

The Political Economy of Security

January 19, 2021

Time: TuTh 3:00pm to 4:15pm
Instructor: Joshua Alley
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Office hours: Mon., 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm;
and by appointment

Course Description

War is a form of organized social activity. Engaging in this activity requires resources. This course will explore why states and non-state actors opt to devote scarce resources to fighting wars, and how they allocate those resources. We will examine the economic motivations that actors have for engaging in political violence, economic and other costs of conducting war, and the consequences that follow for states and societies of having participated in armed conflict.

This course employs a political economy approach to study both interstate and intrastate security. Our examination of the relationship between war and economics will take us from the role that these factors played in the development of the modern nation-state to civil wars and military spending by major powers in international politics.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students in this course should be able to do the following:

1. Employ a political economy approach to the study of interstate and intrastate conflict.

2. Distinguish among different political economy explanations for the causes and outcomes of armed conflict.
3. Critically read and dissect peer-reviewed literature on the political economy of armed conflict.
4. Find and use data relevant to the study of armed conflict.
5. Frame research questions and conduct research relevant to an analysis of conflict.
6. Convey information and research regarding the economic motivations, costs, and consequences of armed conflict in an effective manner, both in writing and orally.
7. Recognize and articulate public policy issues pertaining to the conduct of armed conflict and, as engaged and knowledgeable citizens, participate with others in addressing those issues.

Important Note: Pandemic Life and the Spring Semester

These are unusual times. If you are having difficulty fulfilling your obligations for this class for any reason, please let me know. I am happy to work with you to keep things on track, but I can only help if you ask.

Course Readings

Most of the required readings are from academic journal articles, and will be provided through the resources page of course Collab site. I require two books and suggest that you read a third. You should skim Beah's book in the first week and a half of class.

- Robert Bates. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*. (2nd Ed.)
- Ishmael Beah. 2007. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*.
- E.B. Sledge. 1981. *With the Old Breed*. (Optional)

Grading

This course will be run as a modified seminar with some lectures by the instructor. Student participation, which is an essential part of the modified seminar format, will take the form of small-group activities and discussion of readings and course themes.

- Short Paper 1: 15 %
- Short Paper 2: 15 %
- Final paper: 30%
- Class Attendance: 10%
- Mid-term Exam: 15%
- Final exam: 15%

The following grading scale will be used in this course:

- **A** [90-100): Outstanding and original work; well argued, well organized, without significant error or omission.
- **B** [80-90): Very good work; reasonably argued, clearly organized, with only slight error or omission; clearly well above the average.
- **C** [70-80): Solid work; clear evidence of engagement and comprehension but with some organizational, factual, or interpretive errors or omissions.
- **D** [60-70): Passing but only marginally acceptable work with clear deficiencies of fact, organization, interpretation, or length; incomplete work. Immediate conference with me is suggested.
- **F** [0-60): Unacceptable work submitted with such significant deficiencies that no credit can be awarded. Immediate conference with me is strongly suggested!

Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, you should complete readings and submit assignments before class on the date listed on the syllabus. Please submit assignments through the assignments tab on the Collab site.

1. Short Papers: To check on engagement with the reading, there will be two short papers of 1,500 to 3,000 words. More words is not necessarily better. Two weeks before the deadline, I will send the prompt for these papers, which will ask you to discuss and apply concepts from the readings.
2. Final paper: Each student will write a final paper. The paper must focus on a theme relevant to the political economy of armed conflict. There are two options for the paper, both of which should be 10 to 15 pages long. I will provide rubrics for both paper options.

The first option is an extension of a published study. In this project, you find a published study on the political economy of security (I am happy to provide suggestions), and use their data or new data to answer a different research question and/or assess their results. In this paper, you would describe your question, why the question matters, the nature and design of your extension, and your results. This option assumes familiarity with quantitative research methods and is focused on empirical knowledge.

The second option is an paper that makes a theoretical argument in the political economy of security, but does not test the argument. In this paper, you would identify a research question or puzzle, explain why the puzzle matters and come up with an explanation. You can also describe an interesting test. This paper is essentially a social science model-building exercise.

3. Class preparation: Attendance will be used during the course of the semester to ensure that you are preparing for class discussion each week. Class will also have a heavy discussion component— I want you to discuss the class content with your peers and with me.
4. Exams: There will be take-home midterm and final exams. I will give you 48 hours to complete the exams, both of which are open book. I

will email the exam prompts out ahead of time, and they will be due by the end of our class time on the exam day.

