

## **The Political Economy of Security and Conflict PLSC 380U**

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**Office hours:** Monday and Thursday, 11:00-12:30pm  
at Zoom link provided on myCourses site; please  
email first so I can activate the Zoom link

### **Course Description and Purpose**

This course will examine the interaction of economic and political concerns in shaping state policies about national security and international conflict. We will cover a range of topics in three units. The first focuses on the economic basis of national military power. In this part of the course, we will consider how states extract the resources they need for military use from their society, as well as how societal resistance to this intrusion can influence mobilization and wartime strategy. The second unit focuses on the economic and security dimensions of interaction among states in the international system. We will examine how interdependence can be used to prepare for war or to coerce other states. We will also consider whether interdependence promotes peace or war. The third unit focuses on the economic and political structure of the international system, particularly how the rise and fall of dominant powers shapes the character of international political life.

This is an "online combined" course. This means that most of it will be conducted asynchronously through discussion boards and other facilities that students can access through myCourses. However, we will have optional synchronous discussion meetings most Fridays at our scheduled class time (4:40-5:40). As the need arises, we may also meet during our Monday and Wednesday class times. To simplify matters, there is a single recurring Zoom meeting for all class times throughout the semester. It is also posted as a permanent announcement on the myCourses page for this class.

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that students are expected to do at least 12.5 hours of course-related work or activity each week during the semester. This includes scheduled class lecture/discussion meeting times as well as time spent completing assigned readings, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.

This course counts toward the social science general education requirement (category N). It counts for several purposes within the political science major:

- Helps fulfill the requirement for 10 PLSC courses for political science majors.
- Fulfills the requirement of at least 1 course in international relations
- Helps fulfill the requirement for 6 upper-level courses (300- or 400-level)

### **Learning Outcomes**

In this course, students will learn about the relationship between economic and military power in a range of historical settings. They will also use and develop their writing and critical thinking skills.

### Course Materials

This course will use a variety of text, video, and other sources. With the exception of three books that we will read in their entirety, all of the materials are available on the myCourses page. Two of the three books are available as ebooks through the library. The three books we will read are:

- Capella Zielinski, Rosella. 2016. *How States Pay for Wars*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [Note that this is available as an ebook through the library.]
- Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War & Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McDonald, Patrick J. 2009. *The Invisible Hand of Peace: Capitalism, the War Machine, and International Relations Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Note that this is available as an ebook through the library.]

### Course Requirements and Grading

**Class Participation.** Each student is expected to contribute to the online discussion boards at least twice per week. At least one contribution should be a response to one of the discussion questions posted for that week. This post is due by Thursday at midnight. At least one should be a response to a post by another student. This post is due by Friday at midnight. Your participation will be evaluated each week based on the overall contribution of all your posts to class discussion. There will be no discussion board during the truncated first and last weeks of class or during the two catch-up weeks listed in the course schedule below. This leaves 11 weeks of discussion board activity. Each is worth 5% of your final grade, for a total of 55%.

**Essay.** Each student will write an essay about one of the three books we will be reading in their entirety this semester. One book is assigned for each unit of the course. The question the essay for each unit should answer is listed below. Students may select any one of the three essay assignments listed below. The essay will be worth 25% of your final grade.

**Unit 1.** Rosella Capella Zielinski gives leaders' concerns about the economy, particularly about inflation, a major role in shaping how they pay for war. Winning the war is not their only priority. Of course, she does not examine every war or every state's choices. Does she overstate the importance of economic conditions compared to the demand for military victory? (This essay is due by midnight on Saturday, March 20th.)

**Unit 2.** Is Patrick McDonald too optimistic about the possibility that liberal capitalism will lead to peace between states in *The Invisible Hand of Peace*? (This essay is due by midnight on Saturday, April 24th.)

**Unit 3.** Robert Gilpin's *War & Change in World Politics* is now 40 years old. Does it have anything to tell us about relations between the United States and China in the years ahead, or have historical changes in the last 40 years called its conclusions into question? (This essay is due by midnight on Tuesday, May 18th.)

**Final Exam.** The final exam will consist of an essay question intended to tie together several of the major themes from the course. It will require you to use examples from the assigned reading to illustrate your argument. The question will be provided to students by noon on Wednesday, May 19th. The essay will be due by midnight on Saturday, May 22nd. The final exam is worth 20% of your grade for the semester.

