

International Affairs 4680H: Peace Studies Honors

Spring 2025

Classroom: Military Building 4

Course Meetings: Tuesday-Thursday 2:20-3:35

Instructor: Dr. William Acosta

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Office Hours: Caldwell 214, 10:30am-11:30am

Course Description

This course explores the evolution of peace in the international system, challenging traditional conceptions that equate peace solely with the absence of war. Using *The Puzzle of Peace* as a foundational text, students will analyze key concepts such as negative peace, positive peace, territorial disputes, international norms, and conflict resolution mechanisms. This course will take on a seminar style rather than a lecture style class. Lectures will be used as needed, but we are all expected to contribute to class discussion. Additionally, depending on class size, students will participate in the Reacting to the Past role-playing game "*Versailles 1919: The Peace Conference at Versailles*". This game will allow students to experience the challenges of post-war diplomacy and peacemaking, encouraging negotiation, debate, and strategy.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the evolution of peace and its conceptual frameworks.
2. Critically evaluate the roles of international norms and conflict management mechanisms in fostering peace.

3. Differentiate between negative peace, positive peace, and varying levels of state relationships.
4. Experience the dynamics of historical peacemaking through role-playing simulations.
5. Apply theoretical concepts to case studies and contemporary issues.
6. Develop leadership, negotiation, and critical thinking skills.

Required Texts

1. Goertz, G., Diehl, P. F., & Balas, A. (2016). *The Puzzle of Peace: The Evolution of Peace in the International System*. Oxford University Press. (Available online via UGA Library)
2. Reacting to the Past Game Book: "*Versailles 1919: The Peace Conference at Versailles*" (PDF provided).
3. All other reading will be provided via eLC on the assigned weeks.

Course Requirements

1. Participation (20%)
 - a. In class contributions will encompass 10% of your class grade. Attendance is not enough. You must contribute to in-class discussions both in a quantitative and qualitative sense. To do this you must be in class in person. At the beginning of the semester, I will provide you with a name card. Write your preferred name on it and keep it with you all semester. If I learn your name without needing to read the card, you are in good shape.
 - b. Talking points will encompass 10% of your grade. Before each class—except weeks we do our simulation—you will write two talking points to enhance our discussions. You will submit digital copies via eLC for grading purposes, but please bring hard copies of to class for your personal use. These talking points should serve as a jumping off point for discussion. What questions do you have from the readings? What points remain unclear? What would you like to know more about?

2. Reflection Papers (20%)

- a. Students will be asked to write four reflection papers throughout the semester. You will choose which four weeks to do in the first week of the semester. These are two-page double spaced papers where you reflect on that week's materials. Here are some ideas for how to do this. You might explore how the week's materials connect to an ongoing global conflict or international peace process. Consider its relevance to contemporary events: What insights does it offer for understanding territorial disputes, peace-building efforts, or mediation initiatives today? You are also encouraged to engage critically with the material by raising questions, highlighting potential weaknesses in the arguments, or offering alternative perspectives and solutions. For example, do the readings assume certain ideas about state sovereignty, human nature, or justice that warrant closer examination? Additionally, reflect on how the ideas discussed might inform peace policy or practice. What are the implications for conflict resolution strategies, peacekeeping operations, or policymaking aimed at fostering sustainable peace?
- b. Reflection papers are due at **8:00 AM on Tuesday of the week you have selected**. For instance, if you choose to write a paper on the week focusing on **positive peace**, your reflection would be due on the **Tuesday morning of that week**. These papers will be graded on the depth of analysis, clarity and organization, and the originality or insightfulness of your reflections. Use this opportunity to develop and articulate your ideas, engage with the course material critically, and consider how the topics discussed contribute to our understanding of peace and conflict in the real world.

