

## PLSC 486E: Commerce and Conflict

Fall 2018

Downtown Center 228

Mondays 1:40-4:40pm

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Office hours: Tue & Thu 2-3:30pm  
and by appointment

### Course Description

Commerce and conflict consume an overwhelming amount of human attention, drive technological innovation, and shape (and then reshape) both individual societies and international relations. This senior seminar will focus on four broad topics: imperialism, the so-called commercial peace, the role of natural resources in civil conflict, and the use of commerce as a means of influence in international diplomacy. We will approach these topics through classical writing on trade, through contemporary empirical research in political science and economics, and finally through several focused case studies, both historical and current.

A second focus of the seminar is the sharpening of students' skills in evaluating and conducting empirical research in political science. Part of each seminar will be devoted to deriving novel theoretical arguments and hypotheses from the assigned readings and to discussions about concept operationalization and measurement. Most importantly, students will have the opportunity to develop, and receive feedback on, an original research design.

There are no formal prerequisites for this course.

### Course Materials

The following books are required for this course. It is available for purchase at the Binghamton University bookstore but you may purchase it from other sources, provided you buy the correct edition.

Hobson, J. A. 1965 [1902]. *Imperialism: A Study*. [choose any edition]

Easterly, W. 2006. *White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Powner, L. C. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing. A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Additional materials will include excerpts from edited volumes, scholarly articles, and media reports. They will be available through the Binghamton University library (e.g., JSTOR) or on the course website on MyCourses. In the syllabus, the latter are marked as [MC].

### Course Requirements

Successful participation in this course requires regular and active participation in class, reading quizzes, a 12-15-page research paper, and a peer review. For purposes of assigning a final grade, the following weighting factors will be applied:

Research paper	40%
Participation	25%
Reading quizzes	20%
Peer review	15%

Grading Scale. Your semester grade for the course will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows:

95-100	A	84-87	B	74-77	C	64-69	F
91-94	A-	81-83	B-	71-73	C-	60-63	F-
88-90	B+	78-80	C+	65-70	D	55-59	F

**Research design (40%).** Each student will produce a 12 to 15-page paper (exclusive of endnotes and bibliography) investigating an original research question of his/her choice related to the link between international commerce and (interstate/civil) conflict. The paper should (1) formulate a research question, (2) outline a possible answer to the question in the form of a theoretical argument, (3) derive testable hypotheses from the theoretical argument, and (4) discuss in detail one or more possible strategies for testing these hypotheses.

Detailed instructions for the research paper assignment as well as an opening discussion of principles of empirical research will be provided during the second meeting on **September 5, 2018**.

**Participation (25%).** Participating in class discussions by asking questions, answering questions, and offering opinions is one of your responsibilities as a student in this course. It is a major component of the course grade. Your participation grade will be based both on your attendance and the quality of your contribution to discussion. Active and productive discussion in class requires that students complete the readings listed for each day on the syllabus before class begins. Be advised that class discussions are designed to clarify the material and its implications, not to introduce it. Attendance is no substitute for completing the readings. If you are unsure how you are doing in the course, I encourage you to come see me in office hours at any point during the semester.

**Reading quizzes (20%).** There will be at least six quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will not be announced in advance. They will be designed to test knowledge of the assigned readings for each week. Given that completing the assigned readings is a minimum requirement for performing well in this seminar, students should consider these quizzes a ready opportunity for improving their overall grade.

**Peer review (15%).** Each student will produce a short 3 to 5-page anonymous review of a research design written by a fellow seminar participant. The reviews should assess the clarity of the research question and hypotheses, as well as the appropriateness of the empirical design. The basis for this peer review will be our discussions of social science research practice throughout the semester and relevant assigned readings (most importantly the Powner book).

Detailed instructions for the peer review will be provided during the last meeting on **December 3**. The reviews will be due on the scheduled final exam date for the seminar [TBA].

## Course Policies

**Classroom electronics.** I reserve the right to withdraw permission to use laptops and tablets if their presence undermines participation in the seminar. When this occurs, these devices will be banned for everyone for the remainder of the semester. Smartphones are not permitted at any time. Exceptions will be made for students with documented special needs.

**Attendance, missed quizzes, and late papers.** Students are expected to attend every class meeting. You are responsible for all readings and materials covered, as well as all any announcements made in class. Missed quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstance. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz grade (for example, a zero because you missed the quiz). All due dates are strictly enforced; research papers submitted after the due date will incur a penalty of one letter grade per day (or part of the day) late. **Plan accordingly, including any holiday travel.**

**Grade appeals.** All grade appeals must be made in writing. If you believe that I grade I have assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief note detailing your concerns and submit it to me along with the original graded assignment. I will review the materials and respond to you in writing.

**Academic dishonesty and plagiarism.** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work submitted in this course must be original work. Sources must be properly cited. You may use any citation style of your choice, as long as it is used consistently throughout the paper. You may not give or receive any unauthorized assistance during exams, quizzes, or assignments. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for possible further disciplinary measures. You can find out more about the Honesty Code on the MyCourses site for this class.

**Classroom civility.** In order to create a productive learning environment in our classroom, you will be asked to observe a few simple rules of behavior:

- Be on time.
- Be prepared for class.
- Turn off your cell phone/smartphone/etc.

Students are strongly encouraged to contribute opinions and observations in ways that invite discussion. Please keep in mind that students in our classroom will have divergent perspectives, unique life experiences, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully. Just as importantly, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking. If at any time you are offended by something that is said in class, please come speak to me.

**Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD).** Students requiring particular accommodations for participation in this course must contact the Binghamton University office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), located in the University Union, Room 119. (Phone: 607-777-2686, email: [ssd@binghamton.edu](mailto:ssd@binghamton.edu)). Students are strongly encouraged to register with SSD and obtain the necessary documentation by the Drop/Add date, September 5.

**A Note on Stress and other challenges.** Binghamton University has available a wide range of resources for students who may be experiencing undue stress and other challenges in connection with this class or the college experience (or anything else, really). Please come talk to me and/or see the Announcements section of the MyCourses page for an overview of how we may try to help, as well as relevant contact information.

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### SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS

I reserve the right to add/change readings.

Any changes will be announced at least one week in advance through MyCourses.

#### Week 1 (August 27) Introduction

- Syllabus

#### Week 2 (Wednesday, September 5) Mercantilism, Liberalism, and Influence

- Pew Research Center Quiz [MC]
- Hirschman, A. O. 1945. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters I, II (through page 40, skim rest), and IV. [MC]

#### Social Science Research: Basics

- Powner, L. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Chapters 1 & 2.

**\*\*September 5: Drop/Add deadline (11:59pm)\*\***

### **Week 3 (September 17) Imperialism I**

- Hobson, J. A. 1965 [1902]. *Imperialism: A Study*. Part I, Part II Chapters 1, 3, and 7.

### **Week 4 (September 24) Imperialism II**

- Kautsky, K. 1914. Ultraimperialism. *Die Neue Zeit*, September 11, 1914. [MC]
- Lenin, V. I. 1975 [1916]. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. In: *The Lenin Anthology*, edited by R. C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton. p. 204-74. [MC]

#### **Social Science Research: Research Design**

- Powner, L. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Chapters 3 (pp. 55-68, skim rest) & 4.

### **Week 5 (October 1) Natural Resources & Global Competition**

- Yergin, D. 1991. *The Prize*. Chapters 16-19 (War and Strategy). [MC]

### **Week 6 (October 8) Natural Resources & Civil War**

- Collier, P., and A. Hoeffler. 2004. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563-95.
- Le Billon, P. 2001. The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflict. *Political Geography* 20: 561-84.

#### **Social Science Research: Research Design, cont'd**

- Powner, L. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Chapters 5-8.

### **Week 7 (October 15) A Commercial Peace?**

- Barbieri, K. 1996. Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict? *Journal of Peace Research* 33: 29-49.
- McDonald, P. J. 2004. Peace through Trade or Free Trade? *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(4): 547- 72.
- Kleinberg, K., and B. Fordham. 2010. Trade and Foreign Policy Attitudes. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 54(4): 687-714.

### **Week 8 (October 22) Economic and Security Cooperation**

- Long, A. G. 2003. Defense Pacts and International Trade. *Journal of Peace Research* 40(5): 537-52.
- Fordham, B. O. 2010. Trade and Asymmetric Alliances. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(6): 685-96.
- Spilker, G. T. Bernauer, and V. Umaña. 2016. Selecting Partner Countries for Preferential Trade Agreements: Experimental Evidence from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Vietnam. *International Studies Quarterly* 60(4): 706-18.

### **Week 9 (October 29) Trade Routes**

- Mahan, A. T. 1890. The United States Looking Outward. *The Atlantic*, December.
- Blunden, M. 2012. Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route. *International Affairs* 88(1): 115-29.
- Briefing: China has a Vastly Ambitious Plan to Connect the World. *The Economist*, July 26, 2018.
- The UAE is Scrambling to Control Ports in Africa. *The Economist*, July 19, 2018.

**\*\*October 30: Course Withdrawal/Grade Option Change deadline 4:30pm\*\***

### **Week 10 (November 5) Financing Conflict**

- Knorr, K. 1977. Military Strength: Economic and Non-Economic Bases. In: *Economic Issues and National Security*, edited by K. Knorr and F. N. Trager. p. 183-199. [MC]

*Reading list continues on next page!*

- Fores-Macías, G., and S. E. Kreps. Political Parties at War: A Study of American War Finance, 1789-2010. *American Political Science Review* 107(4): 833-48.
- Shea, P. E. 2014. Financing Victory: Sovereign Credit, Democracy, and War. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(5): 771-95.

**Social Science Research: Editing & Peer Review**

- Powner, L. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Chapters 9 (pp. 209-210 only) & 10.

**Week 11 (November 12) Economic Sanctions I**

- Galtung, J. 1967. On the Effects of International Economic Sanctions: With Examples from the Case of Rhodesia. *World Politics* 19(3): 378-416.
- Drezner, D. W. 2003. The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion. *International Organization* 57(3): 643-59.
- Major, S., and A. J. McGann. 2005. Innocent Bystanders. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(3): 337- 59.

**Week 12 (November 19) Economic Sanctions II: The Case of Iran**

- Laub, Zachary. 2015. Backgrounder: International Sanctions on Iran. *Council on Foreign Relations*. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/international-sanctions-iran>
- CFR.org Editors. 2018. The Return of U.S. Sanctions on Iran: What to Know. *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 6, 2018. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/article/return-us-sanctions-iran-what-know>
- Additional reading: TBA

**\*\*November 20: Research design due 8pm\*\***

**Week 13 (November 26) Economic Development**

- Easterly, W. 2006. White Man's Burden: *Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York, NY: Penguin. Chapters 1-6, 8 & 9.

**Week 14 (December 3) Looking Forward, Looking Back**

- Kaplan, R. 1994. The Coming Anarchy. *The Atlantic*, February Issue.

**\*\*December TBA: Peer review due 5pm\*\*\***