

# Seminar in International Security

**POLS 5347 (CRN: 28416)**

Spring 2022  
205 Benedict Hall  
Wednesdays, 11:00-1:50 p.m.

**Dr. Charles Boehmer**

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### **Office Hours**

Wednesdays, 10:30-12:00  
and by appointment

### **Catalog Course Description**

Examines classical and contemporary topics of security studies, particularly how the security of countries are affected by the behavior of other countries and non-state actors, with an emphasis on security policy. Topics may include geopolitics, insurgency, terrorism, human security, ecological disaster, international crime networks, and interstate conflict. *Prerequisite:* Departmental approval and POLS 5330 suggested.

### **Course Overview and Goals**

This course is a reading (and research) seminar that explores theories, empirical studies, and policies relating to international security. The concept of security studied in this course is broad and covers topics ranging from the causes of interstate wars and nuclear weapon policies to civil war and ecological disaster. It is advisable but not necessary that students have some prior experience from past classes in international relations. Students will have two programs of study from which to choose in the course that are research and exam intensive, respectively. Nonetheless, here are the basic goals and programmatic outcomes of this course:

1. Students will have a basic understanding of the literature, both theory and empirical evidence, on international security. This includes critique of theory and extant empirical work with the goal of understanding what has been accomplished as well as where future work should be directed.
2. Students will become acquainted with research sources on this topic and gain detailed descriptive knowledge of international conflict, civil war, and similar topics. This is useful for the evaluation of security policies.
3. Students will learn how to do graduate level research and writing through various papers or projects.

## Student Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated based on various assignments and class participation. Students can choose from two programs of study (but most declare by February 22). The first program is exam based and the second program involves an instructor improved research project. This latter program is an excellent step towards a thesis or a Final Project (POLS 5393). The first program below is designed for those students who do not anticipate conducting research in this area of study. The remaining program is designed for those interested in either the qualitative or quantitative study of international security.

### Program 1, Reading and Test Intensive:

- Class Participation 15%
- Class Presentation/Discussion Leader 10%
- Critique Papers 30%
- War and Gender Presentation 5%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Final Exam 25%

### Program 2, Research Intensive, but POLS 5300 or equivalent is a prerequisite:

- Class Participation 15%
- Class Presentation/Discussion Leader 10%
- Critique Papers 30%
- War and Gender Presentation 5%
- Research project 40%

**Exams:** Those in Program of Study #1 will take both a Midterm and a Final Exam. These exams will consist of a few essay questions that will require deep thought and synthesis of the course material.

**Class Participation and Class Presentation:** All students will need to participate in seminar discussions based on the readings. This requires being prepared and offering insights in both quantity and quality. Note that this means the quality of discussion should not be reduced in weeks where one does not write a critique paper. The quality of participation will relate to the relevance of questions and comments made in class and will reflect knowledge of the readings and preparation for class.

Each student will also be responsible for leading a class discussion on a week's readings. This will require a professional presentation outlining the major points of the readings, providing questions for discussion, and providing your own insights and opinions. Presenters should summarize and critique the readings for that week. This requires outlining important points but also provides additional insights that can be positive, critical, or point to related issues. The formal presentation of each week's material should take roughly 30-40 minutes, but no more, which will be followed by class discussion and a student peer critique of the presentation. The remainder of the class session the student will help lead discussion and provide questions for class discussion. It is expected that the student will use a PowerPoint presentation that includes

an outline of main points. The use of handouts can often be useful. The tone of this presentation will be conducted in a serious and professional manner, which requires that you dress in a professional manner.

**Critique Papers:** All students will need to write six papers throughout the semester that count for credit, although it is advisable that you write more than six. This will allow you to learn the appropriate style required of the papers. The six highest grades will count in the calculation of your grade. The purpose of these papers is to foster a deep understanding of the subject matter and to gain the ability to synthesize succinctly the readings, with the purpose of understanding both the strengths and weaknesses of published work. This is the first step to contributing to such literatures. These papers will allow students to hone analytical and writing skills. It is my advice that students especially write papers at the earliest opportunities so that they will more quickly learn the subject matter and the instructor's expectations. See the last section at the end of the syllabus for guidelines on writing the critique papers.