**Grading Scale.** Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 94-100 = A; 91-93 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 = D; 0-64 = F.

### **Other Course Policies**

**COVID-19.** This is obviously not a normal semester. We will all need to help one another to navigate its difficulties. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever or other symptoms, such as a cough or difficulty breathing, your top priorities should be getting medical treatment and avoiding further spread of the virus. If you are on campus, call the Student Health Service for instructions at 607-777-2221. Once 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. Please let me know about these 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 will not pry into the details any more than is necessary to assist you.

**Technology.** Because this is an online class, students will need to have access to a device that permits access to the myCourses page and use of the Zoom software we will employ in our synchronous meetings. You will also need to know how to use the hardware and software. The university has resources to help you if you need it. They are set out here: <https://www.binghamton.edu/students-online/>.

**E-mail.** I will use your university e-mail address for course announcements and other official purposes. Check this account at least once a day. I recommend setting your university e-mail account to forward messages to whatever e-mail address you use most often. I will respond to student messages in a timely manner but do not count on receiving an answer in less than 24 hours.

**Grade Appeals.** All grade appeals must be made in writing. If you believe a grade I assigned you is incorrect, you should write a brief memo explaining your concerns. I will review your concerns and respond to you in writing.

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** All work submitted as part of this course, including comments posted on discussion boards, must be original, with your sources cited. It is fine for you to introduce and use outside material that you think is relevant to the course but you should extend credit to the original authors when you do so. You may use any citation system you like for this purpose. Violations of this rule will result in a failing grade for the course and will be submitted to the Harpur College Academic Honesty Committee for possible further disciplinary action.

**Decorum.** I encourage you to express your views on the course material both on the class discussion boards and in our synchronous meetings. You are free to disagree with me or with your fellow students, just as others are free to disagree with you. In doing so, however, please

refrain from personal insults or inflammatory rhetoric. Be respectful of one another and always remember that there is a real person on the other end of your comments. This isn't Twitter.

### **Course Schedule and Assigned Materials**

The course is divided into three thematic units, each several weeks long. Within these units, each week will be dedicated to a different topic. The readings listed here and other material for the week will be posted in the myCourses page in a separate content folder. Most weeks will have one or more short videos on topics not fully covered in the readings. In addition to the readings and videos, there will be a weekly orientation video and an orientation note. You should review these first. The video will explain the week's topic and guide you through the readings. The note will provide the suggested order for the week's material and give the questions that will appear on the discussion board for the week.

### **Week of 11 February: Introduction**

Apart from the syllabus, there is no assigned reading for this week.

We will have a synchronous meeting on Friday, 12 February, at our scheduled class time. At that meeting, I will go over the syllabus and answer any questions you may have about the course.

There is no discussion board for this week.

## **Unit 1. War and Mobilization**

### **Week of 15 February: The Economic and Political Sources of Military Power**

Earle, Edward Meade. 1943. "Adam Smith, Alexander Hamilton, Friedrich List: The Economic Foundations of Military Power." In Edward Earle Mead, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). 117-54.

Harrison, Mark. 1998. "The economics of World War II: an overview." In Mark Harrison, ed., *The Economics of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press). 1-42.

### **Week of 22 February: Domestic Politics and Military Spending**

Fordham, Benjamin O. 2007. "The Evolution of Republican and Democratic Positions on Cold War Military Spending: A Historical Puzzle." *Social Science History* 31(4): 603-35.

Gholz, Eugene, and Harvey N. Sapolsky. 2020. "The Many Lines of Defense: The Political Economy of US Defense Acquisition." *Journal of Global Security Studies*, forthcoming.

Narizny, Kevin. 2003. "Both Guns and Butter, or Neither: Class Interests in the Political Economy of Rearmament." *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 203-20.

### **Week of 1 March: Economic Concerns and Wartime Strategy**

Collins, Robert M. 1996. "The Economic Crisis of 1968 and the Waning of the 'American Century'." *American Historical Review* 101(2): 396-422.

Ransom, Roger L. 1989. *Conflict and Compromise*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6.

Schultz, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 2003. "The Democratic Advantage: Institutional Foundations of Financial Power in International Competition." *International Organization* 57(1): 3-42.

**Week of 8 March: The Long-Term Political and Economic Impact of War**

Hooks, Gregory, and Leonard E. Bloomquist. 1992. "The Legacy of World War II for Regional Growth and Decline: The Cumulative Effects of Wartime Investments on U.S. Manufacturing, 1947-1972." *Social Forces* 71(2): 303-37.

