

The University of California – San Diego: Department of Political Science

Crisis Areas in World Politics – 142P

Summer Session 1 (2020)

Instructor	Dr Graham Timmins
E-Mail	grtimmins@ucsd.edu
Lectures	Mondays and Wednesdays (11.00-12.00)
Webinars	Mondays and Wednesdays - Group A (12.00-13.00) and Group B (13.00-14.00)
Location	Online

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War in 1990 and the demise of the bipolar confrontation between the US and USSR offered the vision of a new era of peace and stability in the world. Driven by the western ideas of political liberalism and the free market, the international community would develop cooperation and agency through strong and effective multilateral institutions, and by utilising international law would reduce if not remove the key ideological, cultural and socio-economic sources of international conflict. The situation in 2020 to the contrary reflects the development of a complex series of regional conflicts in the world. Understanding the nature of these conflicts and the agendas of the actors involved in them are critical in our attempts to and resolve these conflicts.

- A critical appreciation of the causes and modalities of conflict in the contemporary world and attempts to prevent, manage and resolve international crisis.
- An overview of several crisis areas in the contemporary world and a critical appreciation of the dynamics of these conflicts and the actors involved.

Delivery Method

I will deliver a one-hour online lecture at the beginning of each session i.e. during 11.00-12.00. This will be followed by a one-hour webinar and you will be placed in either Group A during 12.00-13.00 or Group B during 13.00-14.00. There will be 10 sessions in total.

Date	Class Information	
Mon 29 Jun	Session 1 Discussion	Introduction – The Post-Cold War World and Conflict What impact has the end of the Cold War had on the nature and dynamics of conflict?
Wed 01 Jul	Session 2 Discussion	Causes and Dynamics of Conflict Why in the 21 st century do humans and the states they inhabit still fight and kill each other?
Mon 06 Jul	Session 3	Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management

	Discussion	Why when we understand so much about the causes and dynamics of conflict, do we still fail to prevent it from happening?
Wed 08 Jul	Session 4 Discussion	Conflict Intervention and Resolution Is it ever right for a state or states to intervene in the sovereign affairs of another state?
Mon 13 Jul	Session 5 Discussion	The US and the New World Order (The Middle East) To what extent is conflict in the Middle East a consequence of the misuse of US hegemonic power?
Wed 15 Jul	Session 6 Discussion	The Rising Powers and Multipolarity (The South China Seas) How far does Chinese action in the South China Sea represent the rise of a new non-western global multipolar order?
Mon 20 Jul	Session 7 Discussion	The Rising Powers and Multipolarity (The Kashmir Conflict) How dangerous is the Kashmir conflict in terms of rising power relations in Asia?
Wed 22 Jul	Session 8 Discussion	The United Nations (Central Africa) How effective has the United Nations been in addressing conflict and instability in Africa since the end of the Cold War?
Mon 27 Jul	Session 9 Discussion	The European Union (The Shared EU-Russia Neighbourhood) To what extent has the European Union been able to project peace and stability in its eastern neighbourhood?
Wed 29 Jul	Session 10 Discussion	Conclusions - Future Prospects and Scenarios How safe is the world today, and what actions either by individual states or the international community would make it safer?

Course Assessment

Performance on the course is assessed through discussion comments, each comprising approximately 1000 words. You will be required to submit four comments in total. The deadlines are:

- Comment 1 on Discussion 3 or 4 – Friday 10 July 2020
- Comment 2 on Discussion 5 or 6 – Friday 17 July 2020
- Comment 3 on Discussion 7 or 8 – Friday 24 July 2020
- Comment 4 on Discussion 9 or 10 – Friday 31 July 2020

Comments will be submitted through Canvas and no extensions will be granted except in exceptional circumstances. The three highest marked comments will contribute to your final grade. I do not use a grade curve. So if every student deserves A+, that's what every student will receive. In broad terms, this is what I expect to see for each band.

- A Excellent in terms of analytical focus, critical engagement and the balance of analysis, the range of materials used, and the style of writing and presentation.
- B Good but not excellent. The difference between good and excellent is typically the level of focus and critical reflection i.e. showing deep awareness and understanding of the different sides to a discussion, evidence of reading and appropriate use of materials, in particular primary sources, a well-polished style of academic writing with correct use of grammar and punctuation together with full and correct references for attributed materials.

- C Generally satisfactory in terms of the above but with some significant weaknesses in either some or all areas.
- D Generally poor in terms of the above with some areas not meeting minimum standards.
- F Does not meet minimum standards.

Expectations and Advice

If you can accept that there are no short cuts to the acquisition of knowledge, you will already be on the way to obtaining a good grade for this course. Follow the advice below too. Your grades will improve if you do.

- Attend class, do the reading and think. Does what you are being told and what you are reading make sense and do you agree?
- Remember you are operating in a protected intellectual space, and what is expected is robust but courteous academic exchange at all times.
- Do additional reading from a range of sources when preparing the class comments, including the use of primary source materials. Ensure you provide full and accurate references for all sources of information you use, but keep to a minimum.
- When writing your class comments, concentrate on explaining rather than describing events and issues. And remember, although your opinions are of interest I would prefer to find out what you have learned.
- Use an academic style of writing. This is an exercise in intellectual discourse and communication, and stylistic conventions apply. Spell check your work and do your best to ensure grammatical accuracy.

General Learning Resources

There is no textbook for this course. I will however provide recommended reading and other materials for each class via the Canvas website. For those of you who are interested, I would suggest making use of the following publications as they provide a useful general overview on Security Studies and current conflict zones:

- Security Studies: An Introduction, Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, London: Routledge, 2018.
- The World in Conflict: Understanding the world's troublespots, John Andrews, London: Economist Books, 2020.

Academic Support

Should you require academic support, please contact me by email and I will respond as soon as possible. I am happy too to make time available for individual Zoom consultations where there is a need. Please remember though I am in the UK and there is a significant time difference, and keep in mind that I am a visiting lecturer and will not always be aware of the specific rules and regulations in operation at UCSD. There may therefore be situations where it would be more appropriate to contact Natalie Ikker, the Undergraduate Student Affairs Advisor.

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu/>). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department **well in advance** of any exams or assignments. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Joanna Peralta; please connect her via the [Virtual Advising Center](#) as soon as possible.

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