

## **PLSC 486E: Commerce and Conflict**

### **Fall 2021**

TR 1:15pm-2:40pm in Classroom Wing 310

Instructor: Prof. Katja Kleinberg  
Email: kkleinbe@binghamton.edu

Office hours: W 2-3:30pm & F 10-11:30am  
via ZOOM

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE**

This course is an advanced undergraduate seminar designed for students who are interested in the relationships between international commerce and international conflict. Political scientists, economists, and policy practitioners frequently assert that (freer) cross-border flows of goods and capital will have a pacifying effect on interstate relations. Over the course of the semester, we will explore this idea in detail, critically assess its merits as a social-scientific explanation for ‘the long peace’ (from 1945-present), as well as consider several challenges to its basic tenets. We will focus on five broad topics: the so-called commercial peace, imperialism, economic coercion, resource conflict, and economic nationalism. We will approach these topics through classical writing on trade, through contemporary empirical research in political science and economics, and finally through 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 week will be devoted to deriving novel theoretical arguments and hypotheses from the assigned readings and to discussions about concept operationalization and measurement. Over the course of the semester, students will have the opportunity to develop, and receive feedback on, an original research design. As critical and constructive engagement with the work and ideas of others is central to the scientific process, each student will also produce a peer review of a research design generated by a fellow seminar participant.

By the end of the semester, students will have acquired (1) an overview of major approaches in political science to the problem of political conflict under conditions of economic interdependence, (2) a theoretical overview of and practice in the process of social-scientific research in political science, (3) an opportunity to generate and discuss original research ideas, and (4) the ability to analyze and critically assess the fit between theory, hypotheses, and research design in their own work and that of other scholars.

This course helps to fulfill the requirement for 10 PLSC courses, 6 upper-level courses (300- or 400-level), and 2 senior seminars (400-level) for political science majors. This course also fulfills N (Social Science) and W (Writing - Harpur) General Education requirements.

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that in addition to the scheduled discussions, students are expected to do at least 9.5 hours of course-related work each week during the semester. This includes things like completing assigned readings, preparing written assignments, responding to discussion board prompts, and other tasks that must be completed to earn credit.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

The following books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at the Binghamton University bookstore or through the library, 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]

Colgan, Jeff D. 2013. *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War*. Cambridge University Press. [available online through BU library]

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 Brightspace. In the syllabus, the latter are marked as [B].

## HOW TO GET & STAY IN TOUCH

**General communication.** Messages about the course, changes to the syllabus or deadlines etc. will be communicated through Brightspace 'Announcements' and your university email address. Make sure to check that email account and the Brightspace site daily.

**Email.** My email address is [kkleinbe@binghamton.edu](mailto:kkleinbe@binghamton.edu). I will respond to email during business hours (Monday through Friday 8am-6pm) and as soon as I can but you should expect answers to take up to 24 hours even during business hours.

**Office hours.** These will be virtual (via Zoom) W 2-3:30pm & F 10-11:30am **by appointment**. Email me to set up a time to talk. There will be a permanent Zoom link under the 'Announcements' tab on the Brightspace page. If the regular office hours do not fit your schedule, if you prefer not to use Zoom, or if you would like to discuss something that might take a bit longer to work out, you can email me to set up a separate appointment.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Binghamton University follows the recommendations of public health experts to protect the health of students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. Safeguarding public health depends on each of us strictly following requirements as they are instituted and for as long as they remain in force. Classroom safety requirements will continue to be based on guidance from public health authorities and will be uniformly applied across campus. If these requirements change, a campus-wide announcement will be made to inform the University.

The following health and safety standards will be enforced:

- Current rules require everyone to wear a face covering that **completely covers both the nose and mouth** while indoors. This applies to our classrooms. A face shield is not an acceptable substitute.
- Eating and drinking will NOT be permitted during class. If you need to eat or drink during class (for example for medical reasons), you will need to leave the classroom (but you may return afterwards). Plan accordingly.
- If you forget your face covering or it does not meet the requirements stated above, you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. You may not return until you meet the requirement. If you miss a discussion because you forgot your face covering and cannot return with one in time, you will receive a grade of zero for this discussion.
- If a student does not comply with the requirements or the instructor's direction, the instructor will immediately cancel the remainder of the class session and inform the dean's office, which will work

with the Student Records office to **issue a failing grade (“F”) for the course** regardless of when in the semester the incident occurs. The dean’s office will also inform the Office of Student Conduct.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 or develop symptom of illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, your top priorities should be getting medical treatment and avoiding further spread of the virus.