3. Versailles Simulation (20%)

- a. Participation: This is included in the participation grade above. Your attendance and participation are required for a passing grade.
- b. Role-Specific Assignments (10%): As the simulation activity approaches, each student will receive a character to play within it. These roles have specific written assignments that students must complete during the simulation module. I will provide you with the parameters for the assignments in class. You will submit these via eLC.
- c. Reflection (10%): In addition to the four reflection papers, all students will write one additional reflection on the simulation. This means there are five reflection papers in total. For the simulation reflection, you will write a two-page paper that connects the simulation to other course content. This will be turned in via eLC.

4. Research Paper (40%)

- a. Students will complete a 15-20 page research paper on a topic related to international peace or human security, demonstrating critical analysis, research skills, and engagement with relevant scholarship. The paper will begin with a clear, well-motivated research question that identifies a significant issue and frames the focus of the project. Students will write a literature review that situates the question within existing research, highlights key debates or gaps, and explains the contribution of their study. From this foundation, they will develop a convincing argument and hypothesis, grounded in their understanding of the literature. Students may take a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approach to their research, depending on the nature of their question and the evidence available. They will then provide a detailed analysis and discussion that connects their findings back to their hypothesis

and broader implications for peacebuilding and/or peacekeeping. The research process will be developed gradually over the semester, with time dedicated to building foundational skills, refining ideas, and receiving feedback at key stages. This assignment will be assessed on the clarity of the research question, the depth and organization of the literature review, the strength of the argument and methods, the quality of case analysis, and the overall coherence and rigor of the paper.

Grade Distribution

- A = 95-100
- A- = 90-94
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 80-86
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 70-76
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 60-66
- F = 0-59

Course Guidelines

1. Students are expected to read the assigned course materials before all class meetings and participate actively within in-class discussions and activities.
2. Check eLC regularly for updates on the course.
3. The class will follow a primarily seminar (i.e., discussion) format. I will lecture when necessary. I will break you up into groups of 5. You will work with this group for the whole semester, so exchange contact information. One of you will be the discussion leader for your

group. This can change depending on the dynamics of the group. If one member of the group is missing, then 20% of that group is missing. If you are going to miss class, you must inform both me and your group members that you will not be in attendance so that they may plan accordingly. Once your group has thoroughly discussed the day's assigned readings, I will ask each group to contribute a wider class discussion.

4. Assignments are due on the dates and times given. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is late. After 5 days, the work will be maxed out at 50%.
5. If you need extensions, please **inform me via email**. If you tell me in person I will forget.
6. Be respectful to one another. I will not tolerate students being disrespectful or making others uncomfortable. We will discuss controversial topics in this class. Passion is fine but respect is necessary. Furthermore, only one person speaks at a time. Do not interrupt or speak over each other.
7. This is a digital free space unless I say otherwise. No laptops, tablets, or phones are allowed. Thus, bring hard copies of your talking point for your personal use. Do not work on other coursework in this class. It is disrespectful to both me and your classmates.
8. As a University of Georgia student, you are expected to adhere to the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must comply with the standards outlined in "A Culture of Honesty," which can be found at: [UGA Academic Honesty Policy](#). Ignorance of the academic honesty policy is not an acceptable excuse for violations. If you have questions related to course assignments or the academic honesty policy, please direct them to the instructor. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be referred to Judicial Affairs, as mandated by university policy.
9. Avoid using generative AI. While AI has its uses, particularly in creating reference pages, it creates sloppy work.

10. It is the policy and practice of the University of Georgia to create an inclusive learning environment. Students requiring accommodations should discuss such matters with the me at the outset of the course. Students requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center on campus (706-542-8719, <http://www.drc.uga.edu>).
11. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.
 - Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
 - Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
 - University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
 - Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
 - Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
 - Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu
12. Any exceptions to or modifications to these rules or the syllabus are given at my discretion.
13. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Weekly Schedule

