

## **INTL 102: ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND INTERNATIONAL CHANGE: ANALYZING CURRENT SECURITY PROBLEMS**

University of California, San Diego  
School of Global Policy & Strategy  
Fall 2020, Online, Tues & Thurs 3:30-4:50  
Professor Barbara F. Walter

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### **Course Outline and Readings**

This is a course designed to teach you to analyze the behavior of key actors in the international system. The course is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the analytic tools students need to acquire in order to explain why individuals, organizations, and states behave the way they do and why they choose certain actions over others. These tools include an understanding of who the main decision makers are, the goals these players are trying to achieve, the information they have about each other, how this information shapes their behavior, and the way their strategic interactions produce certain predictable outcomes.

The second half of the course applies these tools to five major policy problems: the outbreak of interstate war, nuclear proliferation, unconventional violence and terrorism, civil wars, and democratization. Our goal is to explain why each of these events occurs, why these issues disproportionately affect certain countries and not others, and what can be done to resolve problems associated with these phenomena. We will also analyze ongoing cases to predict how the players involved are likely to behave in the future. The objective is not to become an expert on any particular historical event or topic, but to give students the skills needed to understand and analyze *any* international problem they may encounter, now and in the future.

### **Organization of the Course**

This is a large lecture *and* discussion course that deviates from traditional courses in the following way. Roughly half of the classes are designed around class discussion in the auditorium using the case method developed at Harvard Business School. Each of these discussions centers around a number of questions which the class will explore without, in the end, arriving at a “correct” answer. Class discussion will be worth 20% of your grade and you will be given three ways to participate (1) in-class students are encouraged to raise their hand in class so that they may be called on. (2) Online synchronous students are encouraged to participate by raising their hand using the Zoom “raise hand” function.(3) Online asynchronous students are encourage to participate via the discussion board on xxx. All students are expected to participate in their discussion sections which will be held online (synchronously and asynchronously). I will provide only very limited guidance to the discussion. If we both do our parts, the case method offers an exhilarating learning experience for all of us; for the most part, you will be teaching and learning from each other. At the end of each class, I will offer approximately 10 minutes of reflection on the specific case and how it relates to the broader themes of the course.

## Requirements

The grade for this course will be based on:

- class and discussion section participation (20%),
- 4 short papers, maximum 3 pages in length (10%, 20%, 20% and 20% respectively).
- Final paper, maximum 1 page (10%)

Class Participation: Successful class participation will require coming to class prepared (having read the assigned reading and prepared answers to the discussion questions), and active engagement in both class discussions and discussion section. One TA will act as a scribe to keep track of who speaks, the quality of a person's response, and to record absences.

Short Papers: Students are also required to write 4 papers, no longer than 3 double-spaced pages each. Paper should be 12 pt type, with one inch margins. Please make sure that your name and student number appear on the first page of the document, and that the pages are numbered.

You have the choice of topics on which to write your papers, with one caveat. You can choose 4 of the paper topics listed on the syllabus (they are the questions listed as "Discussion Questions – please answer all questions), but one topic must come from one of the topics listed between October 6th – October 15<sup>th</sup>, one from one of the topics listed between October 20th – November 3rd<sup>th</sup>, one from November 5th – November 19<sup>th</sup>, and the last from one of the topics listed between December 1st – December 8<sup>th</sup>. You will be given no additional credit for writing more than 4 short papers or for more than one paper written during each of the time periods.

An electronic copy of the paper must be submitted to Turnitin.com no later than 3:30 pm on the day it is due. **Papers submitted late (after 3:30 pm on the day due) will not be graded.**

You are free to use whatever outside sources are available to answer the short-paper questions. Note, there are good and bad sources of information on the internet. Some of the best sources for current international reporting are the major newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Guardian*. In addition, the *Economist* has excellent coverage on a wide range of countries and international events. For more in-depth analyses see *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, the *New Yorker*, and the *Atlantic*. You should be familiar with all of these sources and be reading extensively about a particular event before writing your memos.

Memos must follow all conventions of attribution and notation. Quotes and paraphrasing must be explicitly cited. Memos found to include plagiarized material will be given an automatic "zero" and no make-up paper will be allowed. The plagiarized paper will then be

reported to UCSD's Committee on Academic Integrity for whatever additional punishment the University would like to add.

**READINGS:** All of the readings are available either through the hyperlinks included on the syllabus below (accessed through your university internet account), or through Canvas.

