. Even conventional war is now a fading institution.

8. Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete?" in Lynn-Jones, Cold War and After, pp. 81-103. Mueller is right for the wrong reasons. War is obsolete because it has lost its utility, not because it horrifies anyone.

9. Geoffrey Blainey, The Causes of War, chapter 2 ("Paradise is a Bazaar"), pp. 18-32. Do prosperity and interdependence promote peace?


October 23: Hypotheses on strategic interaction; applications of theories of war to explain history; causes of civil war; case study method

A. Hypotheses on strategic interaction (175 pp.):


B. Emotions and war: the role of vengeance, contempt, honor, contrition, apology, insult, pride.

Needed: a more developed literature on this topic.

C. Religion and war.

D. Applications of theory to explain history (74 pp.):


E. Civil war: how common (very!) What do we know about its causes and cures? (Not much!) (69 pp.)


Some useful recent (spring/summer 2001) papers on civil war can also be found online at www.worldbank.org/research/conflict. For the papers click on the four "workshops" listed on the left hand side of the first page under "resources."

F. The Correlates of War project: inferring theories from large-n data sets.

his Correlates of War project. Singer does not use the case method; rather, he seeks correlations in large-n data sets, hoping that correlation will sometimes signal causation. How fruitful is this approach? When should it be used?

G. Segue to Cases: the Case Study Method. How Should Case Studies Be Performed?


C 5. Andrew Bennett, "Lost in Translation: Big (n) Misinterpretations of Case Study Research" (Paper presented to the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Toronto, March 1997). Much nonsense is believed about the case method. Some intelligent mythbusting is provided here.


short pieces on the great debate over rational choice.

C 10. Syllabi on the case study method by professors Scott Sagan (Stanford), John Mearsheimer (Chicago), Andrew Bennett (Georgetown), John Odell (USC), Matthew Evangelista (Cornell), Ted Hopf (Michigan). In the past many political science departments defined "methodology" to consist solely of large-n (statistical) methods. While statistics was a required course at most schools, case study methodology often wasn't even taught. This is changing, as these syllabi illustrate. I include them for your general perusal and background. No need to give them a talmudic reading--they are for your reference.

Those curious to see more qualitative methods syllabi can find them on the web at www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm/syllabi.html. And for more on qualitative methods see www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm/.

C 11. Syllabi on the causes of war for courses taught by Jack Levy (Rutgers), Christopher Gelpi (Harvard), Stephen Walt (Chicago), Hayward Alker (USC), Louise Hodgden (Texas/Austin), and Dale Copeland U. of Virginia). How the subject is taught elsewhere, by a diverse range of scholars. For your reference. (Handy to have for the day when you have to design your own version of this course.)

III. CASE STUDIES

October 30: The Seven Years war & the Korean War

A. Seven Years:


B. Korea:


C 2. Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance

November 6, 13: World War I


C 2. Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), pp. vii-ix, 121-127, 142-150, 206-207. This book summarizes the views of the "Fischer School," which argues that German aggression was a prime cause of World War I. Pages 142-150 recounts the occurrence and aftermath of the War Council of 8 December 1912, a centerpiece of the Fischer school case; pages 206-207 reprint the Fischer school's "smoking gun" diary entry by Admiral Müller, discovered only in the 1960s. But many find Fisher and Geiss unpersuasive. How can this dispute be resolved?

C 3. Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 96-142 ("The Army and the Idea of Preventive War," and "The Army and the Civilians."). In Germany the army purveyed the concept of preventive war, the notion that war was healthy and beneficial, and other exotic ideas; and within Germany it became a law unto itself--a "state within the state," in Gordon Craig's phrase.


C 6. Louis L. Snyder, *German Nationalism: Tragedy of a People* (Port Washington NY: Kennikat, 1969), chapters 6 ("Historiography") and 10 ("Militarism"). Please read pp. 123-24, mid-139-152, 227-243; you need only skim pp. 124-139, 243-254. German historians were more a problem than a solution; German popular thought was militarized.

