

# Political Science 4384-01: Conflict Studies

**(Writing Enhanced)**

Spring 2022

M/W/F 2:00pm- 2:50pm

LDB 209

CRN: 21623

Credit Hours 3

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Patane

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**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00am-11:00am & 1:00pm-2:00pm, or by appointment.

Due to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and its associated uncertainty, I would prefer to meet with students remotely until later in the semester (I will contact the class via Blackboard about meeting in my office in person). My partner is immune-compromised, so even though we're both vaccinated, I still need to minimize the risk of infecting them during the semester.

I will also be easily available and responsive over email during the semester to answer questions as they come up.

## Course Description

This course will provide a general overview of the state of scientific research into the onset, outcomes, and conduct of warfare between states and sub-state actors. We will not focus on specific wars, and this is not a military history course. Instead, we will examine the general understanding of aspects of war. Individual cases will be used as examples to explain/test our theories about war, but we will learn about them along the way. Students do not need any pre-existing knowledge about historical cases of war.

The first part of the class will examine the factors that influence things like the onset of conflict, how states make war demands, how well states perform, and the role of leadership in conflict. The second section focuses on aspects of armed conflict and the consequences of war. We will examine subjects such as the use of child soldiers, drugs and warfare, and the consequences of war on soldiers and the societies that wage them.

This is a Writing Enhanced course, as a result, your course grade will be determined entirely by written assignments. These include weekly assignments and two longer case studies.

## Blackboard

All communication for this course will be conducted via the course's Blackboard site and University email. Any supplementary material, assignments, or changes to the course structure will be made available on this site. Each student should ensure that they have access to these materials and are able to receive emails through their student account. Please note that I cannot accept or respond to student emails that come from a non-university address.

I usually respond to emails within 24 hours of receipt, earlier if they are sent during typical business hours (9am-5/6pm). Please do not send a second email until the 24-hour waiting period is up. If there is an emergency, please take care of that first. I am always happy to work around personal emergencies when it comes to the completion of coursework.

## Course Material

There is no assigned text for this course. Instead, readings will be provided via pdf on the course Blackboard page. Each week, on the "Course Readings" page, students will find a folder corresponding to that week's topic.

Normally, it will contain one article or book selection focusing on that week's topic and one literature review provided as an example of the kind of social science writing that you will be able to produce when the course concludes. ***It is necessary that you complete these readings before the first class of the week, as we will use them over the course of discussion.***

## Grading and Course Requirements

Assignment	Points
Weekly Wiki Post	1 each (15 total)
Bargaining Model Case Study	5
Aspects of War Case Study	5

## Weekly Wiki Post

Each week students must choose one of the assigned articles and write 2-3 thoughtful discussion questions to be used in class. For example, it can ask about its findings, implications, problems noticed, and potential additional considerations implied by the work. Each student must add their questions to the weekly Wiki page under the title of the article. We will use these to help guide class discussions.

## **Bargaining Model Case Study**

Going through published academic research is a useless endeavor unless we can apply it to learn something about the real world, evaluate our theories, and ideally predict the future. Around halfway through class, you will choose an example of a real world conflict and apply to it our general theory of the Bargaining Model of War. You will examine whether the model adequately explains the onset of the war and explain how. Alternatively, you will explain why events of the war do not fit the model, and how we should rethink our understanding of war as a result.

Further details and directions will be given later in the semester.

## **Aspects of War Case Study**

Just like the first case study, this assignment will ask you to apply knowledge from our topics section of the course to a different real world conflict than the first case. Further details and directions will be given later in the semester.

## **Grading Scale**

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: Below 60

## **Classroom Conduct**

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university.

Students may use laptops/tablets to take notes, as long as they do not distract other students. If this happens, students with computers may be asked to sit towards the back of the room.

Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. The instructor reserves the right to ask students to cease disruptive behavior that is not listed here.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Please be aware that plagiarized work and any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" on the assignment. SHSU [Academic Policy](#)

[Statement 810213](#) outlines the definition of academic honesty and the related disciplinary procedures.

You should also familiarize yourself of [Academic Policy Statement 900823](#), which outlines the procedures for students to file an academic grievance should you wish to appeal your grade for reasons other than academic dishonesty. Please read over these policies. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[http://www.shsu.edu/~slo\\_www/](http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/)

## **Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities Policy**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you

have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

## **Visitors in the Classroom**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

## **Copyright on Lecture and Course Materials**

Copyright 2022 (Christopher Patane) as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the instructor teaching this course.

## **Emergencies, Crises, and Mental Health**

Sometimes the study of Political Science involves dealing with difficult material. In some cases, these may reflect or reference your own personal, family, or group experiences.

Other times, life events may interfere with your ability to succeed in class. We do not want neglect our own health or well-being. If you need support, the Counseling Center can be reached at 936-294-1720. The [website](#) also contains self-help resources, and those services available in the Huntsville community.

As with all other parts of the course, students are welcome and encouraged to come talk to me to voice their concerns, seek support, or discuss accommodation for coursework after a crisis. If you can, please let me know if you are falling behind or need additional help. I'm always happy to work with students to find ways to help them through the course as the rest of life goes on around them.

## **Class Outline**

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and on the course Blackboard site. It is the responsibility of the student to take note of any changes.

### **Part 1: The Theory of War**

#### **Week 1: January 12-14**

Course Introduction

Reading, Notetaking, and Understanding Academic Research

#### **Week 2: January 17-21**

Studying War Scientifically

**No Class**, Monday January 17, MLK Holiday

#### **Week 3: January 24-28**

The Theory of War: The Bargaining Model

#### **Week 4: January 31- February 4**

Testing the Bargaining Model

#### **Week 5: February 7-11**

How Wars End and Who Wins

#### **Week 6: February 14-18**

War Outcomes: Do States get what they Want?

### **Part 2: Aspects of War**

#### **Week 7: February 21-25**

Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism

#### **Week 8: February 28- March 4**

Drone Warfare

#### **Week 9: March 7-11**

Drugs and War

**Week 10: March 14-18**

**No Class, Spring Break**

**Week 11: March 21-25**

Child Soldiers

**Week 12: March 28-April 1**  
**No Class, ISA Convention**

**Week 13: April 4-8**

Gender and War

**Week 14: April 11-15**

War and Political Extremism

**No Class**, Friday April 15, Good Friday Holiday

**Week 15: April 18-22**

Climate Change and War

**Week 16: April 25-29**  
Bringing the War Home, Domestic Backlash to Wars

**Week 17/18: May 2-11**  
Lecture wrap-up.

Last Week of Class and Finals Week

Last Class Day, May 4  
Study Day, May 5