Lobell, Stephen. 2006. "The Political Economy of War Mobilization: From Britain's Limited Liability to a Continental Commitment." *International Politics* 43: 283-304.

Scheve, Kenneth, and David Stasavage. 2010. "The Conscription of Wealth: Mass Warfare and the Demand for Progressive Taxation." *International Organization* 64(4): 529-61.

**Week of 15 March: Catch-up and Rejuvenation**

No discussion board for this week.

Essay for Unit 1 due Saturday, 20 March, if you choose to write it.

Friday, 19 March, synchronous discussion of Capella Zielinski, Rosella. 2016. *How States Pay for Wars*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

**Unit 2. Economic Dimensions of Interstate Conflict and Coercion**

**Week of 22 March: Interdependence, Mobilization, and War**

Morrow, James D. 1993. "Arms Versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search for Security." *International Security* 47(2): 207-33.

O'Hanlon, Michael E. 2018. Brookings Institution Video: What Trump Gets Right and Wrong about Defense Burden-Sharing.  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/unpacked/2018/08/01/unpacked-what-trump-gets-right-and-wrong-about-defense-burden-sharing/>.

Rowe, David M., David H. Bearce, and Patrick J. McDonald. 2002. "Binding Prometheus: How the 19th Century Expansion of Trade Impeded Britain's Ability to Raise an Army." *International Studies Quarterly* 46(4): 551-78.

**Week of 29 March: Economic Interdependence and Influence**

Farrell, Henry, and Abraham L. Newman. 2019. "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion." *International Security* 44(1): 42-79.

Hirschman, Albert O. 1980 [1945]. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 3-52.

Ross, Robert S. 2019. "On the fungibility of economic power: China's economic rise and the East Asian security order." *European Journal of International Relations* 25(1): 302-27.

**Week of 5 April: Economic Interdependence as a Cause of Peace**

McDonald, Patrick. 2008. *The Invisible Hand of Peace*. New York Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.

**Week of 12 April: Economic Interdependence as a Cause of War**

Fordham, Benjamin O. 2007. "Revisionism Reconsidered: Exports and American Intervention in World War I." *International Organization* 61(2): 277-310.

Young, Patricia T., and Jack S. Levy. 2010. "Domestic politics and the escalation of commercial rivalry: Explaining the War of Jenkins' Ear, 1739–48." *European Journal of International Relations* 17(2): 209-32.

PBS documentary, The Prize, part 4, "War and Oil,"  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=407\\_uE-Vokc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=407_uE-Vokc)

**Week of 19 April: Catch-up and Rejuvenation**

No discussion board for this week.

Essay for Unit 2 due Saturday, 24 April, if you choose to write it.

Friday, 23 April, synchronous discussion of McDonald, Patrick. 2008. *The Invisible Hand of Peace*. New York Cambridge University Press.

**Unit 3. Shaping the International System****Week of 26 April: Economics, Empire, and Grand Strategy**

Frieden, Jeffrey A. 1994. "International Investment and Colonial Control: A New Interpretation." *International Organization* 48(4): 559-93.

Gallagher, John A., and Ronald E. Robinson. 1953. "The Imperialism of Free Trade." *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 6 (1): 1-15.

Kennedy, Paul M. 1984. "The First World War and the International Power System." *International Security* 9(1): 7-40.

**Week of 3 May: Hegemony and Order**

Deudney, Daniel, and G. John Ikenberry. 2018. "Liberal World: The Resilient Order." *Foreign Affairs* 97(4): 16-24.

Krasner, Stephen D. 1976. "State Power and the Structure of International Trade." *World Politics* 28(3): 317-47.

**Week of 10 May: Hegemonic Transition and Conflict**

Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War & Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4-5.

Rapkin, David, and William R. Thompson. 2003. "Power Transition, Challenge, and the (Re)emergence of China." *International Interactions* 29: 315-42.

Rasler, Karen, and William R. Thompson. 2000. "Global War and the Political Economy of Structural Change." In Manus Midlarsky, ed., *The Handbook of War Studies II* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press). 301-31.

**Week of 17 May: Final class meeting**

No discussion board for this week.

Essay for Unit 3 due Tuesday, 18 May, if you choose to write it.

Monday, 17 May, synchronous discussion of Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War & Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.