- Do NOT come to class if you feel ill. This applies even if you do not suspect Covid-19. If you feel unwell, stay home. Safety first (yours and others’)!
- Seek medical help RIGHT AWAY – an evaluation by medical staff can clarify what the problem is and what treatments can help you. If you are on campus, call the Student Health Service for instructions at 607-777-2221.
- As soon as you are able, let me know about your situation. I will take steps to help you make up the work you miss. I will do the same for other personal and family emergencies that may arise this semester.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Successful participation in this course requires regular and active participation in class, discussion board posts, a 12-15 page research design, and a peer review of another student’s research design. For purposes of assigning a final grade, the following weighting factors will be applied:

Discussion board posts	25%
Class discussions	30%
Research paper	30%
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		
91-94 A-	81-83 B-	71-73 C-		
88-90 B+	78-80 C+	65-70 D	0-64 F	

**Discussion Board (25%).** For each week’s first in-class discussion, there will be a Brightspace discussion board devoted to that week’s readings. I will post several discussion questions on this board to get us started. Each student should post an answer to at least one of these questions. In addition, you will be able to post your own questions and/or respond to (or elaborate on) other students’ questions. Your answers to the initial discussion questions for each week will be due on **Monday by 8pm.**

**Class Discussions (30%).** Learning in this course will take place primarily through discussions of assigned readings. Your **active** participation is essential to making this work, which includes asking questions as well as answering them. This means that you need to finish the assigned readings **before our class meetings** and come prepared to talk about them.

**Research Paper (30%).** Each student will produce a 12 to 15-page paper (double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography). The paper will be a **research design**, outlining an original research question of the student's choice related to the link between international commerce and (interstate or 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 using quantitative or qualitative research methods. Detailed instructions for the research paper assignment as well as an opening discussion of principles of empirical research will be provided during the second week of classes (August 31 & September 2). The paper will be due **November 23 at 8pm** via Brightspace/Turnitin.

**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 week of classes (December 7 & 9). The reviews will be due on the scheduled final exam date for the seminar [**TBA**].

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES**

**Missed classes, assignments, or deadlines.** In order to accommodate any classes or assignments you might miss due to religious observance, personal emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances, the following rules apply:

You may miss TWO discussion meetings without penalty.

You may miss TWO discussion question responses without penalty.

At the end of the semester, if you have completed more than the required number of any of these, I will drop the lowest of your grade(s) for each. ***Plan accordingly!*** And see the comments on extraordinary circumstances ('Dealing with...') below.

**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 letter 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. You may not give or receive any unauthorized assistance for assignments or exams. ***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 in the University Bulletin (click on Academic Policies and Procedures - All Students): <https://www.binghamton.edu:8443/exist/rest/bulletin/2021-2022/index.html>

**Students with Additional Needs.** Athletes who expect to miss classes are required to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester as well as in advance of classes and/or assignments that need to be rescheduled. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides a wide range of assistance to enrolled students with physical, learning or other disabilities. If you have a disability

and need classroom accommodations, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities: 607-777-2686 (voice/TTY).

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

- Be on time (for discussion posts and live discussions).
- Be respectful and courteous.
- Disagree (or agree) with arguments, not people.
- **Before you type something, consider whether you would say it to another student's face.**

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 the context of our class, please let me know.

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### **A Note on Dealing With *\*EVERYTHING – AGAIN/STILL\****

As we are working on a return to effective in-person instruction, we all know that things are still not “normal.” All of us are dealing with additional stress and anxiety. **You are not alone.** You don’t have to deal with the stress and anxiety all by yourself. We will all need to help one another to navigate the difficulties we will face, as we have these past 18 months. Please let me know about any issues **as soon as you can.** It is much easier for me to help you if I know about your situation before it critically affects your academic performance. I don’t need to know details. I will not pry into the details any more than necessary to assist you. Letting me know sooner rather than later, though, is key. I’m in a much better position to help you and make accommodations if you tell me when the problem arises. It is MUCH harder to do this if you wait until the end of the term. You can email me or check during office hours.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS

I reserve the right to add/change readings.

