



Theoretical Understanding of Interstate and Intrastate Conflicts

Module: (SOT86707) International Security - Seminar 1
Lecturer: Dr. Burak Giray

Fall 2024

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Day and Time: W 11:30–13:00
Course Format: *Onsite*

Seminar Description

This seminar aims to provide students with an opportunity to read and discuss a range of scholarly literature on the causes of interstate and intrastate conflicts, and to plan their own research on related topics. It examines the causes of both types of conflicts—why they occur—and how to approach conflict processes conceptually, theoretically, and empirically. The first part introduces the causes of interstate conflict through major International Relations theories, while the second part shifts focus to the theoretical explanations of intrastate conflicts. By the end of the seminar, students will be able to link theoretical approaches to contemporary conflict events and design a research project related to interstate or civil wars, presenting a theoretical argument and, if relevant, supporting it with empirical evidence.

Seminar Style

Each session is based on required readings, which participants must review prior to the session. Consequently, all attendees are expected to grasp the key points from the required readings and contribute comments or critiques during group discussions. The reading list indicates which readings are eligible for presentation. Recommended readings are optional.

Examination of the module

The module grade is based on a written examination in the form of a seminar paper (13 – 15 pages). Through their seminar paper, students will document to which extent they have gained a foundational understanding in the area of digital transformations in civil conflicts and peace operations. The seminar paper is accompanied by a presentation (10-15 min) to test the communicative

competence of presenting scientific topics to an audience. The presentation must be supplemented by a short-written handout.

- **Presentation (20%):** Each session contains a presentation part of 12-15 minutes per student. For each presentation, a handout of max. two pages is prepared. The presentation (1) summarizes the core statements of the supplementary texts briefly, (2) clarifies theoretical connections using empirical examples chosen by the students themselves, and (3) places the topic in the larger seminar context. In addition, (4) media supporting the content are used (e.g. blackboard, presentation slides, etc.) The presentation serves as content preparation for the seminar paper.
- **Seminar Paper (80%):** Written paper of 13-15 pages (without bibliography and title page) based on a theoretical question in the context of the seminar topic. The seminar paper explores the compulsory texts and the supplementary reading for a session in more depth. In addition, further secondary and primary sources should be consulted to answer the chosen question. Topic, question and approach can be discussed and determined together with the lecturers during the lecture period. If you would like to take advantage of this, please prepare a draft of your seminar paper (topic/session, possible question, theory, case selection) of no more than one page and send it by e-mail to the lecturer at least three days before the office hours. The seminar paper must be submitted via Moodle by **March 15, 2025** (midnight) at the latest.

Session Overview

Session	Session Date	Session Title
1	16.10.2024	Course Overview & Introduction
2	23.10.2024	Realism and Neorealism
3	30.10.2024	The Neoliberal Response
4	06.11.2024	Rational and Non-rational Approaches
5	13.11.2024	The Bargaining Model of War
6	20.11.2024	Domestic Politics and War
7	27.11.2024	Leaders and International Conflict
8	04.12.2024	Gender Effect
9	11.12.2024	Understanding Civil Wars
10	18.12.2024	The Economic Origins of Civil Wars
11	08.01.2025	Ethnicity, Divercity, and Civil Wars
12	15.01.2025	State Strength, Political Systems, and Armed Conflict
13	22.01.2025	Transnational Dynamics and Diffusion
14	29.01.2025	Final Presentations
15	05.02.2025	Wrap-up Session

Required Textbook

Mason, T. D., & Mitchell, S. M. (Eds.). (2023). What do we know about civil wars?. Rowman & Littlefield.

Course Sessions and Readings

Session 1: Course Overview & Introduction	
Required Readings	Course Syllabus
	De Mesquita, B. B. (1985). Toward a scientific understanding of international conflict: A personal view. <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> , 29(2), 121-136.
	Lake, D. A. (2011). Why “isms” are evil: Theory, epistemology, and academic sects as impediments to understanding and progress. <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> , 55(2), 465-480.
Recommended Reading(s)	Singer, J. D. (1961). The level-of-analysis problem in international relations. <i>World Politics</i> , 14(1), 77-92.

Session 2: Realism and Neorealism	
Required Readings	Morgenthau, Hans J. 1948. <i>Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Ch. 1.
	Thucydides. 1972. <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> . London: Penguin, The Melian Dialogue. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Gilpin, R. (1981). <i>War and Change in World Politics</i> . Cambridge University Press.
	Keohane, R. O. (1986). <i>Neorealism and its Critics</i> . Columbia University Press.

Session 3: The Neoliberal Response	
Required Readings	Baldwin, D. A. (2014). Neoliberalism, neorealism, and world politics. In <i>The Realism Reader</i> (pp. 313-319). Routledge.
	Milner, H. (1991). The assumption of anarchy in international relations theory: a critique. <i>Review of International Studies</i> , 17(1), 67-85. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Keohane, Robert O. 1984. <i>After Hegemony</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Session 4: Rational and Non-rational Approaches	
Required Readings	Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics. <i>International organization</i> , 46(2), 391-425.
	Hopf, T. (1998). The promise of constructivism in international relations theory. <i>International security</i> , 23(1), 171-200. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Fearon, James and Wendt, Alexander. 2002. Rationalism vs. Constructivism: A Skeptical View. In <i>Handbook of International Relations</i> , eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A Simmons. London: SAGE, pp.52–72.
	Walt, Stephen. 1995. Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies. <i>International Security</i> 23(4): 5–48.

