INTL 8225: International Conflict Management  
University of Georgia, Department of International Affairs

Course Instructor Information:  
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Office Hours: 1:30-3:30p Tues.  
(or by appointment)

Course Meeting Information:  
Fall 2017  
Thursdays, 3:30-6:15pm  
225 Park Hall  
https://uga.view.usg.edu/

Course Overview  
What can states do to manage the causes and consequences of militarized conflict? The answer to this question is complex. Those managing conflicts seek to prevent conflict outbreaks, de-escalate or end active conflicts, resolve disputed issues regardless of whether violence exists, and rebuild society in the aftermath of conflict to prevent conflict recurrence. International conflict management therefore occurs before, during, and after the militarized conflict that grabs headlines and the attention of traditional international relations research. In all cases, the goal is “peace”—broadly conceived—but peace means different things to different actors and within different phases of the conflict cycle.

This course reviews the cacophony of research that comprises the field of international conflict management—or peace research. Its purpose is to understand the actors engaged in international conflict management, what strategies they employ during their management efforts, and whether those efforts succeed. Although this seems descriptive at first glance, we primarily obtain this understanding by examining theoretical arguments about who manages, how, when, and to what effect. Critical analysis and empirical evidence—largely, but not exclusively, quantitative—then help us evaluate the merits of these arguments.

Course Caveats:  
I believe in truth in advertising, so it is important for you to know what this course is and what it is not—especially if you are joining the course from another discipline. First, this is not a course in international conflict, comparative political violence (i.e., civil wars), or human rights. Other courses in our curriculum cover this material in-depth. Second, the course is not a purely historical one—meaning that we will not simply read in-depth historical accounts of specific conflicts (e.g., Bosnia, Rwanda, Iraq, or the Chaco War). To be sure, conflict details may appear in our readings—and certainly underlie the quantitative and qualitative analyses we consider—but our focus will not be on obtaining historical conflict knowledge. Instead, we focus on the broader, theoretical arguments that explain when international conflict management happens, what form it takes, and when it succeeds. Finally, we will not address the practice of conflict management directly. For example, we do not discuss how Jimmy Carter would (or should) mediate an international dispute. Although this is undoubtedly an important question, it lies beyond the scope of this course, which sits at the state and international, as opposed to individual, level. Nonetheless, we will confront and challenge the policy implications of the work we study.

Learning Objectives  
At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

• Identify and explain various topics within the field of international conflict management, the current state of research on them, and how they relate to one another;
• Discuss theoretical arguments about when international conflict management occurs, what form it takes, and when it is likely to succeed—accounting for the myriad conflict management strategies;
• Critically evaluate theoretical and empirical arguments made in the scholarly literature;
• Construct a theoretical argument and present it in oral and written form;
• Identify potential avenues of future research; and
• Appreciate the challenges faced by conflict management scholars and practitioners

Course Readings
We will read large sections of the following books, which I therefore recommend for purchase:

Recommended (no required reading will come from this text during the course):

Any assigned readings beyond the required textbooks listed above will be made available electronically from the instructor – via the eLearning Commons (eLC) website (log-in using UGA MyID at: https://uga.view.usg.edu/). If the library owns a copy of the required books listed above, they have also been placed on reserve at the library for the semester.

Course Requirements
Participation (20% of final grade)
As with any graduate course, attendance and participation are critical and required. My goal is to have you directly engage the course material, rather than passively hear about it. Therefore, I will conduct each class meeting as an open-ended discussion of the material assigned for that day, rather than a traditional lecture. Students should prepare for class by reading the assigned material before we meet, preparing any assignments listed for the week, and being ready to contribute actively to the discussion in class. I will grade participation based on the following factors: (a) attendance, (b) frequency with which a student participates in discussion (i.e., quantity), (c) extent to which student comments contribute positively to the discussion (i.e., quality), (d) the extent to which a student identifies key points and raises appropriate questions, and (e) the extent to which comments demonstrate that the student has thought about and processed the readings. Appropriate questions include those that critique, extend, or request clarification of readings, as well as those that connect various readings to one another.

Models (15% for each paper; 45% total):
Throughout the semester, students will write three (3) short papers (approximately 5-7 pages each) that: a) identify and summarize a theoretical model from our readings, b) depict that model graphically, c) situate the model within other works/research that we have covered, d) critique the model, and e) offer some indication
of how the model might be tested. (Note: the graphic does not count toward paper length.) For our purposes, a model consists of a specified relationship between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y), explained by theoretical logic. Students may make empirical criticisms about the work they examine, but the focus must primarily be on the theoretical model under examination.

