POLISCI 3203G
International Crises
W2025

1. Course Information

Hours: Friday 10:30 AM – 12:20 PM

List of Prerequisites and Antirequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. Instructor Information

Instructors	Email	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Lucas Pokrywa (Course Coordinator and Instructor)	lpokrywa@uwo.ca	SSC 7336		In person: Fridays (9:30-10:30) Zoom: Fridays (4:00-5:00)

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode, Aims/Objectives

What constitutes an international crisis? Moreover, what is a crisis? The course will introduce students to the major themes and debates in the contemporary study of international peace and security. We will survey a range of issues, including the causes and management of inter-state warfare, civil wars/rebellion, terrorism, violence against civilians, intelligence and other geopolitical crises like climate change, and resource scarcity. By the end of the course, you should have a good overview of the literature in contemporary security studies. You should also have acquired a set of conceptual tools that can be used for analyzing the causes of violent conflict, the sources of international stability and instability, and the mechanisms of international conflict management and resolution. In addition, you should be familiar with the main issues confronting contemporary

policymakers in the field of international security, and be equipped to conduct independent research on contemporary international crises. Students will also have the chance to apply their acquired skills, knowledge, and logic to interactive problem-based learning activities (simulations, wargames, conflict resolution).

Course aims:

    a. To provide an understanding of the different theoretical perspectives concerning why and how crises emerge, and what are their consequences.
    b. To assist students in developing a conceptually and empirically informed understanding of the debates surrounding crisis management.
    c. To qualify undergraduate students who may wish to proceed to further specialised study of crisis management/policy and/or employment in a related field.
    d. To develop key skills associated with: reading about, understanding and discussing conceptual issues and theoretical debates; applying concepts and theories to the empirical study of crises; and, writing briefing notes and essays.

Course Objectives:

    e. By the end of the course students recognise, outline the key elements of, and differentiate between the main theoretical approaches to the study of crises.
    f. Students will be able to critically review and apply the different approaches to the study of international peace and security.
    g. They will have gained the theoretical skills to systematically analyse key issues associated with peace and conflict and its consequences.
    h. Students will demonstrate systematic reading and clarity of expression in developing written and oral arguments for and against specific positions, and to recognise the theoretical principles on which such arguments are based.

Key Sessional Dates (W2025):

Classes begin: January 10th
Winter Reading Week: February 17th – 21st
Classes end: April 4th
Exam period: April 7th – 30th

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning
In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

4. Student Evaluation

Assessment*	Weighting	Due Date
Participation	25%	Variable denoted with [%]
Briefing Note (1000 words)	5% proposal; 30%	Feb 7 (Week 5), Feb 21 (Week 7)
Essay (2000-2500 words)	5% proposal; 35%	March 7 (Week 9), April 4 (Week 13)
Total	**100%**	April 11th (grades returned)

*Further details on the various graded requirements will be provided at the introductory class on January 10th

Participation
Students will actively participate in various exercises and simulations as outlined in the weekly course schedule. The value of each contribution (participatory exercise) can be found in the heading for those weeks, for example [3%]. No preparation is needed for any exercise as instructions will be provided in class.

Briefing Note, and Proposal
Students will write a 1000 word briefing note, not including the title page (2 pages, single space, bullets, **endnotes**, and bibliography), and a 200-300 word proposal (Issue, 4 possible *general* policy options, 4 sources). Instructions and rubrics are available on the course website and will be discussed in class. Proposals will be submitted in class. Briefing notes must be submitted on the course website (through Turnitin) by 11:55 pm on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2% per day including weekends to a maximum of 10%. While the course instructor will NOT grant any extensions, including workload related reasons, any requests for medical extensions will require an illness declaration for consideration.

Essay, and Proposal
Students will write an essay of 2000-2500 words (double-spaced, not including the title page, **footnotes**, and bibliography) and a 200-400 proposal (research question, argument, 5 sources). Instructions and rubrics are available on the course website and will be discussed in class. Proposals will be submitted in class and essays must be submitted on the course website (through Turnitin) by 11:55 pm on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2% per day including weekends to a maximum of 10%. While the course instructor will NOT grant any extensions, including workload related reasons, any requests for medical extensions will require an illness declaration for consideration.