**War and Gender Presentation:** For this week on the syllabus, all students will be responsible for presenting the content of two chapters of the Joshua Goldstein book, *War and Gender*. This is a rather fascinating book for the breadth of content and findings therein. Each student will give an oral presentation that includes the main topics and findings of their chapter. It may be useful to provide your fellow students with handouts. The style and tone for these presentations are similar to the individual presentations mentioned above, albeit without student peer critique.

**International Security Research Project:** This is for those students in Program 2. Students will engage in an intensive project studying some aspect of international security. This track is recommended for students thinking about writing a thesis in this area or already possessing research ideas. If you are interested in taking this track, please submit a brief written proposal to the instructor as early as possible in order to obtain the earliest start at a feasible project. The type of paper may vary from an empirical paper to one that is policy oriented. It is important that this paper is well developed and written, meaning the substance of the paper justifies being forty percent of the course grade. It is advisable that anyone taking on this project consult with the instructor regularly about the paper's content and purpose. Possible research projects include: a research design (with a thesis in mind), an empirical paper (quantitative or case study based), policy-oriented paper, or some other format. It is expected that these papers will have some form of argument and literature review. All papers should have some type of evidence, except for the research design paper. The research question should be clear and of course relate to international security. Again, you must have an approved research project prior to the midterm of this course to take this research program in this course.

### **COVID-19 ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. For our online course, you should still notify UTEP and notify me in case there is missed work so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations.

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

This instructor abides by university policies, such as excused absences and attendance, as stated in the [UTEP Graduate Catalog](#). It is the student's responsibility to understand university policies and their rights. In addition to university policies, I add the following:

**Late Work:** The course has a compressed timeline of modules, activities, and assignments that need to be completed in order. Students falling behind and submitting late assignments will increase the chance of failing this course. This is not a self-paced course. Work submitted late without excuse or accommodation may incur a 20% reduction in credit for per day, and zero credit after three days.

**Attendance Policy (and make-ups):** UTEP expects that students will not miss sessions without valid excuses. To deter lack of participation, students may be dropped by the instructor, who miss class sessions and assignments without a valid excuse. If you face complications with some of these sessions, please note this to the instructor at the outset of the course. Valid excuses for missed work include religious holidays, recognized university related activities (with Dean of Students letter), and military leave. In addition, I add the following policies:

- The instructor reserves the right to accept, or not, excuses related to medical issues. It is sometimes infeasible to document in advance time lost due to illness. The exception is planned surgeries and appointments (not normal check-ups). Any class time missed will be unexcused without medical or other valid documentation. I have the ability to read in Spanish, so documentation in Spanish is permissible. Students with severe medical problems resulting in on-going missed time and assignments may want to consider a complete withdrawal from the university for medical purposes (this requires dropping all courses). That is an option when multiple courses are affected. In cases where there is a significant, and documented, loss of time, the instructor may withdrawal a student (excused) or work with the student to set up an “incomplete” grade and course of action. The course of action established will depend on the amount of time and assignments the student missed and the estimated chance of the student passing the course. The more the work of a course is completed, the more an incomplete grade may be coordinated.
- Absences/missed assignments due to conflicts with work, child care, etc. that make it impossible for you to attend to this class regularly are not permitted. If you know you will have scheduling conflicts with this class, then you should make other arrangements or post-pone this class until a future semester. Treat this course as you would a professional job in which you cannot miss work; set yourself up for success.
- The instructor may not accept missed exams or quizzes due to family hardship or family medical problems as valid excuses. For example, helping family members move, picking up at the airport, driving family members to medical appointments when you know they conflict with class, and other such activities, will not be permitted as valid excuses. Emergencies such as deaths in the family must be documented, unfortunately.
- Missing any course assessments and work due to vacations and pre-booked travel arrangements are not valid excuses for make-ups. Note the date for the final exam on the course calendar. Moreover, please note that the university has used language on the academic calendar that confuses some students by stating the “last day of classes”, which means last normal class session excluding the final exams. There is a separate final exam calendar for each academic semester and term. See: [Final Exam and Semester Calendars website](#)