For more on World War I origins see the documents collection at
November 20: The Second World War in Europe


C 4. Sheri Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment: Ideas and Politics in the Making of Interwar Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): ix-x, 176-200. Why did the Great Depression of the 1930s bring benign Social Democrats to power in Sweden while bringing the vicious and expansionist Nazis to power in Germany? Clearly, the effects of depressions on modern industrial politics are not uniform; instead, a condition variable of some sort must decide these effects. Clearly, that condition variable must have had very different values in the Swedish and German cases. Berman's study tries to identify that condition variable. Does she do so persuasively?

November 27: The Pacific War


BK2. Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945* (Pantheon, 1979) pp. vii-152, 247-256. Was the Japanese decision for war a rational response to circumstances, or in some sense "irrational"?
Ienaga and Sagan disagree--who's right?


December 4: The Arab-Israeli War 1967: The 1991 Persian Gulf War; the Peloponnesian War

A. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War:


B. The Persian Gulf War


C. The Peloponnesian War


predictions are implicit but clear nevertheless.) Does his method work?

IV. THE FUTURE OF WAR
December 11: The Future of War: Using Theory to Predict and Prescribe; The Field Agenda in War Studies.

BK 1. Review again Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete?" in Lynn-Jones, Cold War and After, pp. 81-103, assigned above. Kaysen says past causes of war are already gone--but if he's right, why does war continue?

BK 2. Read the rest of Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," in Lynn-Jones, Cold War and After, some of which was assigned above.

C 3. Frank Fukuyama, "The End of History?" in John T. Rourke, Taking Sides, 4th ed. (Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin, 1992), pp. 268-286. Fukuyama forecasts that the spread of democratic ideas will spread peace worldwide over the next several centuries, ending forever the cycle of wars that have plagued human history.


C 6. Ziegler, War, Peace and IR, chapter 11 ("Collective Security,") pp. 179-203. Many people have offered this answer. Why has it failed?


BK 9. Van Evera, Guide to Methods, chapter 6 ("Professional Ethics"). This topic has nothing in particular to do with the causes of war, but you should form an attitude on the issues raised here.
FURTHER READING

I. GENERAL & THEORETICAL WORKS

Bibliographies:


Journals:

World Politics
International Studies Quarterly
International Security
Journal of Peace Research
Journal of Conflict Resolution
Peace Studies
Peace Research
Peace and Change
International Organization
Security Studies
Journal of Strategic Studies

General & theoretical works:

Kenneth N. Waltz, Man, the State, and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959)
Seyom Brown, The Causes and Prevention of War, 2nd ed. (NY: St. Martin's
Press, 1994)
Keith Nelson and Spencer C. Olin, Jr., Why War? Ideology, Theory, and History
( Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979)
J. David Singer and Paul F. Diehl, eds., Measuring the Correlates of War (Ann
F.H. Hinsley, Power and the Pursuit of Peace (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1967)
Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz, eds., The Use of Force, 4th ed. (Lanham,
MD: University Press of America, 1993)
T.C.W. Blanning, The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars (London:
Herman Kahn, On Thermonuclear War, 2nd ed., Foreword by Klaus Knorr (New York:
James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of
International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey, 3rd ed. (New York:
HarperCollins, 1990), parts.
Lester Kurtz, ed., Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict, 3 vols. (San

Military policy & the causes of war:

Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale, 1966)
Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin, Strategy and Arms Control NY: Twentieth
Century Fund, 1961)
University Press, 1990)
George H. Quester, Offense and Defense in the International System (New York:
John Wiley & Sons, 1977)
Marlies Ter Borg, "Reducing Offensive Capabilities--the Attempt of 1932,"
Marion W. Boggs, Attempts to Define and Limit "Aggressive" Armament in
Diplomacy and Strategy, University of Missouri Studies 16, No. 1 (Columbia:
University of Missouri, 1941)
Vol. 55 (July 1932), pp. 71-78.
Bjørn Møller, Common Security and Nonoffensive Defense: A Neorealist
Perspective (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992)
Bjørn Møller and Hakan Wiberg, Non-Offensive Defense for the Twenty-First
Century (Boulder: Westview, 1994)
Carl Conetta, Charles Knight and Lutz Unterseher, "Toward Defensive
Restructuring in the Middle East," Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 22,
No. 2 (1991), pp. 115-134.
Barry R. Posen, "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern
Bjørn Møller, "Bibliography of Non-Offensive Defense," in NOD International
Research Newsletter (Copenhagen: Centre of Peace and Conflict Research,
University of Copenhagen, 1987), pp. 1-123.

The nuclear revolution & the causes of war:


Systemic theory:


Realism vs. liberal institutionalism:

Michael Joseph Smith, Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986)
Formal theory:


Perceptions & ideas:


Militarism:

Derek Shearer, "The Pentagon Propaganda Machine," in Leonard Rodberg and Derek
See also representative writings on war and international affairs by military officers, e.g., Friedrich von Bernhardi, Ferdinand Foch, Giulio Douhet, Nathan Twining, Thomas Powers, and Curtis LeMay.

Nationalism--general works:


Nationalist mythmaking:

Frances Fitzgerald, America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979)

Relevant organization theory, applications of it:


Human instinct theories of war:
Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations pp. 274-288.
Waltz, Man, the State, and War, pp. 16-79.
William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in Bramson and Goethals, War, pp. 21-31; William McDougall, "The Instinct of Pugnacity," in ibid, p. 33-43; Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in ibid, pp. 71-80; and Margaret Mead, "Warfare is Only an Invention, Not a Biological Necessity," in ibid, pp. 269-274.

Gender and war:
Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart, eds., The "Man" Question in International Relations (Boulder: Westview, 1997)
Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals,"
Domestic politics & war (general):


Democratic peace theory, dictatorial peace theory:


Steve Chan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall ... Are the Freer Countries More Pacific?" Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 28, No. 4 (December 1984), pp. 617-648


Stanislav Andreski, "On the Peaceful Disposition of Military Dictatorships,"
Arms races:


Civil war, causes and means to control:


Peace movements:


Crisis management:


Negotiation and diplomacy:

Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without*
Giving In (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981)
Fred Charles Iklé, How Nations Negotiate (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1982, first pub. 1964)

Mediation:

Case study method:
Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994)
Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 33-42.

II. HISTORICAL WORKS

Bibliographies:
Jürgen Förster, David French, David Stevenson and Russel Van Wyk, eds., War and Society Newsletter: A Bibliographical Survey (Munich: Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, annual since 1973). This source lists articles and book chapters relevant to international relations and war.

General surveys of international history:


See Palmer & Colton's extensive bibliography for more sources.

General surveys of European international history:

Carlton J.H. Hayes, Contemporary Europe Since 1870 (NY: Macmillan, 1962)

Also pertinent are the relevant books in four series of general histories:

1: The "Langer" series, published by Harper Torchbooks, 15-odd volumes covering western history since 1200, under the general editorship of William Langer (e.g. Raymond Sontag, A Broken World, 1919-1939.)
2: The Longman's "General History of Europe" series, covering western history since Roman times, published by Longman, under the general editorship of Denys Hays (e.g. J.M. Roberts, Europe 1880-1945).
3: The Fontana "History of Europe" series, published by Fontana/Collins, covering history since the middle ages, under the general editorship of J.H. Plumb (e.g. J.A.S. Grenville, Europe Reshaped, 1848-78);
4: The "New Cambridge Modern History" and "Cambridge Ancient History" series, covering western history from the beginning.