5. Weekly Course Outline and Schedule

Week #1: January 10th, *Course Introduction*

Course Introduction (No Readings)
The class will outline the general orientation of the course, review the syllabus, clarify assessments and expectations, and offer a broad overview of the course objectives.

Week #2: January 17th, *Concepts, Definitions, Levels of Analysis [2%]*

We will discuss some of the course's key working definitions for central concepts such as war, peace, security, conflict and crisis. By looking at the different levels of analysis (LOA) - micro, meso, macro - we can examine the different ways in which individuals, non-state

groups/organizations, and states, can be strategic and how we can represent these strategic relationships in a principled and coherent manner.

READINGS:

Schelling, T. C. (1960) *The strategy of conflict* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA) pp. 1-52.

Lake, D. A. and Powell, R. (1999) 'International relations: A strategic-choice approach' In D.A. Lake and R. Powell, editors, *Strategic choice and international relations* (Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ) pp. 3-38.

FURTHER READING:

De Haan, W. (2009) 'Violence as an Essentially Contested Concept' in S. Body-Grenot and P. Spierenburg, editors, *Violence in Europe*, pp. 27-30(40). (12 pgs)

Buzan, B., and Hansen, L. (2009) *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK), Chapter 1.

Week #3: January 24th, *Conditions for War*

We examine the fundamental puzzle of war from a rationalist perspective and identify three core mechanisms by which conflict can occur: information problems, commitment problems, and issue indivisibility. We also explore the security dilemma and how it is referenced in academic and policy debates. We also think about it from the classical realist perspective(s), to today, with a constructivist reinterpretation. An important aspect of security relations are collective action problems and how they arise at different levels of analysis (LOA). We also examine how delegation and competition induce strategic behaviour that affects conflict processes. We also consider why the environment is now part of the security agenda.

READINGS:

Fearon, J. D. (1995) 'Rationalist explanations for war', *International Organization* 49(3), pp. 379-414.

Hassner, R (2003) 'To halve and to hold: Conflicts over sacred space and the problem of indivisibility', *Security Studies* 12(4), pp. 1-33.

Tang, S (2009) 'The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis', *Security Studies* 18(3), pp. 587-623.

FURTHER READING:

Kydd, A. H. (2005) *Trust and mistrust in international relations* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ) Chapter 4.

Week #4: January 31st, *International Conflict [2%]*

Having laid out the conceptual foundations last week, we examine how they can be applied to particular forms of conflict, starting this week with international conflict. Among others, we examine the democratic peace.

READINGS:

Oneal, J. R., Oneal, F. H., Maoz, Z., and Russett, B. (1996) 'The liberal peace: Interdependence, democracy, and international conflict, 1950-85', *Journal of Peace Research* 33(1), pp. 11-28.

Fearon, J. D. (1994) 'Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international disputes' *American Political Science Review* 88(3), pp. 577-592.

Chiozza, G. and Goemans, H. E. (2004) 'International conflict and the tenure of leaders: Is war still ex post inefficient?', *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3) pp. 604-619.

FURTHER READING:

Gurr, Ted (1970) *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey), Chapter 1, pp. 3-21.

Week #5: February 7th, *The Bomb [3%]*

Focus is on the nuclear revolution thesis and its foundation, nuclear deterrence, moreover, mutually assured destruction (MAD). We read Jervis's classic articulation of how nuclear weapons change the international system, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

READINGS:

Jervis, Robert (1989) The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, N.Y.) Chapter 1.

Tannenwald, N. (1999) 'The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use', *International Organization* 53(3), pp. 433-68.

Kroenig, M. (2013) 'Nuclear Superiority and the Balance of Resolve: Explaining Nuclear Crisis Outcomes' *International Organization* 67(1), pp. 141-171.

FURTHER READING:

Jervis, R. (1979) 'Deterrence Theory Revisited', *World Politics* 31(2), pp. 289-324.

Week #6: February 14th, *Civil War/Insurgency/Rebellion*

This week we look at the actors of arguably intra-state conflicts and their impact on international conflict.

READINGS:

Fearon, J. D., and Laitin, D. D. (2003) 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War', *American Political Science Review* 97(1), pp. 75-90.

Sambanis, N. (2004) 'What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6), pp. 814-858.