Academic Dishonesty: The instructor follows the university policies on academic honesty concerning cheating and plagiarism. Such acts will not be tolerated. Students will be reported to OSCR. To learn more see the [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#). Here is a list of forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism: The use of other people's words, ideas (concepts, sentence or paragraph structure or phrasings), songs, or images without documentation or their consent. The instructor will use anti-plagiarism software to evaluate papers for non-original content. One can avoid plagiarism by being honest and using proper style guidelines concerning citations, footnotes, or endnotes for passages in the text that are borrowed or inspired by other person's works. This course involves exams that are open book. This means that if you use content from our textbook, or other sources, you must cite this source. You should most often paraphrase and use quotations sparingly. When using quotations, you must cite page numbers when available. The vast majority of words in an exam or paper should be one's own; writers need to put work that is cited in a context, such as an argument, and not rely on other authors to provide the argument. If you do not know how to paraphrase properly, please seek help from the University Writing Center. See the paper guidelines for other instructions and tips.
- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.
- Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. One example of collusion is preparing a discussion entry for another person or having someone prepare a discussion entry for you. The instructor encourages students to study together and work collectively; however, working together to write any part of a written assignment, research paper, and/or exam is collusion.

### **Books Required (most are available at UTEP bookstore)**

I expect you to read everything listed on the syllabus for a particular date before class. Some classes, especially those in the first few weeks, will contain lecture, although most classes will be conducted in a seminar format requiring participation. The texts for this course are:

- ❖ Betts, Richard. *Conflict After the Cold War, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Pearson/Longman. (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> are fine as well)
- ❖ Ganguly, Sumit. 2016. *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*. Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Goldstein, Joshua. *War and Gender*. Cambridge University Press. (I suggest purchasing a used copy, perhaps online)
- ❖ Mearsheimer, John. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Norton. (I suggest purchasing a used copy, perhaps online)
- ❖ Trejo, Guillermo, Sandra Ley. 2020. *Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico*. Cambridge University Press.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **1/21 Introductions and lecture on central concepts to IR**

Besides getting to know each other and going over the syllabus, we will also discuss important concepts about international relations.

- “The Melian Dialogue” Thucydides, in Betts
- “Doing Evil in Order to Do Good” Niccolo Machiavelli, in Betts
- “The State of Nature and the State of War”, Thomas Hobbes, in Betts
- “Realism and Idealism” Edward Hallett Carr, in Betts

**01/28 Realism and Image of International System: Anarchy and Power**

- Mearsheimer, John: *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Norton.

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Critique paper due, no more than 6 pages)**

**2/04 Systems Level Conflict, Balance of Power System, and Economics**

- “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory”, Kenneth Waltz, in Betts
- “Hegemonic War and International Change”, Robert Gilpin, in Betts
- “Men, Women, and War”, J. Ann Tickner, in Betts
- “Perpetual Peace”, Immanuel Kant, in Betts
- “The Great Illusion” Norman Angel, in Betts
- “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” V.I. Lenin, in Betts
- “Paradise is a Bazaar” Geoffrey Blainey, in Betts

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Critique paper due, no more than six pages)**