The Seven Years War:

An overview:

Fred Anderson, Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000)

On the Franco-British conflict in the Seven Years War:

On the Prussian-Austrian-Russian-French war of 1756 accounts include:

Gerhard Ritter, Frederick the Great (Berkeley: U. of California, 1974), pp. 73-148.

The Crimean War:


The Italian Wars of Independence:


The Wars of German Unification:


World War I:

Basic histories include:

D.C.B. Lieven, Russia and the Origins of the First World War (New York: St. Martin's, 1983)
Zara S. Steiner, Britain and the Origins of the First World War (NY: St. Martin's, 1977)

Surveys of debates about the war's origins are:  


Other sources on the origins of the war include:  


Contemporary descriptions of the political climate in Germany are:  

William Roscoe Thayer, ed., *Out Of Their Own Mouths* (NY: Appleton, 1917)  
Wallace Notestein, ed. *Conquest and Kultur: Aims of Germans in Their Own Words* (Washington: Committee on Public Information, 1917)  

Other works on themes pertinent to this course include:  

Louis L. Snyder, *From Bismarck to Hitler* (Williamsport: Bayard, 1935)  
Antoine Guillard, *Germany and Her Historians* (NY: McBride, Nast, 1915)  


Readable accounts of the war itself include:


On Versailles an introduction is:

World War II in Europe:

E.H. Carr, International Relations Between the Two World Wars (NY: Macmillan, 1947)
William L. Shirer, Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1960)
Max Weinreich, Hitler's Professors (NY: Yiddish Scientific Institute, 1946)
Omer Bartov, Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and the War in the Third Reich (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991)
Richard J. Evans, In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past (New York: Pantheon, 1989)
Denis Mack Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977)

The Pacific War:

Stephen E. Fez, Race to Pearl Harbor: The Failure of the Second London Naval
Conference and the Onset of World War II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974)
Michael A. Barnhart, Japan Prepares for Total War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

The origins of the Cold War:

The Korean War:
Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1960)
Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in Harold Stein, ed., American Civil-Military Relations: A Book of Case Studies (Birmingham: University of
Alabama Press, for the Twentieth Century Fund, 1963), pp. 569-642.
David Rees, Korea: The Limited War (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970)
James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, United States Foreign Policy and World Order, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985), pp. 113-156.

The Indochina War:

David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1972)

**The Peloponnesian War:**


**The Punic Wars**


**Arab-Israeli Wars:**

General on the Arab-Israeli conflict:

Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (NY: St. Martin's, 1988)
Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary*

On 1948:


On 1956:

Safran, Israel, the Embattled Ally, pp. 224-39, 334-58.
Hirst, Gun and the Olive Branch, pp. 172-205.
Livia Rokach, Israel's Sacred Terrorism: A Study Based on Moshe Sharett's Personal Diary and Other Documents (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1980)
Michael Brecher, Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), ch. 6 (pp. 225-317).
Moshe Dayan, Diary of the Sinai Campaign (Jerusalem: Steimatzky's, 1966)

On 1967:

Safran, Israel, the Embattled Ally, pp. 240-56, 359-414.
Hirst, Gun and the Olive Branch, pp. 206-58.
Donald Neff, Warriors for Jerusalem: the Six Days that Changed the Middle East (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1984)
Richard B. Parker, The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993)


On 1969-70:


On 1973:

Safran, Israel, the Embattled Ally, pp. 278-316, 448-505.

Donald Neff, Warriors Against Israel (Brattleboro, Vt.: Amana Books, 1988)

Mohamed Heikal, The Road to Ramadan (NY: Ballantine, 1976)


Insight Team of the London Sunday Times, The Yom Kippur War (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974)

The 1982 Lebanon war:

Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, Israel's Lebanon War (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1984)

The Cuban Missile Crisis:


Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968)

Graham Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971)


Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, "Controlling the Risks in Cuba", in Art and

**Contemporary wars:**