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

### Week 1 (August 24 & 26) – Introduction

- Syllabus

For Thursday:

- Ben-Achour, Sabri. 2021. From Taxes to the Drug Trade, how the Taliban Paid Its Way. American Public Media: Marketplace. August 16, 2021.  
URL: <https://www.marketplace.org/2021/08/16/from-taxes-to-the-drug-trade-how-the-taliban-paid-its-way/>
- Rappeport, Alan. 2021. Afghanistan Faces Economic Shock as Sanctions Replace Foreign Aid. *New York Times*, August 21, 2021.
- Ghosh, Bobby. 2021. What Will the Taliban Do With a \$22 Billion Economy? *Washington Post/Bloomberg Opinion*, August 21, 2021.

### Week 2 (August 31 & September 2) – Theoretical Foundations & Basics of Empirical Research

- Hirschman, Albert O. 1945. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters I, II (through page 40, skim rest). [B]
- Irwin, Douglas A. 2015. *Free Trade under Fire*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2: The Case for Free Trade. [B]

Conducting original research:

Powner, Leanne C. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapters 1&2.

### Weeks 3&4 (September 9 & September 14) – The ‘Commercial Peace’ Argument

- Russett, Bruce M., and John R. Oneal. 2001. *Triangulating Peace*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton. Chapter 4: Both Democracy and Economic Interdependence Reduce Conflict. [B]
- Brooks, Stephen G. 2013. Economic Actors’ Lobbying Influence on the Prospects for War and Peace. *International Organization* 67(4): 863-888.
- Fordham, Benjamin O., and Katja B. Kleinberg. 2011. International Trade and US Relations with China. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7(3): 217-236.

Conducting original research:

Powner, Leanne C. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapters 3&4.

### **Week 5 (September 21 & 23) – Complicating the ‘Commercial Peace’**

- Morrow, James D. 1999. How Could Trade Affect Conflict? *Journal of Peace Research* 36(4): 481-89.
- McDonald, Patrick J. 2004. Peace through Trade or Free Trade? *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(4): 547-72.
- Karlsson, Lars, and Peter Hedberg. 2021. War and Trade in the Peaceful Century: The Impact of Interstate Wars on Bilateral Trade Flows during the First Wave of Globalization, 1830–1913. *Economic History Review* 74(3): 809-830.

Conducting original research:

Powner, Leanne C. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapters 5-7.

### **Week 6 (September 28 & 30) – Imperialism**

- Hobson, J. A. 1965 [1902]. *Imperialism: A Study*. Part I (entire) and Part II Chapter 1.
- Kautsky, K. 1914. Ultraimperialism. *Die Neue Zeit*, September 11, 1914. **[B]**
- 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. **[B]**

### **Week 7 (October 5 & 7) – Imperialism**

- Frieden, Jeffrey A. 1994. International Investment and Colonial Control: A New Interpretation. *International Organization* 48: 559-93.
- Gallagher, John, and Ronald Robinson. 1953. The Imperialism of Free Trade. *The Economic History Review* 6(1): 1-15.
- Palen, Marc-William. 2015. The Imperialism of Economic Nationalism, 1890–1913. *Diplomatic History* 39(1): 157-185.

### **Week 8 (October 12) – Economic Coercion**

- [RECAP] Hirschman, Albert O. 1945. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapter II (through page 40) **[B]**
- Farrell, Henry, and Abraham L. Newman. 2019. Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion. *International Security* 44(1): 42-79.
- Helleiner, Eric. 2003. Dollarization diplomacy: US Policy towards Latin America Coming Full Circle? *Review of International Political Economy* 10(3): 406-429.

### **Week 9 (October 19) – Economic Coercion**

- Neta C. Crawford and Audie Klotz. 1999. How Economic Sanctions Work: A Framework for Analysis. In: Crawford and Klotz. 1999. *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Chapter 2. **[B]**
- Pape, Robert A. 1997. Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work. *International Security* 22(2): 90-136.