**2/11 Interstate Conflict I: A Sample of Important Topics**

- “Advancing the Scientific Study of War” by Stuart Bremer, Chapter 1 from *The Process of War*, by Stuart Bremer and Thomas Cusack. 1995
- "Dangerous Dyads: Interstate War, 1816-1965." Bremer, Stuart. 1992. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36: 309-341.
- “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma”, Robert Jervis, in Betts
- “1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense, and Instability.” 1986. Scott Sagan. *International Security* 11: 151-175. “The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology”, Jack Levy, in Betts
- “Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies”, Christopher H. Achen & Duncan Snidal. 1989. in *World Politics* 41(2) :143-169.
- Gartzke, Erik, Quan Li, and Charles Boehmer. 2001. “Investing in the Peace: The Impact of Economics on International Conflict.” *International Organization* 55 (2): 391-438

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Critique paper due, no more than six pages)**

### **2/18 Interstate Conflict II**

- Ganguly, Sumit. 2016. *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*. Cambridge University Press.

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Critique paper due, no more than six pages)

### **2/25 War and Gender**

- Goldstein, Joshua, *War and Gender*  
(No critique papers, but all will participate in presentations of the book chapters as dived up)

### **3/04 Midterm Examination (Program 1)**

### **3/11 Civil Conflict and Civil War**

- “Science of Guerrilla Warfare” T.E. Lawrence, in Betts
- “On Guerrilla Warfare” Mao Tse-Tung, in Betts
- “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict” Ivan Arreguin-Toft *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer, 2001), pp. 93-128
- “What Causes Civil Wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings” by Jeffrey Dixon, 2009 *International Studies Review* Vol. 11 (4): 707-735.
- “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” James Fearon and David Laitin. *American Political Science Review* 97, 1 (February 2003), 75-90.
- “How Civil Wars End: The International System, Norms, and the Role of External Actors.” Howard, L. M., & Stark, A. (2017). *International Security*, 42(3), 127–171. [https://doi-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00305](https://doi-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00305)

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Critique paper due, no more than five pages)

### **3/18 Spring Break week – No class this day**

### **3/25 Cesar Chavez Day – No class this day**

### **4/01 Mexico Drug Cartels, Parties, and Violence**

- *Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico*. Trejo, Guillermo, and Sandra Ley. 2020. Cambridge University Press.

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Critique paper due, no more than five pages)

#### 4/08 Civil War II

- “Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992.” Hvard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates, and Nils Petter Gleditsch. *American Political Science Review*. (2001) 95 (1).
- “Where Do Third Parties Intervene? Third Parties’ Domestic Institutions and Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts.” Koga, Jun. 2011. *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (4).
- “Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison.” Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. *American Political Science Review* (2011).
- “Control over Bodies and Territories: Insurgent Territorial Control and Sexual Violence.” Victor Asal & Robert U. Nagel (2021), *Security Studies*, 30:1, 136-158, DOI: [10.1080/09636412.2021.1885726](https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2021.1885726)
- “Does Peacekeeping Really Bring Peace? Peacekeepers and Combatant-perpetrated Sexual Violence in Civil Wars.” Kirschner, Shanna, and Adam Miller. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2019, Vol. 63(9) 2043-2070

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Critique paper due, no more than 6 pages)

#### 4/15 No class due to Spring Study Day

#### 4/22 Civil War/Interstate War: Resources and Security

- “Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict” Thomas Homer Dixon, in Betts
- “How do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases” Michael L. Ross, 2004 *International Organization* Vol. 58 (1): 35-67.
- “Oil Wealth, Winning Coalitions, and Duration of Civil Wars.” Wiegand, Krista, and Eric Keels. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2019, Vol. 63(4) 1077-1105 2019.
- “Pax Petrolica? Rethinking the Oil–Interstate War.” LinkageHye Ryeon Jang & Benjamin Smith (2021), *Security Studies*, 30:2, 159-181, DOI: [10.1080/09636412.2021.1914718](https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2021.1914718)

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Critique paper due, no more than seven pages)

