

The Political Economy of Security

October 18, 2022

Time: Monday 1400:1600
Instructor: Joshua Alley
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Office: Newman Building G316
Office hours: Wednesday, 13:00 to 15:00 (sign up here);
and by appointment (sign up here)

Course Description

War consumes and impacts scarce 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, the economic and other costs of 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 course 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. Frame research questions and conduct research relevant to an analysis of conflict.
5. Convey information and research regarding the economic motivations, costs, and consequences of armed conflict in an effective manner, both in writing and orally.
6. 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.

Course Readings

Most of the required readings are from academic journal articles. I require two books and suggest that you read a third. You should skim Beah's book in the first weeks of the module.

- 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*.

Grading

This course will be run as a modified seminar with 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%

- Mid-term Exam: 30%
- Course Participation: 10%

The following ranges give a rough scale, with differences within each band for + and – grades. See <https://www.ucd.ie/students/exams/gradingandremediation/understandinggrades/> for more context.

- **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): Good 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 on Brightspace before class starts.

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: Participation 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. Exam: There will be a take-home midterm exam. I will give you 48 hours to complete the exam, which is open book. I will email the exam prompt out ahead of time, and it will be due by the end of our class time on the exam day.

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

Course Schedule

Readings under the optional heading are suggested but not required.

1. Overview.

- Syllabus, Introductions and Questions. Why Study the Political Economy of Security.
- Start skimming Ishmael Beah. *A Long Way Gone*. Finish by week 3.
- Read Lave and March: *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. Provided on Brightspace.

2. Studying security through a political economy lens.

- Robert Bates. *Prosperity and Violence*.
- Paul Poast. Beyond the “sinew of war”: The political economy of security as a subfield. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22: 223–239, 2019

Civil Conflict

3. Political Economy Explanations for Civil Conflict:

- Carles Boix. Economic roots of civil wars and revolutions in the contemporary world. *World Politics*, 60(03):390–437, 2008
- Michael L Ross. How do natural resources influence civil war? evidence from thirteen cases. *International Organization*, 58(01): 35–67, 2004
- 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
- Optional:
- 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

4. Economic Consequences of Civil Conflict

- **Short Paper 1 Due.**
- Erin Lin. How war changes land: Soil fertility, unexploded bombs, and the underdevelopment of cambodia. *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(1):222–237, 2022
- Shahryar Minhas and Benjamin J. Radford. Enemy at the gates. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(10):2105–2129, 2017
- 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, 2019

5. Summary & Midterm Exam.

Midterm Exam: Civil Conflict

International Conflict

6. The Domestic Politics of International Conflict and Military Spending:

- 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
- 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
- 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
- Optional:
- 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

7. Economic Causes of International Conflict:

- Nuno Montiero and Alexandre Debs. An economic theory of war. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(1):255–268, 2020
- Andrew J Coe and Jonathan N Markowitz. Crude calculations: Productivity and the profitability of conquest. *International Organization*, 75(4):1058–1086, 2021
- Eric Gartzke and Dominic Rohner. The political economy of imperialism, decolonization and development. *British Journal of Political Science*, 41(1):525–556, 2011
- Optional:
- Patrick E Shea. Borrowing trouble: Sovereign credit, military regimes, and conflict. *International Interactions*, 42(3):401–428, 2016
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P Monteiro. Known unknowns: Power shifts, uncertainty, and war. *International Organization*, 68(01): 1–31, 2014

8. Economic Statecraft (No Class Meeting: Bank Holiday)

- David A Baldwin. *Economic Statecraft: New Edition*. Princeton University Press, 2020 Chapters 1-4. (Ebook available through the library)
- Optional:
- Michael Mastanduno. Economics and security in statecraft and scholarship. *International Organization*, 52(4):825–854, 1998

9. Paying for International Conflict:

- 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
- 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

- Optional:
- 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

10. Financial Consequences of Security Cooperation:

- **Short Paper 2 Due.**
- James D Morrow. Arms versus allies: trade-offs in the search for security. *International Organization*, 47(2):207–233, 1993
- Joanne Gowa and Edward D. Mansfield. Alliances, imperfect markets, and major-power trade. *International Organization*, 58(4):775–805, 2004
- Brandon J Kinne and Jonas Bunte. Guns or money? defense cooperation and bilateral lending as coevolving networks. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(3):1067–1088, 2018
- Optional:
- Scott Wolford and Moonhawk Kim. Alliances and the high politics of international trade. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 5(4):587–611, 2017
- Joshua Alley. Alliance participation, treaty depth and military spending. *International Studies Quarterly*, 65(4):929–943, 2021

11. Economic Consequences of International Competition and Conflict:

- 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
- James D Fearon. Cooperation, conflict, and the costs of anarchy. *International Organization*, pages 1–37, 2018
- Didac Queralt. War, international finance, and fiscal capacity in the long run. *International Organization*, 73(4):713–753, 2019
- Optional:
- Ryan Saylor and Nicholas C Wheeler. Paying for war and building states: The coalitional politics of debt servicing and tax institutions. *World Politics*, 69(2):366–408, 2017

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

12. The Liberal Peace Thesis:

- Erik Gartzke, Quan Li, and Charles Boehmer. Investing in the peace: Economic interdependence and international conflict. *International Organization*, 55(02):391–438, 2001
- Mark J. C. Crescenzi. Economic exit, interdependence, and conflict. *Journal of Politics*, 65(3):809–832, 2003
- 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
- Optional:
- 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
- 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

December 9

- Final Paper Due.

Course Policies

Plagiarism

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.

Please make sure your cell phones are on silent mode and refrain from using them during class time.

Late Assignments

Per UCD policy, penalties for late submission are minus 1 grade point for 1 week late (up to 5 working days after submission) and minus 2 grade point for 2 weeks late (up to 5 working days after submission). Assignments more than two weeks late cannot be graded unless Extenuating Circumstances have been granted.

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.

Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to reasonably alter the elements of the syllabus at any time by adjusting the reading list to keep pace with the course schedule. Moreover, I may change the content of specific sessions. In case of adjustments, I will send an email to all seminar participants and upload the revised syllabus to Brightspace.