FURTHER READING:

Giustozzi, Antonio (2005) 'The Debate on Warlordism: The Importance of Military Legitimacy' *Crisis States Discussion Papers*, London School of Economics, pp. 1- 25

Rodgers, Dennis, and Muggah, Robert (2009) 'Gangs as Non-State Armed Groups: The Central American Case', *Contemporary Security Policy* 30(2), pp. 301-317.

Carey, Sabine, and Mitchell, Neil (2017) 'Progovernment Militias', *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, pp. 127-147.

Walter, B. F. (2009) 'Bargaining failures and civil war', *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, pp. 243-261.

Blattman, C., and Edward, M. (2010) 'Civil War', *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(1), pp. 3-57.

Week #7: READING WEEK

Week #8: February 28th, *Terrorism [3%]*

Why are there so many different definitions of terrorism? What problems can this cause? Who decides what is radical/extreme? Do preventative measures work? Do they go too far?

READINGS:

Rapaport, D. (2004) 'The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism' in Audrey Cronin and James Ludes, eds., *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Georgetown University Press).

Kydd, A., and Walter, B. (2006) 'The Strategies of Terrorism', *International Security* 31(1), pp. 49-80.

FURTHER READING:

Auger, V. A. (2020) 'Right-Wing Terror: A Fifth Global Wave?', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14(3), pp. 87-97.

Horgan, J (2003) 'The search for the terrorist personality' in A. Silke ed. *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences* (Wiley Press:

London) pp. 1- 27.

Pape, R. A. (2003) 'The strategic logic of suicide terrorism', *American Political Science Review* 7(3), pp. 343-361.

Shapiro, J. N. (2012) 'Terrorist decision-making: Insights from economics and political science', *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 6(4-5).

Hegghammer, T. (2013) 'The recruiters dilemma signalling and rebel recruitment tactics', *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1), pp. 3-16.

Crenshaw, M. (2011) 'The Concept of Terrorism' in *Explaining Terrorism* (London: Routledge), Chapter 1, pp. 21-33.

Schmid, A. P. (2004) 'Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16(2), pp. 197-221.

Jones, S., and Libicki, M. (2008) *How Terrorist Groups End* (Washington DC: RAND Press), Chapter 2, pp. 9-43.

Week #9: March 7th, *Violence Against Civilians [3%]*

We will examine the logic of violence against civilians, repression and genocide.

READINGS:

Harff, B. (2003) 'No lessons learned from the holocaust? Assessing risks of genocide and political mass murder since 1955', *American Political Science Review* 97(1), pp. 57-73.

Eck, K. and Hultman, L. (2007) 'One-sided violence against civilians in war: Insights from new fatality data' *Journal of Peace Research* 44(2), pp. 233-246.

FURTHER READING:

Valentino, B. A. (2014) 'Why we kill: The political science of political violence against civilians', *Annual Review of Political Science* 17, pp. 89-103.

Week #10: March 14th, *The Transnational – Guest Lecture*

What is the relationship between health and human security? What is hashtag activism? What is the link between disinformation and international security? We consider transnational factors that are relevant to issues of peace and security. These include, amongst other, diffusion processes, transnational constellations, and conflict externalities.

READINGS:

Salehyan, I. (2008) 'The externalities of civil strife: Refugees as a source of international Conflict', *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4), pp. 787-801.

Buhaug, H (2010) 'Climate not to blame for African civil wars', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107(38), pp. 16477-16482.

FURTHER READING:

Colombo, M. (2018) 'The Representation of the "European Refugee Crisis" in Italy: Domopolitics, Securitization, and Humanitarian Communication in Political and Media Discourses' *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 16(1-2), pp. 161-178.

Hudson, H. (2005) 'Doing' Security as Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security', *Security Dialogue* 36(2), pp. 155-174.

Yang, G. (2016) 'Narrative Agency in Hashtag Activism: The Case of #BlackLivesMatter', *Media and Communication* 4(4)

Freelon, D., and Wells, C. (2020) 'Disinformation as Political Communication' *Political Communication* 37(2), pp. 145-156.

Deudney, D (1990) 'The Case against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security', *Millennium* 19(3), pp. 461-476.

Ebinger, C.K., and Zambetakis, E. (2009) 'The geopolitics of Arctic melt', *International Affairs* 85(6), pp. 1215–1232.

Week #11: March 21st, *Intervention [4%]*

We analyze possible policy interventions in ongoing conflicts, in particular the role of peacekeeping. What are the consequences for policy recommendations if we take a strategic perspective?