**TEACHING ASSISTANTS:** We are fortunate to have four great T.A.'s for this class. They are: Marco Alcocer ([m2alcoce@ucsd.edu](mailto:m2alcoce@ucsd.edu)), Faith Conlin ([fconlin@ucsd.edu](mailto:fconlin@ucsd.edu)), Damin Curtis ([djcurtis@ucsd.edu](mailto:djcurtis@ucsd.edu)), and Wendy Wagner ([wwagner@ucsd.edu](mailto:wwagner@ucsd.edu)). Below is the schedule for the discussion sections. Please contact them directly for their office hours.

Section ID	Type	Section	Day	Time	Building	Room	Email	Section Assignments			
14360	DI	A01	M	9:00a-9:50a	PCYNH	109	<a href="mailto:m2alcoce@ucsd.edu">m2alcoce@ucsd.edu</a>	Marco			
14361	DI	A02	M	10:00a-10:50a	PCYNH	109		Marco			
14362	DI	A03	M	11:00a-11:50a	PCYNH	109	<a href="mailto:fconlin@ucsd.edu">fconlin@ucsd.edu</a>		Faith		
14363	DI	A04	M	12:00p-12:50p	PCYNH	106			Faith		
14364	DI	A05	W	9:00a-9:50a	PCYNH	109	<a href="mailto:djcurtis@ucsd.edu">djcurtis@ucsd.edu</a>			Damin	
14365	DI	A06	W	10:00a-10:50a	PCYNH	109				Damin	
14366	DI	A07	W	11:00a-11:50a	PCYNH	109	<a href="mailto:wwagner@ucsd.edu">wwagner@ucsd.edu</a>				Wendy
14367	DI	A08	W	12:00p-12:50p	CENTR	115					Wendy

**DISCUSSION SECTIONS:** The discussion sections are mandatory and will all be held in person and online (synchronously and asynchronously). They serve to provide a smaller forum for students to discuss and review course material (e.g., lectures, readings). Students can share insights, raise questions, and discuss ideas in smaller groups with their classmates. This will give students added time to develop their own perspective, and to reinforce the main themes and theories of the course. Your participation in discussion section is mandatory and will count toward your overall participation grade.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

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### ANALYTIC TOOLS

#### **Thursday October 1: Introduction**

##### Required Reading:

- 10 Tips for Writing an Essay
- Good Writing in Political Science
- Write Like a Mad Man or Woman
- Powerpoint Slide on Writing Tips

#### **Tuesday October 6: Al Qaida's Attack Against the United States, September 11, 2001**

*Baseline Case to Analyze: Why did Al Qa'ida attack the United States in 2001?*

Case Study: [The 9/11 Commission Report](#). Pages 1-14, and 47-70.

##### Discussion Questions (Please answer all questions if you are writing a memo):

1. On September 11, 2001, nineteen members of al Qa'ida carried out a coordinated attack on New York City and Washington D.C. Why did AQ target the U.S. with attacks?
2. What did AQ hope to achieve?
3. Why did they launch it in September 2001 as opposed to another time?
4. Was the attack successful? Of so, why? If not, why not?

#### **Thursday October 8: Introduction to Game Theory**

*How does game theory help us analyze the behavior of different actors in the international system? What recent international event (or decision by a state leader) have you found puzzling and would like to see analyzed in class using game theory?*

John McMillan. [Games, Strategies, and Managers: How Managers Can Use Game Theory to Make Better Business Decisions](#). pp 1-41. Posted on Canvas.

Discussion question:

“Based on game theory’s definition of ‘rational,’  
President Trump is a highly rational individual.”

Please explain this statement to someone who knows nothing about game theory.  
Make sure you include a discussion of what Trump is seeking to maximize and how  
his behavior helps him maximize this objective.

**Tuesday October 13:           Actors and Their Preferences**

*Who are the main actors in international affairs? How do you, the analyst, determine what  
their interests (i.e., preferences) are?*

Joseph S. Nye Jr. “[Why the Gulf War Served the National Interest](#),” The Atlantic.  
July 1991.

Helen Milner, Interests, Institutions and Information: Domestic Politics and  
International Relations. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1997), pp. 9-23, pp. 33-  
46 and 60-65. To be posted on Canvas.

**Thursday October 15: Preferences, continued**

Charles Waugh, “[The Politics and Culture of Climate Change: US Actors and Global  
Implications](#),” 2011.

Cary Funk and Meg Hefferon, “[U.S. Public Views on Climate and Energy](#),” Science &  
Society. November 25, 2019.

Case. Why do Democrats and Republicans Disagree about Climate Change

Discussion Questions:

1. The vast majority of scientists in the United States agree that climate change is the biggest security threat to the United States, much more so than any other issue. If this is true, why do Democrats and Republicans disagree so much on its cause and how to address it?
2. Under what conditions are Republicans likely to change their view?