#### 4/29 Terrorism

- “The Strategic Logic of Terrorism” Martha Crenshaw, in Betts
- “Market Civilization and Its Clash with Terror” Michael Mousseau *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Winter, 2002-2003), pp. 5-29
- “The Strategies of Terrorism Andrew”. H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter. *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer, 2006), pp. 49-80
- “Terrorism Research: The Record.” Martha Crenshaw (2014), *International Interactions*, 40:4, 556-567, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2014.902817
- “The quality of terrorist violence: Explaining the logic of terrorist target choice.” Polo SM. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2020;57(2):235-250. doi:10.1177/0022343319829799



- “Kill, Capture, or Defend? The Effectiveness of Specific and General Counterterrorism Tactics Against the Global Threats of the Post-9/11 Era.” Jesse Paul Lehrke & Rahel Schomaker (2016), *Security Studies*, 25:4, 729-762, DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2016.1220199
- “Why They Leave: An Analysis of Terrorist Disengagement Events from Eighty-seven Autobiographical Accounts.” Mary Beth Altier, Emma Leonard Boyle, Neil D. Shortland & John G. Horgan (2017), *Security Studies*, 26:2, 305-332, DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2017.1280307

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Critique paper due, no more than six pages).**

### **5/02 Additional Human Security Topics**

- “Food Resources and Strategic Conflict.” Koren O, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2019, Vol. 63(10) 2236-2261
- “The hunger games: Food prices, ethnic cleavages and nonviolent unrest in Africa.” Abbs L. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2020;57(2):281-296. doi:10.1177/0022343319866487
- “Climate variability, crop and conflict: Exploring the impacts of spatial concentration in agricultural production.” Vesco P, Kovacic M, Mistry M, Croicu M. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2021;58(1):98-113. doi:[10.1177/0022343320971020](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320971020)
- “First comes the river, then comes the conflict? A qualitative comparative analysis of flood-related political unrest.” Ide T, Kristensen A, Bartusevičius H. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2021;58(1):83-97. doi:[10.1177/0022343320966783](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320966783)
- “Food and water insecurity as causes of social unrest: Evidence from geolocated Twitter data.” Koren O, Bagozzi BE, Benson TS. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2021;58(1):67-82. doi:10.1177/0022343320975091

Presentation by: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Critique paper due, no more than seven pages)**

**5/09 Final Exam, 7:00-9:45p.m, if in class. Also, Final Research Papers due for those in Study Program 2.**

## Appendix on Critique Papers:

The critique papers should typically follow a format such as the following:

- Description of the works, i.e., summary of main theses and points
- Critique of strengths and weaknesses, primarily through a synthesis of the readings
- Final remarks including direction of future research or other thoughts

The section describing the readings should number no more than two to three pages in a four to five page paper, or roughly about 40% to 50% of the paper. This aspect is a summary of main points and you will not have much space for details. You should stick to major components of a book or articles, such as major theoretical points, general approach or methods, and conclusions or evidence. The reader should have a decent idea about the major points of each reading but not drown in details. The remainder of the paper should go into a bit more detail about the readings' contributions, strengths, or weaknesses, and how they fit together. You can think of the applicability of the literature to the world, critique the theory, critique the methods and data, etc. Look for the common themes and implications between the readings and tie them together (if articles), or compare/contrast. It can be useful to tie readings, albeit briefly, with readings in other weeks. This should not become a laundry list but instead a section that hits upon a few major points in-depth. By in-depth, I mean you should elaborate fully on your argument to make sure that your points are clear. This is often a mistake committed by those new to this form of writing, by trying to include too many details or issues. Do not write in bullet points; it is important that you elaborate and discuss your points. To make a clear point about some topic you need to avoid providing a laundry list of other issues that collectively take up too much space. The two final sections above are similar but vary depending on what you have to say and the nature of the readings. A typical book review or critique paper should be about five pages long (although I allow up to five or seven depending on the number of readings). Ideally, look for published literature reviews if you would especially like to see how authors attempt to describe literature and then provide commentary. For examples of book reviews in political science, see the journals *American Political Science Review* or *Journal of Politics*. However, do not plagiarize main points from such reviews since these are rather easy to find and document.