Week & Dates	Topics and Activities
Week 1 (Jan 7 & 9)	<p>Introduction to Peace Studies</p> <p>Course overview and syllabus discussion.</p> <p>Introduction to the key themes in 'The Puzzle of Peace.'</p>
Week 2 (Jan 14 & 16)	<p>Conceptualizing Interstate Peace</p> <p>Discussion on defining peace beyond the absence of war.</p> <p>Read Chapter 2: Conceptualizing Interstate Peace and Constituting the International System.</p>
Week 3 (Jan 21 & 23)	<p>The Evolution of Peace</p> <p>Exploration of peace trends and state relationships over time.</p> <p>Read Chapter 3: The Evolution of Peace 1900–2006.</p> <p>Additional Readings: Cha, Victor D. 2016. Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter 6.</p> <p>Marks, Sally. 2013. Mistakes and Myths: The Allies, Germany, and the Versailles</p>

Week 4 (Jan 28 & 30)	<p>Treaty, 1918–1921. <i>The Journal of Modern History</i> 85(3): 632–59.</p> <p>Territorial Issues and Peace</p> <p>Examination of how territorial disputes impact peace.</p> <p>Read Chapter 4: Territorial Issues and the Evolution of Peace.</p> <p>Additional Reading: Quackenbush, Stephen L. 2010. Territorial Issues and Recurrent Conflict. <i>Conflict Management and Peace Science</i> 27(3): 239–52.</p>
Week 5 (Feb 4 & 6)	<p>Development of Territorial Norms</p> <p>Focus on the norm against conquest and its historical development.</p> <p>Read Chapter 5: The Development of Territorial Norms and the Norm against Conquest.</p> <p>Additional Reading: Wright, Thorin M., and Paul F. Diehl. 2016. Unpacking Territorial Disputes: Domestic Political Influences and War. <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 60(4): 645–69.</p>
Week 6 (Feb 11 & 13)	<p>Territorial Change and Conflict Management</p>

Analysis of territorial norms and conflict resolution strategies.

Read Chapters 7 and 8 from *The Puzzle of Peace: When Territorial Change Happens: The Norm of Uti Possidetis and Managing Territorial Conflict and Promoting Peace: Mediation and Legally Binding Approaches*.
Additional Reading: Quackenbush, Stephen L., and Jerome F. Venteicher. 2008. *Settlements, Outcomes, and the Recurrence of Conflict*.

Week 7 (Feb 18 & 20)

Partition and its Impact (Part 1)

Read Yasmin Khan's *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, First Half.

Week 8 (Feb 25 & 27)

Partition and its Impact (Part 2)

Read Yasmin Khan's *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Second Half.

Week 9 (Mar 3–7)

Spring Break (No Classes)

Week 10 (Mar 11 & 13)

Versailles Simulation (Week 1)

Initial negotiations and committee meetings.

Role-specific preparation and discussions.

Week 11 (Mar 18 & 20)	<p>Versailles Simulation (Week 2)</p> <p>Policy debates and drafting agreements.</p> <p>Reflection on challenges in peacemaking.</p>
Week 12 (Mar 25 & 27)	<p>Versailles Simulation (Week 3)</p> <p>Final agreements and voting sessions.</p> <p>Group presentations.</p>
Week 13 (Apr 1 & 3)	<p>Versailles Simulation (Week 4)</p> <p>Reflection on the simulation and its connection to course themes.</p>
Week 14 (Apr 8 & 10)	<p>Post-Conflict Peace Durations</p> <p>Examination of factors affecting peace duration after conflict.</p> <p>Additional Readings: Senese, Paul D., and Stephen L. Quackenbush. 2003. Sowing the Seeds of Conflict: The Effect of Dispute Settlements on Durations of Peace. <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 65(3): 696–717.</p>
Week 15 (Apr 15 & 17)	<p>Deterrence and its Role in Peace</p> <p>Exploration of how deterrence mechanisms influence state behavior and conflict prevention.</p> <p>Case studies of successful and failed deterrence strategies.</p>

Week 16 (Apr 22 & 24)

Conclusions and Final Reflections

Synthesis of course concepts and discussion of the book's final arguments.

Read Chapter 10: Conclusions and Implications.

Read Afterwords: Some Speculations about the Causes of Peace.