## **Tuesday October 20: Why do Actors Pick Certain Strategies and Not Others?**

*The strategy a player chooses to pursue depends on the player's (a) capabilities/resolve and (b) the information she has at her disposal.*

Azhar Ahmad, "[Concept of National Power](#)," *Strategic Studies*, Summer/Autumn 2012.

Case: Evan Osnos, "Making China Great Again," [The New Yorker](#), January 8, 2018.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Identify and analyze two reasons why Trump might be de-emphasizing the use of U.S. soft power around the world.
2. Identify and analyze two reasons why President Xi might be increasingly investing in Chinese soft power around the world.

## **Thursday October 22: Why do States Pursue Some Strategies and Not Others? (Case Application)**

Case: Ned Lebow, [The Cuban Missile Crisis](#), CIAO Case Study.

### Discussion Questions:

Some of President Kennedy's advisors suggested he launch a targeted military strike against Cuba in order to eliminate Russia's nuclear missiles. Ultimately, he chose a different strategy. What strategy did Kennedy choose and why did he prefer this strategy to a military strike? (Hint: assume that Kennedy, like all politicians, wanted to be re-elected.)

## **Tuesday October 27: The Importance of Information and Signaling (Theory)**

John McMillan, "Gaining Bargaining Power," and "Using Information Strategically" in [Games, Strategies and Managers](#). pp. 59 -75. To be posted on Canvas.

Case: The Cuban Missile Crisis, continued.

### Discussion Questions:

Games have uncertainty, pieces of information that players do not know about each other. What are all the ways in which President Kennedy and Khrushchev were uncertain about each other's motivations? Actions at their disposal? Resolve? And the costs and benefits they would receive from each of the possible outcomes?

## **Thursday October 29: The Importance of Information and Signaling (Application)**

### **Case: The 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis.**

Case: Richard L. Russell, [The 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis](#): The United States and China at the Precipice of War?

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What motivated Taiwan's President Lee to make such a provocative speech at Cornell?
2. Why were the three players able to avoid war over this issue?
3. Do you think the Taiwanese President would ever precipitate such a crisis today (i.e., travelling to the U.S. to make such a provocative speech, or anything to get the Chinese government's ire)? If so, why? If not, why not?

## **ANALYZING CURRENT PROBLEMS**

### **Tuesday November 3: The Breakdown of Bargaining = War**

#### **Information Problems and the Outbreak of War (Theory)**

James D. Fearon. "[Rationalist Explanations for War](#)," International Organization. 49, No. 3 (1995): pp. 379-414.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What effect, if any, do you think new information and communication technology (especially surveillance technology) is likely to have on information problems? Be as specific as possible about the type of technology you think will have an effect and why.

### **Thursday November 5: Information Problems and the Outbreak of War (Application)**

*Why did the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War occur, and to what degree did information problems play a role?*

#### **Case: The First Gulf War**

Case: Steven Yetiv, [The Persian Gulf Crisis](#). (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), Chapters 1-4. Posted on Canvas.

Discussion Questions:

Many people have argued that Saddam Hussein could have been deterred from invading Kuwait had President George H. W. Bush more clearly communicated his willingness to go to war if this happened. War, in essence, was the result of an information failure between the two leaders.

If you agree with this argument, what could President Bush have done to better signal his intent to go to war if Saddam Hussein invaded? Why didn't he do this? Please support your argument with available evidence.

If you do not agree with this argument, why would Saddam Hussein choose to put himself in a situation where he would have to fight a war against a much stronger opponent (the United States)? If your argument is that Hussein believed he would win the war, please explain why Hussein miscalculated his chances? What information would he have needed to correctly assess the outcome of the war, and why didn't he have this information? Is there anything President Bush could have done to provide it? Please support your argument with available evidence.

**Tuesday November 10: Commitment Problems and the Outbreak of War.**

*Why did the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf War occur, and why were Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush not able to reach a settlement?*

Robert Powell, "[War as a Commitment Problem](#)," International Organization. (Winter 2006) pp. 169-204.

Case: Kenneth M. Pollack, "[Next Stop Baghdad](#)," Foreign Affairs. March/April 2002.

Discussion Questions:

A number of people have argued that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf war was the result of a commitment problem, possibly on both sides. Lay out all the reasons you can think of why Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush may not have been able to reach an agreement short of war, and then offer at least one criticism about why this explanation may not be sufficient to explain why war broke out. If a lack of credible commitments is unable to fully explain why war broke out in 2003, why do you think the war happened?