READINGS:

Fortna, V. P. (2004). Does peacekeeping keep peace? international intervention and the duration of peace after civil war. International Studies Quarterly, 48:269-292.

Caprioli, M (2005) 'Primed for violence: the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict', *International Studies Quarterly* 49, pp. 161-178.

Beardsley, K. (2008) 'Agreement without peace? International mediation and time inconsistency problems', *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4), pp. 723-740.

FURTHER READING:

Luttwak, Edward (1999) 'Give War a Chance', *Foreign Affairs* 78(4) pp. 36-44. (9 pgs).

Week #12: March 28th, *Covert Action and Intelligence [3%]*

Secrets (or intelligence) has only recently become a research program on its own. We will read scholarship on the role of secrecy (transparency) in diplomatic bargaining and clandestine

operations and examine the tradeoffs in concealing or revealing sensitive 'information'.

READINGS:

Scott, L.V. (2004) 'Secret Intelligence, Covert Action and Clandestine Diplomacy', in L.V. Scott and P. Jackson, eds, *Understanding Intelligence in the Twentieth-First Century* (Routledge: London) pp. 162-179.

Lefebvre, S. (2003) 'The Difficulties and Dilemmas of International Intelligence Cooperation', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence* 16, pp. 527-542.

Betts, R.K. (2009) 'Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable' in P. Gill, S. Marrin and M. Phythian, eds, *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates* Routledge: London) pp. 87-111.

FURTHER READING:

Treverton, G.F. (2011) 'Covert action and unintended results' in L.K. Johnson, ed, *Intelligence: Critical Concepts in Military, Strategic & Security Studies. Volume II. Covert Action: The Aggressive Arm of National Security Intelligence* (Routledge: London) pp. 276-297.

Handel, M.I. (1987) 'Introduction: Strategic and Operational Deception in Historical Perspective', *Intelligence and National Security* 2(3), pp. 1-91.

Jervis, R. (2010) *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca) pp. 123-155.

Honig, O. (2008) 'Surprise Attacks-Are They Inevitable? Moving Beyond the Orthodox-Revisionist Dichotomy', *Security Studies* 17, pp. 72-106.

Johnson, L. (2012) *National Security Intelligence* (Polity Press: Cambridge) pp. 77-108.

Week #13: April 4th, *Wargames [5%]*
No readings

6. Course Materials

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (http://owl.uwo.ca) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

There is no required textbook/coursebook for purchase, the readings will be accessible on OWL: http://owl.uwo.ca.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

7. Student Absences

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible.

For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

The Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

8. Accommodation and Accessibility

Religious Accommodation
When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo.

Accommodation Policies
Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

9. Academic Policies

Academic Integrity
Western is committed to a culture of integrity within and beyond the classroom. This culture values trustworthiness (e.g., honesty, integrity, reliability), fairness, caring, respect, responsibility and citizenship. Together, we have a shared responsibility to uphold this culture in our academic and nonacademic behaviour. The University has a defined policy with respect to academic misconduct. As a Western student you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with this policy and the accompanying penalty guidelines, some of which may appear on your transcript if there is a finding of misconduct.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

The website for Registrarial Services is http://www.registrar.uwo.ca. In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Syllabus Statement - Intellectual Property

The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments, and any materials posted to OWL, are the intellectual property of the course instructors. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of course content to third-party websites violates instructors' intellectual property rights, and the *Canadian Copyright Act*. Recording lectures in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by instructors. Failure to follow these instructions may be in contravention of the university's Code of Academic Conduct, and will result in appropriate penalties. Participation in this course constitutes an agreement by all parties to abide by the relevant University Policies, and to respect the intellectual property of others during and after their association with the University of Western Ontario.

Turnitin

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy

Students are allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools) to assist them in the screening of articles for research purposes with no special documentation or citation required. However, each student is expected to complete each assignment without any substantive assistance from advanced automated tools and so are not permitted to use artificial intelligence systems/tools to generate ideas or text for their assignments (proposals, essay/briefing note).

10. Support Services

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: Academic Counselling - Western University (uwo.ca)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental_Health@Western (https://uwo.ca/health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact, support@uwo.ca

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at:

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

If you have any questions regarding accommodations. Learning-skills counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (https://learning.uwo.ca) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, https://westernusc.ca/services/.