

PSCI 321—War and Peace

Spring 2022

Professor: Gregory P. Williams, Ph.D.

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Office hours: TR 9:30 to 10:30 (on Zoom), and by appointment

Registration: PSCI 321 (001), reg no. 20971

Meeting: TR 11-12:15 on Zoom

This course is about the nature of conflict and cooperation on the world stage. Why do societies go to war? Why do they choose to make peace? In exploring these questions, we will examine inter-state war, civil war, and the potential for peace.

Please buy the books listed below. New copies can be bought for a total of \$91. With hard copies in hand, you will easily find the assigned reading each week.

1. Max Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery* (London: Verso, 2019).
2. Christopher Coker, *Can War Be Eliminated?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014).
3. Jack Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
4. Ian Morris, *War! What is it Good For?* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2014).
5. Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 2020).

We will cover roughly one topic a week. Two exceptions are (a) when Professor Williams's wife gives birth to Baby Williams (due 2/12), and (b) when Professor Williams is at the International Studies Association conference (3/30 to 4/1). More information (and photos!) will be forthcoming.

Course topics are as follows, with assigned readings:

Topic 1: Uncertainties of a self-help world

William J. Astore, "Why American leaders persist in waging losing wars," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 2018).

Yelena N. Yemelyanova, "The Nature and Origins of War: The Social Democratic Concept," *Social Evolution & History* 19, no. 2 (2020): 68-97.

Topic 2: Is war natural?

Morris, pp. 3-26 (Introduction) and pp. 288-332 (Ch. 6)

Topic 2: Thinking theoretically

Levy and Thompson, all of Ch. 1 and pp. 29-43 in Ch. 2

Topic 3: Hegemonic cycles, rivalries, and interdependence

Levy and Thompson, pp. 43-54 (Ch. 2) and pp. 55-82 (Ch. 3)

Topic 4: Imperialism

Levy and Thompson, pp. 83-104 (Ch. 4)

Topic 5: War in the Modern World

Morris, pp. 165-234 (Ch. 4)

Levy and Thompson, pp. 186-204 (Ch. 7)

Topic 6: The Bomb and Democratic Peace

Morris, pp. 271-287

Levy and Thompson, pp. 104-117 (Ch. 4)

Topic 7: The Age of Endless War, Part I: Afghanistan

Blumenthal, pp. 1-40 (Introduction), 75-104 (Ch. 2)

Bonus Topic: Iraq

Blumenthal, pp. 75-104 (Ch. 3)

Errol Morris, *The Unknown Known* (2013). [Available to stream]

Errol Morris, "The Certainty of Donald Rumsfeld," Parts I-IV, *The New York Times* (March 25-28, 2014).

Topic 8: The Age of Endless War, Part II: Syria

Blumenthal, pp. 159-204 (Ch.s 6-7)

Topic 9: The Age of Endless War, Part III: ISIS and Effects at Home

Blumenthal, pp. 205-220 (Ch. 8, on ISIS), pp. 240-275 (Ch.s 10-11, on domestic consequences of foreign policy) and pp. 277-306 (Afterward, on 2016 and Trump)

Topic 10: Eastern Europe After the Cold War—Russia's Sphere of Influence?

John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 77-89.

Yekelchyk, Ch. 1 pp. 1-12 and Ch. 3 pp. 24-55

Topic 11: Ukraine After the Cold War

Yekelchyk, Ch.s 4-5 pp. 56-103

Topic 12: Contemporary Ukraine

Yekelchyk, Ch.s 6-7, pp. 104-181

Bonus Topic: NATO Expansionism

Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, “Deal or No Deal?: The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion,” *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 7-44.

John O’Loughlin, et al, “Who identifies with the ‘Russian World’? Geopolitical attitudes in southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57, no. 6 (2016): 745-778.

Topic 13: Reconsidering war as a permanent feature of life

Coker, Prologue, Ch.s 1-3 pp. 1-52

Topic 14: The end of history

Coker, Ch.s 4-6 pp. 53-108

Grades will be based on leading class discussions, regular participation, and two papers. Handouts for written assignments will be provided. Final grades will be determined as follows:

- a. Questions and critical summary: 15%
- b. Participation, reading quizzes: 15%
- c. Papers 1 and 2: 70%
- d. Optional film review

A) You are asked to help lead a week’s discussion on Canvas. Unless there is an exceptional circumstance such as the arrival of Baby Williams, all presentations are on Tuesdays. On one Tuesday, you will provide a critical summary of the week’s reading. To be critical means to examine the strengths, weakness, and consequences of the argument. In short: engage with the reading.

On another week, you will come to class with roughly five thoughtful questions to spark a class discussion. Give background information and try to also answer the questions you pose.

B) Students are expected to be prepared for class each day. This means having completed the readings beforehand and coming to class with questions and comments. What surprised you? What inspired you? What infuriated you? Good participation does not mean that you know all the answers. Good participation means that you’re thoughtfully engaged with the material. Grades are holistic and non-formulaic, based on the quality of your comments in class. Quizzes will only be given if it seems folks are not doing the assigned reading. Remember, this class is a safe space for discussing ideas. Students are expected to treat one another with respect and hold themselves to high academic standards. Class etiquette also means putting one’s phone away for the session.

C) Papers are essay-based analyses on the major ideas of the course. More information will be provided before the first paper is due.

Paper 1 will most likely be due Thursday, February 24th

Paper 2 is due at the time of our scheduled final exam, Monday, May 2nd at 10:45am

D) Students may choose to write an optional film review, which will make Part C based out of three papers (rather than two). This assignment is submitted in two parts: first a film review proposal; then, the review. One must complete the first part on time in order to receive credit for the review.

Film review proposals are due Friday, April 1st

Film reviews are due Friday, April 22nd

Let me close with a few final notes. One, I am here for you! Got questions? Want to talk politics? Send me an e-mail or make an appointment for office hours. I like hearing from students. It shows that you care about the class and want to be involved.

Two, Given the volume of e-mails I receive, I cannot write back and forth like a text exchange. To me, and to employers out there, e-mails are more like letters. They should have a greeting/salutation, a message, and a closing. E-mails should contain relevant information and questions that the recipient can understand. E-mails don't have to be fancy. Many of you already do them just fine. But they are not text messages. However old-timey this sounds, a touch of e-mail formality will take you far in life.

Three, treat your syllabus as your primary guide to the course. You will need to keep it as a reference for the entire semester. Treat Canvas as a secondary resource. I will post announcements there, as well as all the readings.

Finally, I am excited for this class and for our great conversations!