- Drezner, Daniel W. 2003. The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion. *International Organization* 57(3): 643-59.

### **Week 10 (October 26 & 28) – Economic Coercion: Case Study (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>
- Schaffer, David. 2020. The Flawed U.S. Effort to Revive Iran Sanctions. *Council on Foreign Relations*. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/article/flawed-us-effort-revive-iran-sanctions>
- Recommended: Congressional Research Service. 2021. Iran Sanctions. [B] *Provides detailed background on the political and legal basis for US sanctions against Iran.*

Conducting original research & performing peer reviews:

Powner, Leanne C. *Empirical Research and Writing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapters 9 (pp. 209-210 only) & 10.

### **Week 11 (November 2 & 4) – Resource Conflict: Oil**

- Colgan, Jeff D. 2013. *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War*. Cambridge University Press. [available online through BU library]
  - Read Chapters 1-4 AND pick one of the case studies (Chapters 5 through 9)
- Yergin, D. 1991. *The Prize*. Chapters 16-19 (War and Strategy). [B]

### **Week 12 (November 9 & 11) – Resource Conflict: Climate Change**

- Hendrix, Cullen S., and Stephan Haggard. 2015. Global Food Prices, Regime Type, and Urban Unrest in the Developing World. *Journal of Peace Research* 52(2): 143-157.
- Tir, Jaroslav, and Douglas M. Stinnett. 2012. Weathering Climate Change: Can Institutions Mitigate International Water Conflict? *Journal of Peace Research* 49(1): 211-225.
- Reuveny, Rafael. 2007. Climate-induced Migration and Violent Conflict. *Political Geography* 656-673.
- Recommended: Sakaguchi, Kendra, Anil Varughese, and Graeme Auld. 2017. Climate Wars? A Systemic Review of Empirical Analyses on the Links between Climate Change and Violent Conflict. *International Studies Review* 19: 622-645.

### **Week 13 (November 16 & 18) – Trade Routes**

- Blunden, M. 2012. Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route. *International Affairs* 88(1): 115-29.
- The Economist Explains: Who Controls the Arctic? *The Economist*, June 14, 2021.
- The Economist Explains: Why the Suez Canal and other Chokepoints Face Growing Pressure. *The Economist*, March 26, 2021.
- Briefing: China has a Vastly Ambitious Plan to Connect the World. *The Economist*, July 26, 2018.



**Week 14 (November 23) \*no class meeting\* RESEARCH DESIGN DUE at 8PM**

**Week 15 (November 30 & December 2) – Economic Nationalism I**

- Malmgren, Harald B. 1970. Coming Trade Wars? (Neo-Mercantilism and Foreign Policy). *Foreign Policy* 1(Winter): 115-143.
- Borrus, Michael, Steve Weber, John Zysman and Joseph Willihnganz. 1992. Mercantilism and Global Security. *The National Interest* 29: 21-29.
- Ahmed, Salman, and Rozlyn Engel (Eds.). 2020. Making Foreign Policy Work Better for the Middle Class. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. **[B]**
- Zettelmeyer, Jeromin. 2019. The Return of Economic Nationalism in Germany. March 2019. PIIE paper# 19-4.
- Reuters. China quietly sets new 'buy Chinese' targets for state companies - U.S. sources. August 2, 2021. URL: <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/china-quietly-sets-new-buy-chinese-targets-for-state-companies-u.s.-sources-2021-08-02>

**Week 16 (December 7 & 9) – Economic Nationalism II**

- Pickel, Andreas. 2003. Explaining, and explaining with, economic nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism* 9 (1): 105-127.
- Frank, Dana. 1999. *Buy American*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. Chapter 9: Nationalism from the Bottom Up? Popular Buy American Movements. **[B]**
- de Bolle, Monica, and Jeromin Zettelmeyer. 2019. Measuring the Rise of Economic Nationalism. August 2019. Peterson Institute for International Economics, paper#19-15.
- Margalit, Yotam. 2019. Economic Insecurity and the Causes of Populism, Reconsidered. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33(4): 152-170.

**PEER REVIEW DUE [TBA]**