A few guidelines:

• Be concise and clear in the presentation of your model. Ensure that you cover all the theoretical logic that connects the key independent variable to the key dependent variable. If some is missing, say that.

• The discussion of possible model testing should not merely reiterate what the readings did. Rather, it should search for ways to evaluate, *inter alia:* a) further implications of the model (i.e., what has not yet been tested, but is consistent with the model's logic), b) model adjustments in light of criticisms raised (i.e., tests that shed light on the value of criticisms and whether the model holds up to them), or c) the merits of the model relative to other models (i.e., a way to distinguish the model's predictions from other models—e.g., testing alternative hypotheses).

• Students may not work together on these assignments and will sign up for topics in class. One student can work on any given topic, and these are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

• Papers are due on or before the start of the class period in which we cover the paper's model. Because of this (and because there are three papers to write), students are encouraged not to wait until the end of the semester to write their papers.

• Students will present their model(s) to the class as part of our class discussion. This presentation will be part of your assignment grade.

Writing Resources Online Quizzes (10%): During the semester (see syllabus schedule), students will read the following two resources and complete an online quiz about their content. Students may take the online quiz twice, and the highest score earned will be the grade for this component of the course.


I cannot overstate the importance of writing skills. Whether you will work in academia or the public or private sphere, writing is an essential skill. We all need practice and help to improve our writing—myself included. The assignments for this course supply one form of practice, and my feedback on them should offer you advice on how to improve. Beyond this advice, I carefully selected the resources covered by the online quiz as ones I think will be of high value to you for writing generally, as well as for academic papers in particular (e.g., capstones, theses, and dissertations). The following additional resources have also helped me, my colleagues, or my students improve their writing. These resources are not required for the course.


Final Exam (25% of final grade): The course will conclude with an exam consisting of 1-2 questions, amounting to about 8-10 pages of writing, and drawing upon material covered throughout the entire semester. I will distribute this exam in class on Thursday, November 30, 2017. Students will turn in a hard-copy of the exam to the instructor by 5:00pm on Friday, December 8, 2017—to 325 Candler Hall.
Collaborative Research:
I will discuss and foster opportunities for collaborative research projects—both with your peers and with me—which can be moved ultimately toward a conference paper and/or published product. Although these projects are not part of the course requirements, I strongly encourage you to participate in and take advantage of them. Whatever your final career goal, graduate education transitions students from being consumers to producers of knowledge, and research is how you do the latter. Employers in academia, the policy community, inter-/non-governmental organizations, and private business expect those with graduate degrees to be able to research and write well.

Special Events:
Throughout the semester, the department, school, and university will have special lectures and presentations. These events constitute a key facet of graduate education, and I therefore encourage students to attend and will keep students aware of them. Advertisements generally travel via the SPIA graduate student listserv.

Course Policies
We will abide by two general policies throughout this course. First, as a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to follow the University's academic honesty policy (“A Culture of Honesty”) and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty” (including policies that cover plagiarism; for more information, see: http://www.uga.edu/honesty). Students are responsible for informing themselves about these standards before performing any academic work and should direct any specific questions they have regarding the policy (or its application to course assignments) to the instructor or the Academic Honesty office.

Second, it should go without saying that we will treat everyone in the class—and their comments—with respect. It is normal to disagree in an academic setting. In fact, many of the scholars that we will read regularly disagree with one another. This disagreement, however, must occur respectfully. Towards the goal of creating a respectful classroom environment, students are expected to: (a) use language that does not insult others or their point of view, (b) keep cell phones turned off and put away during class meetings, and (c) use laptops brought to the classroom for educational purposes only (though my preference is to omit them altogether). Any student that does not follow these guidelines may be asked to leave the classroom.

Course Schedule
The following pages contain a general plan for the course—although deviations may be necessary and will be announced in class by the instructor if they occur.

I recommend completing required readings for each topic in the order listed. Please note that the goal of this class is to familiarize students with theoretical and empirical developments in the field of international conflict management; the inclusion (or omission) of readings in the course syllabus therefore does not constitute an endorsement (or rejection) of those readings' positions and arguments.