The goal of the exams is to assess your ability to use course content under time constraints. The exam prompts will ask you to apply what you've learned to a policy question.

Course Schedule

- Week 1: Overview.

Feb 2:

- Syllabus, Introductions and Questions. Why Study the Political Economy of Security.
- Start Ishmael Beah. *A Long Way Gone*. Finish by 2/11.

Feb 4: A framework for political science scholarship.

- Read Lave and March: *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. Provided on course page.

- Week 2: Studying security through a political economy lens.

February 9:

- Robert Bates. *Prosperity and Violence*.

February 11:

- Michael Mastanduno. Economics and security in statecraft and scholarship. *International Organization*, 52(4):825–854, 1998
- Paul Poast. Beyond the “sinew of war”: The political economy of security as a subfield. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22: 223–239, 2019

- Week 3:

February 16: Guest Lecture and Q&A with Brad Carson

- Read Professor Carson's bio and brainstorm questions. Can base questions on last week's readings, especially Mastanduno and Poast, or other things you want to know.

February 18: Conflict Overview

- James D. Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–414, 1995
- Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel. Civil war. *Journal of Economic Literature*, pages 3–57, 2010
- Eric Gartzke. War is in the error term. *International Organization*, 53(3):567–87, 1999

Civil Conflict

- Week 4: Political Economy Explanations for Civil Conflict:

February 23: Inequality, greed, and the resource curse.

- **Short Paper 1 Due.**
- Carles Boix. Economic roots of civil wars and revolutions in the contemporary world. *World Politics*, 60(03):390–437, 2008
- Gudrun Østby. Polarization, horizontal inequalities and violent civil conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(2):143–162, 2008
- Michael L Ross. How do natural resources influence civil war? evidence from thirteen cases. *International Organization*, 58(01):35–67, 2004

February 25: Liberalism, globalization, and state capacity.

- Katherine Barbieri and Rafael Reuveny. Economic globalization and civil war. *Journal of Politics*, 67(4):1228–1247, 2005
- Caroline A Hartzell, Matthew Hoddie, and Molly Bauer. Economic liberalization via imf structural adjustment: Sowing the seeds of civil war? *International Organization*, 64(02):339–356, 2010
- Matthew R DiGiuseppe, Colin M Barry, and Richard W Frank. Good for the money international finance, state capacity, and internal armed conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(3):391–405, 2012

- Week 5: Economic Consequences of Civil Conflict

March 2:

- Seonjou Kang and James Meernik. Civil war destruction and the prospects for economic growth. *Journal of Politics*, 67(1):88–109, 2005
- Shahryar Minhas and Benjamin J. Radford. Enemy at the gates. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(10):2105–2129, 2017

March 4

- Gianmarco Leon. Civil conflict and human capital accumulation the long-term effects of political violence in perú. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(4):991–1022, 2012
- Renard Sexton, Rachel L Wellhausen, and Michael G Findley. How government reactions to violence worsen social welfare: Evidence from peru. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(2):353–367, 2017

- Week 6: Individual Participation in Civil War

March 9: Break Day.

March 11:

- Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M Weinstein. Who fights? the determinants of participation in civil war. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2):436–455, 2008
- Ben Oppenheim, Abbey Steele, Juan F Vargas, and Michael Weintraub. True believers, deserters, and traitors who leaves insurgent groups and why. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, pages 794–823, 2015

- Week 7: Summary & Midterm Exam.

March 16: Civil Conflict Review.

March 18: Midterm Exam.

International Conflict

- Week 8: The Domestic Politics of International Conflict and Military Spending:

March 23:

- Benjamin O. Fordham. The domestic politics of world power: Explaining debates over the united states battleship fleet, 1890–91. *International Organization*, 73(1):435–68, 2019
- Mark Dincecco, Giovanni Federico, and Andrea Vindigni. Warfare, taxation, and political change: Evidence from the italian risorgimento. *The Journal of Economic History*, 71(04):887–914, 2011

March 25:

- Guy D. Whitten and Laron K. Williams. Buttery guns and welfare hawks: The politics of defense spending in advanced industrial democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(1):117–134, 2011
- Daniel Yuichi Kono and Gabriella R Montinola. The uses and abuses of foreign aid: Development aid and military spending. *Political Research Quarterly*, 66(3):615–629, 2013