**Thursday November 12: Nuclear Proliferation (Theory)**

*Why do states seek nuclear weapons? And can states cooperate to contain the spread of nuclear weapons?*

Kyle Beardsley and Victor Asal, "[Winning with the Bomb](#)". Journal of Conflict Resolution. Vol. 53, no. 2 pp. 278-301.

Case: Iran. "[Everything You Want to Know About the Iran Nuclear Deal.](#)" The Economist, April 5, 2015.

Discussion Questions:

1. On July 14, 2015 President Obama (along with the leaders of China, France, Russia, the UK and Germany) signed an agreement with Iran on the future of Iran's nuclear program. What were the terms of the deal?
2. Why did the United States and Iran both agree to sign the deal?
3. On May 8, 2018, President Trump withdrew from the agreement despite the fact that a majority Americans (according to a CNN poll) said the U.S. should remain. Trump has described the deal as "disaster," "the worst deal ever," and so "terrible" that it could lead to "a nuclear holocaust." How do you explain Trump's decision to reject the deal? How do you think the Iranian government is likely to respond and why? Is the United States safer or less safe as a result? Why do you think this is the case?

**Tuesday November 17: Nuclear Proliferation (Application)**

**Case: North Korea.**

Case: Evan Osnos, "[The Risk of Nuclear War with North Korea,](#)" The New Yorker, September 18, 2017.

Discussion Questions:

1. President Trump has vowed to put an end to North Korea's nuclear program. What strategies does he have at his disposal to achieve this objective? What strategy has he chosen to pursue and why do you think he has chosen this strategy versus other potential strategies?
2. How likely do you believe this strategy is to work (i.e., convince Kim Jong Un to end North Korea's nuclear program?) If you think it is likely to work, please explain how. If you think it is likely to fail, please explain why Trump has chosen such a strategy.

**Thursday November 19: What We Know About Terrorism**

*Terrorism has become increasingly popular over the last twenty five years. Why has this particular form of violence emerged, and why now?*

Robert Pape, [Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism](#). (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 3-76. Posted on Canvas.

Film: The Battle of Algiers

Discussion Questions: If you are writing the paper, please answer only questions 4-6.

1. What was the FLN fighting for?
2. How did they recruit?
3. Who were the early recruits and why did they join?
4. The tactics the FLN pursued changed over time. In what way did they change and why?
5. There's a struggle over information in the film. What information is the FLN seeking to signal?
6. The French won the battle over Algiers, but lost the war. Why did they lose the war?
7. The Pentagon screened this movie in the summer of 2003. What lessons do you think those who watched it learned from it?

**Tuesday November 24: No Class.**

**Thursday November 26: No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Tuesday December 1: How Terrorism Is Designed to Work and How to Counter It**

Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, "[The Strategies of Terrorism](#)," [International Security](#) (Summer 2006) pp. 49-80.

Case: Mexico

Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, "[Mexico's Record Violence is a Crisis 20 Years in the Making](#)," [The New York Times](#), October 28, 2017.

Discussion Questions:

Some people have argued that violence perpetrated by drug cartels in Mexico is a form of intimidation. Assuming this is true, lay out the logic by which violence by drug lords is designed to achieve the goals these leaders are seeking. Assuming this argument is false, give an alternate explanation for why violence is being used.

### **Thursday December 3: Explaining Civil Wars**

*What makes a country prone to civil war?*

James Fearon and David Laitin, Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War, [American Political Science Review](#), February 2003.

Case: Barbara F. Walter, "[The New, New Civil Wars](#)", Annual Review, 2017.

#### Discussion Questions:

Since the early 2000's, almost all new civil wars have occurred in Muslim majority countries. Given existing theories and evidence for why civil wars break out in some countries and not others, why do you believe Muslim countries have been disproportionately affected by civil wars recently?

### **Thursday December 8: Why Do Democracies Not Fight Each Other and Why Are Transitions to Democracy So Violence-Prone?**

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et.al. "[An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace](#)," [American Political Science Review](#). Vol. 93, No. 4 (December 1999).

#### Discussion Questions:

Duncan Hunter, indicted ex-Congressman from San Diego, argued last year that the United States should launch a preemptive military attack against North Korea. Given what you know about democracies and the conditions under which they are willing to start a war, how likely do you think it is that Donald Trump will follow Hunter's advice? (Hint: in order to answer this well you need to explain what the likely repercussion to the U.S. would be for a preemptive strike, how this would affect President Trump's ability to get re-elected in 2020, and to what degree Trump was likely influenced by this.)

### **Thursday December 10: What Have We Learned?**

Final case analysis and assignment questions: TBD.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN WITH THIS!