UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
POLS 5368: SEMINAR IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS (CRN: 27446)
Spring 2016

W 6:00pm-8:50pm, Benedict Hall 205

Instructor: Dr. Cigdem V. Sirin
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Location: Benedict Hall 302
Office Phone: (915) 747-7971
E-mail: cigdemsirin@utep.edu
Class Website: Blackboard through MyUTEP portal

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course examines processes of conflict and cooperation between and within countries. War
and peace is studied both as a cause and outcome of interactions between states and peoples
within states. In the first section of this course, we will discuss key theories, perspectives, and
methodological issues in the analysis of conflict. The second section will look into conflict at
different stages, including conflict initiation, escalation, duration, and resolution. The third
section of this course covers different forms of conflict (e.g., territorial, ethnic, and resource-
based) as well as key factors that influence conflict processes and behavior (such as alliances,
arms races, and economic interdependence).

LEARNING OUTCOMES
I believe, with adequate effort and willingness, all of you are capable of doing well in this
course. By the end of this course, you can expect to accomplish the following learning
outcomes:

- to master concepts and terms relevant to the scientific study of conflict
- to apply and critique major theories and perspectives relevant to understanding the role of
domestic and international arrangements that structure conflict, war, and peace
- to develop an advanced understanding of the literature in various areas of conflict studies
- to apply and critique a body of factual knowledge necessary for analyzing the role of
  historical, social, political, economic, and global forces on the outbreak of conflict
- to recognize and formulate testable hypotheses relevant to the scientific study of conflict
- to recognize, identify, and apply empirical datasets and methodological approaches
  relevant for the scientific study of conflict
- to develop foresight for situations and episodes where the outbreak of conflict is likely

OBJECTIVES FOR PROFESSIONALISM
It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between
class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and
controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as
political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing
ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views.

No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor’s full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

**GRADING POLICY**

Your final grade in this class will be based on the following requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>All meetings</td>
<td>35%</td>
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All grades (including the final grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 89.50</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>79.50-89.49</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>69.50-79.49</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>59.50-69.49</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>≤ 59.49</td>
<td>F</td>
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I do not change grades. If you are concerned about your grade, please come and see me during my office hours so that I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.

**MIDTERM EXAM**

For your midterm exam task, you will identify a published quantitative article in the field of international conflict and will critically analyze the study. As part of this task, you will review its theoretical framework and hypotheses. You will discuss its research design, operationalization of the variables employed, and its empirical findings. In doing so, you will be expected to discuss the plausibility of the theory, any omitted variables that should have been included in the analytical models, any alternative design decisions, etc. The midterm exam will be due on March 4, 11:59pm and will constitute 25% of your final grade.

The exam should be submitted electronically via “Turnitin” (embedded in Blackboard), which is an online originality checking service made available by UTEP) by the designated due date and time. Exams submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends).

**RESEARCH PAPER**

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the key aspects of conflict analysis. An important part of this goal is to help you develop the theoretical and methodological skills
necessary to grasp these dynamics. As such, you will write a research paper, which will constitute 30% of your final grade.

The research paper task involves the development and systematic testing of one or more hypotheses on the causes, management, or consequences of militarized international conflict. This paper may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, depending on the nature of the question and the student's methodological training, but in any case it must be analytical and theoretical in nature rather than descriptive.

- Topics must be approved by me. You should inform me about your paper topic by e-mail by February 10 @ 11:59pm at the latest or you will lose 5 points.
- A paper proposal is due on March 2 @ 11:59pm (submit by e-mail). This is worth 5% of the research paper grade. This proposal will involve a brief (2-3 pages) description of the paper topic, including a statement of what the student plans to study (the dependent variable), a suggestion of the basic theoretical logic and expectations (the independent variables), and a brief discussion of how he/she plans to study this topic (including some preliminary notes about the data or other sources to be used).
- The paper should be double-spaced; minimum 10-maximum 20 pages long (not counting the front sheet and references); typed in 12-point Times New Roman font; with 1-inch margins, and numbered. Papers that are single-spaced, too long or too short, not numbered, that use wider or narrower margins, or which use very large or very small fonts to stay within the page limit will lose 10 points.
- There should be no more than two extensive quotations (in excess of three lines of text)
- Make sure you are aware of the scholarly pitfalls of plagiarism, which are discussed in detail in the document on academic misconduct (available on Blackboard). Specifically, whenever you use an idea or information from another source, you must give credit to the author by properly citing her/him within the text. Not doing so constitutes an act of plagiarism, which will result in a score of zero for the paper.
- The formatting of your paper should follow the American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Specifically, you are required to carefully read the document on citation and reference requirements (also available on Blackboard) and employ these formatting rules for your research paper. Inaccurate citation/reference format = 5-40% penalty (depending on severity)
- You must provide at least fifteen scholarly sources (academic books and articles) or you will lose 5 points for each missing source. You are free to cite weekly readings but they should be in addition to these 15 scholarly sources you will identify.
- If you are unclear about what constitutes a scholarly book or article, please ask! (For example, Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, nor are magazines and newspapers such as the Economist or the New York Times).
- Grades will also be based on the clarity of the writing (i.e., lack of spelling and grammar errors, organization, appropriate tone of writing). Please note that The University Writing Center (UWC) provides writing assistance to all UTEP students. The UWC is located on the second (ground) floor of the library in Room 227 Library, phone: (915) 747-5112.
- You are welcome to come and discuss your paper progress during my office hours or by appointment.
Deadline
The research paper is due on May 6, 2016 @ 11:59 pm (MT). You should submit your paper electronically via “Turnitin” (embedded in Blackboard) by the designated due date and time. Papers submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends).