- Week 9: Economic Causes of International Conflict:

March 30:

- Nuno Montiero and Alexandre Debs. An economic theory of war. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(1):255–268, 2020
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P Monteiro. Known unknowns: Power shifts, uncertainty, and war. *International Organization*, 68(01):1–31, 2014

April 1:

- **Short Paper 2 Due.**
- Patrick E Shea. Borrowing trouble: Sovereign credit, military regimes, and conflict. *International Interactions*, 42(3):401–428, 2016
- Douglas M Gibler. State development, parity, and international conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 111(1):21–38, 2017

- Week 10: Paying for International Conflict:

April 6:

- Michael D Bordo and Eugene N White. A tale of two currencies: British and french finance during the napoleonic wars. *The Journal of Economic History*, 51(02):303–316, 1991
- Kenneth A Schultz and Barry R Weingast. The democratic advantage: institutional foundations of financial power in international competition. *International Organization*, 57(01):3–42, 2003

April 8:

- Paul Poast. Central banks at war. *International Organization*, 69(1):63–95, 2015
- Gustavo A Flores-Macias and Sarah E Kreps. Political parties at war: A study of american war finance, 1789–2010. *American Political Science Review*, 107(4):833–848, 2013

- Week 11: The Arms-Alliances Tradeoff:

April 13:

- James D Morrow. Arms versus allies: trade-offs in the search for security. *International Organization*, 47(2):207–233, 1993
- Matthew DiGiuseppe and Paul Poast. Arms versus democratic allies. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 1–23, 2016
- Michael C Horowitz, Paul Poast, and Allan C Stam. Domestic signaling of commitment credibility: Military recruitment and alliance formation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(8):1682–1710, 2017

April 15: Break Day.

- Week 12: Economic Consequences of International Competition and Conflict:

April 20:

- Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. Democracy, war, and wealth: lessons from two centuries of inheritance taxation. *American Political Science Review*, 106(01):81–102, 2012

- Daniel W Drezner. Military primacy doesn't pay (nearly as much as you think). *International Security*, 38(1):52–79, 2013

April 22:

- Joanne Gowa and Edward D. Mansfield. Alliances, imperfect markets, and major-power trade. *International Organization*, 58(4): 775–805, 2004
- James D Fearon. Cooperation, conflict, and the costs of anarchy. *International Organization*, pages 1–37, 2018

- Week 13: The Liberal Peace Thesis:

April 27

- Erik Gartzke, Quan Li, and Charles Boehmer. Investing in the peace: Economic interdependence and international conflict. *International Organization*, 55(02):391–438, 2001
- John R. Oneal and Bruce M. Russett. The kantian peace: The pacific benefits of democracy, interdependence, and international organizations, 1885-1992. *World Politics*, 52(1):1–37, 1999

April 29

- Michael D Ward, Randolph M Siverson, and Xun Cao. Disputes, democracies, and dependencies: A reexamination of the kantian peace. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(3):583–601, 2007
- Marc Flandreau and Juan H Flores. The peaceful conspiracy: Bond markets and international relations during the pax britannica. *International Organization*, 66(2):211–241, 2012

May 10

- Final Paper Due.

May 15

- Final Exam.

Course Policies

Honor Code

I expect that all work represented as your own throughout the semester be your own. Any work done with the help of others should clearly indicate such. I will provide guidelines for collaboration with each assignment.

Class Attendance

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You have two free absences. After two absences, I will deduct one point from the 10 possible attendance points for each absence. Excused absences do not deduct from your free absences. If you have more than 15 unexcused absences, then you will receive an F in the course.

Late Assignments

I will accept assignments turned in late, but only for a one-week period following the date that they were due. During the one-week period, assignments will be penalized by the loss of five points per day for each day they are late. After the one-week period, missing assignments will receive a grade of 0.

ADA Policy Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you require an accommodation, please let me know in the first two weeks of the semester.

Extra Credit

Unless I decide that the whole class merits an opportunity for extra credit, I will not offer extra credit.

Communication

The best place to ask questions is in the classroom. If your question is not related to class material or relevant to other students, we can discuss it after class. I encourage you to visit my office hours to discuss any difficulties with the readings or homework.

You can expect me to reply to emails in 24–48 hours during the work week. I will not reply to emails on the weekend.