I. Foundations of International Conflict and Its Management

Week 1: Course Introduction & Field Orientation (August 17)
Research on interstate conflict generally proceeds from the assumption that, if we understand the causal mechanisms that produce militarized conflict, we can intervene in those processes to prevent that conflict. Although logically true, a difficulty arises: “not conflict” and “peace” are not necessarily the same thing. We therefore begin by exploring what scholars mean by peace and peace research, how they have conceptualized it, and what advice they offer about where the field should go.
Week 2: Conflict Management Concepts & Trends (August 24)
Students often note that the conflict management field is eclectic and difficult to organize. These are accurate sentiments, and good reasons exist for them. First, conflict management—broadly conceived—consists of any activity that tries to mitigate the effects of conflict. This broad umbrella includes behavior that ranges from conflict prevention efforts, to diplomatic settlement attempts, to military intervention, to post-conflict reconstruction. Because different contexts and motivations exist for choosing one type of behavior over another, these behaviors can be difficult to organize within one framework. Second, there is a host of terminology that litters the field—conflict management v. resolution, mediation v. conciliation, and so on. This topic introduces students to the terminology in the field, how researchers organize various conflict management behaviors, and how the demand (and supply) of conflict management has evolved over time. In so doing, it prepares the remainder of the course.

• Goertz, Diehl, and Balas, The Puzzle of Peace, chapters 2-3.

**Week 3: Theories and Foundations of International Conflict (August 31)**

International conflict management assumes an international conflict—that is, we must have a conflict (past, present, or future) to manage. Mindful of this, we visit broad theories about why conflict occurs, particularly because not all students have had an international conflict course.


*Additional Reading:*

**II. Theory of Conflict Management**

This section of the course considers three broad questions. First, what (if any) difference exists between conflict management and resolution? Second, how do we know when conflict management efforts succeed? Finally, what general theoretical mechanisms facilitate or hinder peace?
Week 4: Management, Resolution, and Evaluation (September 7)

- Blum, Chapters 1 (Conceptual Framework), 2 (India/Pakistan), and 5 (Testing Theory).
- Kupchan, Chapters 1-3 (Stable Peace, Anarchy to Cooperation, Rapprochement) and 7 (Making Friends).

Additional reading:

Week 5: Theories of Conflict Management (September 14)


Additional Reading:
III. Tools and Topics of International Conflict Management

The remainder of the course examines conflict management behavior in three phases: pre-conflict, during conflict, and post-conflict. The pre-conflict phase generally contains efforts to forecast where conflict will likely occur, an undertaking that has advanced significantly in recent years. Beyond this, we also consider non-violent protest as a means to address disagreements—under the assumption that nonviolence would be tried before violence. Once a militarized conflict begins, the landscape shifts; actors then consider a series of strategies designed to mitigate a conflict’s effects, bring it to an end, and (perhaps) resolve its underlying issues. These strategies include negotiations—in which disputants work alone—as well as various options that introduce third parties that can play many roles. Finally, after conflict ends, actors consider how to make peace durable—that is, prevent conflict relapse. This requires addressing the institutions and relationships that conflict damaged.

Week 6: Conflict Prevention – Forecasting and the Use of Nonviolent Outlets (September 21)


Additional Reading:

- Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapter 7.
**Week 6: Negotiations (September 28)**


**Additional Reading:**

- Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapter 2.

**Week 7: Mediation (October 5)**


**Additional Reading:**
• Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapter 3.

**Week 9: Legal Strategies (October 12)**
• Mitchell and Powell, Chapters 1, 3, 5-6.

**Additional Reading:**
• Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapter 4.

**Week 10: Writing Skills – Professional Development (October 19)**
I will be away from campus on this day, attending a publisher-editor meeting on behalf of *International Studies Review*. In lieu of meeting on this date, I will ask you to read the two (short) books listed below and complete an online quiz about their content (on eLC). We will then schedule a graduate student professionalization workshop after my return to discuss writing.


**Week 11: Peace Operations (October 26)**

*Additional Reading:*
• Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapter 6.


*Week 12: Organizations, Coercion, and Humanitarian Problems (November 2)*


*Additional Reading:*

• Bercovitch and Jackson, Chapters 5, 8 & 9.


**Week 13: Forum Selection and Interdependence Among Strategies (November 9)**


*Additional reading:*

Week 14: The Durability of Peace (November 16)

- Goertz, Diehl, and Balas, Chapters 5-10.

Additional Reading:


Week 15: Reconciliation and Reconstruction (November 30)


**Additional Reading:**

• Berovitch and Jackson, Chapters 11 & 12.