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
Each student will present their research paper in class, which will constitute 10% of their final course grade. The date reserved for project presentations is May 4. The presentations should use PowerPoint and should not exceed 20 minutes (plus 10 minutes of Q&A).

CLASS PARTICIPATION
Class participation grade will comprise 35% of your course grade and will be based on the following criteria:

(a) participation in seminar discussions (15%)
(b) performance as a discussion leader (10%)
(d) weekly talking points (10%)

I expect everyone to attend class on the scheduled dates and times. Keep in mind that class participation is more than just attending the class meetings—you should come to class alert, be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class discussions. To do so, you should complete the assigned readings before each class meeting. Exams will cover material from the readings and the lectures, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage.

Only those students who prepare well-written weekly talking points, attend class regularly, and actively participate in and effectively lead class discussions will receive full credit (100) for their class participation grade. You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet at each class meeting and it is your responsibility to make sure to sign-in. After one unexcused absence, I will begin to deduct 10 points from your participation grade for each absence thereafter. If you arrive late and request to sign-in at the end of the class meeting, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each incident of tardiness after one late arrival. The same policy will apply to incidents of leaving class early (Note that if you leave the class early, the time of your departure will be recorded). The class participation portion of the grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

Discussion Leader Duty
During the course of the semester, each student will lead the seminar discussions twice. Specifically, the discussion leaders will briefly present and critique that week’s readings to set the stage for class discussion on the topic. The leaders are also expected to comment on other students’ talking points.

Weekly Talking Points
Beginning from the second week of the semester, each student will be required to submit three “talking points” on the readings for that week. These talking points will help shape the seminar
discussions, so they should be the most interesting questions or arguments that the student has identified based on the week’s readings. They should be submitted in the form of a short paragraph outlining the question or argument. Each talking point should refer to one or more specific sections of the weekly readings with appropriate page references. Further, each talking point should refer to a different chapter or article from the weekly readings. Talking points less than 150 words or in excess of 200 words and/or that arrive late will not be accepted. The talking points must be submitted on Blackboard by **Tuesday 11:59pm (MT)** each week that the class meets.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

I will excuse absences and late work *only* when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his faith that happens to coincide with a class session, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency. To be excused, you must notify me *in writing* prior to the date of absence. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance. You must also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence. In case of an illness, a doctor’s note is the proper documentation required.

_For my records, you should e-mail me a scanned copy of the documentation that verifies the reason for your absence (if you don’t have access to a scanner, you can take a photo of the documentation). Documentation that is not provided in a timely manner will not be accepted._

Please do not ask me to excuse absences for minor illnesses or scheduling conflicts. I am aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See academic regulations in UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences: [http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418](http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418). According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”

**CLASSROOM AND E-MAIL PROTOCOL**

Chatting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. The best way to contact me is via UTEP e-mail. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will respond to weekend messages by Monday at the latest. When e-mailing me, please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND DISHONESTY**

Academic misconduct and dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and
plagiarism. 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 signing in for another person (or having someone sign for you) on the class attendance sheet.

Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one. A document detailing different forms of plagiarism is provided on Blackboard. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts.

Be aware, just as the internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. All written work submitted for this course will be checked by the instructor for originality via Turnitin—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP (http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/features/originalitycheck).

Any act of academic misconduct and dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386 for further information.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS
All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)
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 specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: cass@utep.edu; location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT
The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS*

SECTION I: PERSPECTIVES, THEORIES, LEVELS, AND METHODS IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Week 1 (01/20) Welcome and Course Introduction

Week 2 (01/27) Key Perspectives and Theories in Conflict Analysis


Week 3 (02/03) Analyzing Conflict at the Monadic, Dyadic, and Systemic Levels: An Example from the Democratic Peace Literature


Week 4 (02/10) Methodological Approaches and Issues in Conflict Analysis


**SECTION II: ANALYZING KEY STAGES OF CONFLICT**

**Week 5 (02/17)** University closed - No class

**Week 6 (02/24)** Analyzing Conflict Initiation, Escalation, and Duration


**Week 7 (03/02)** Analyzing Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping


*Midterm Exam due March 4, 2016 @11:59pm.*

**Week 8 (03/09)** Spring Break – No class

**SECTION III: MAJOR FORMS AND FACTORS IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

**Week 9 (03/16)** Analyzing Different Forms of Conflict
Territorial Conflict

Ethnic Conflict and Civil War

Resource-based Conflict

Week 10 (03/23) Analyzing Rivalry

Week 11 (03/30) Analyzing Economic Liberalization and Interdependence


**Week 12 (04/06) Analyzing Alliances**


**Week 13 (04/13) Analyzing Arms Races and Nuclear Proliferation**


**Week 14 (04/20) Analyzing Terrorism and Insurgency**


**Week 15 (04/27) New Directions in Conflict Analysis**


**Week 16 (05/04) Student Presentations**

*Research Paper due May 6, 2016 @ 11:59pm*

*Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.*