Session 5: The Bargaining Model of War	
Required Readings	Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. <i>International organization</i> , 49(3), 379-414.
	Powell, R. (2006). War as a commitment problem. <i>International organization</i> , 60(1), 169-203. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Reiter, Dan. 2003. Exploring the Bargaining Model of War. <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 1(1): 27–43.
	Fey, Mark and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2007. Mutual Optimism and War. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 51(4): 738–754.

Session 6: Domestic Politics and War	
Required Readings	Chiozza, G., & Goemans, H. E. (2004). Avoiding diversionary targets. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> , 41(4), 423-443.
	Tomz, M. (2007). Domestic audience costs in international relations: An experimental approach. <i>International organization</i> , 61(4), 821-840. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Weeks, J. L. (2008). Autocratic audience costs: Regime type and signaling resolve. <i>International Organization</i> , 62(1), 35-64.
	Chatagnier, J. Tyson. 2012. The Effect of Trust in Government on Rallies' Round the Flag. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 49(5): 631–645.

Session 7: Leaders and International Conflict	
Required Readings	Croco, S. E., & Weeks, J. L. (2016). War outcomes and leader tenure. <i>World Politics</i> , 68(4), 577-607.
	Horowitz, M. C., & Stam, A. C. (2014). How prior military experience influences the future militarized behavior of leaders. <i>International Organization</i> , 68(3), 527-559. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Chiozza, G., & Goemans, H. E. (2004). International conflict and the tenure of leaders: Is war still ex post inefficient?. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> , 48(3), 604-619.

Session 8: Gender Effect	
Required Readings	Caprioli, Mary and Boyer, Mark A., 2001. Gender, Violence, and International Crisis. <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 45(4): 503–518.
	Imamverdiyeva, U., & Shea, P. E. (2022). Re-examining women leaders and military spending. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> , 59(5), 679-693. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Post, A. S., & Sen, P. (2020). Why can't a woman be more like a man? Female leaders in crisis bargaining. <i>International Interactions</i> , 46(1), 1-27.

Session 9: Understanding Civil Wars	
Required Readings	What do we know about civil wars? (Introduction & Chapter 1)
	Humphreys, M., & Weinstein, J. M. (2008). Who fights? The determinants of participation in civil war. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> , 52(2), 436-455. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Walter, B. F. (2017). The new new civil wars. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , 20(1), 469-486.

Session 10: The Economic Origins of Civil Wars	
Required Readings	What do we know about civil wars? (Chapter 2)
	Collier, P. and A. Hoeffler (2004). Greed and Grievance in Civil War. <i>Oxford Economic Papers</i> 56(4): 563-595. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Ross, Michael L. (2006). A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 9: 265–300.
	Scott, James. (1976). <i>The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia</i> . New Haven: Yale University Press (Introduction, Chapter 1 & 7).

Session 11: Ethnicity, Diversity, and Civil Wars	
Required Readings	What do we know about civil wars? (Chapter 3)
	Sambanis, Nicholas. (2001). Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 45 (3): 259-82. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Weidmann, Nils B. (2011). Violence from ‘Above’ or from ‘Below’? The Role of Ethnicity in Bosnia’s Civil War. <i>Journal of Politics</i> , 73(4): 1178-1190.
	Lake, David A. and Donald Rothchild. (1996). Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflicts. <i>International Security</i> , 21(2): 41-75.

Session 12: State Strength, Political Systems, and Armed Conflict	
Required Readings	What do we know about civil wars? (Chapter 4)
	Tezcur, G. M. (2010). When democratization radicalizes: The Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> , 47(6), 775- 789. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Gurses, M., & Mason, T. D. (2010). Weak states, regime types, and civil war. <i>Civil Wars</i> , 12(1-2), 140-155.
	Fearon, J. D. (2004). Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others?. <i>Journal of peace research</i> , 41(3), 275-301.

Session 13: Transnational Dynamics and Diffusion	
Required Readings	What do we know about civil wars? (Chapter 5)
	Gleditsch, Kristian S. and Idean Salehyan. (2006). Refugees and the Spread of Civil War, <i>International Organization</i> 60(2): 335-66. (Presentation)
Recommended Reading(s)	Idean Salehyan. (2007). Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups. <i>World Politics</i> 59(2): 217-242.
	Gleditsch, Kristian S. 2007. Transnational Dimensions of Civil War. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 44:293-309.

Session 14: Final Presentations	
Structure	10-minute presentation, supplemented by a short- written handout that outlines the research question, theoretical expectations, and the methodology.

Session 15: Wrap-up Session	
Structure	The final session includes a brief review of the previous sessions, a discussion of any remaining questions, and feedback from students on the course structure.

Research Paper Guidelines

Formal

Length	13-15 pages, excluding references and title page
Font-size	Standard (Times New Roman 12)
Line spacing	1.5
Submission	Upload via Moodle: LASTNAME_ModuleNumber.pdf
Citation style	Any common social science citation style is accepted, e.g. Harvard in-text citation – Author (Year: pages). Important is that the used citation style is uniform and consistent throughout the paper. (Hint: Use a reference management program, e.g. EndNote)

Structure

Title page (1 page)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of the paper (as precise and pertinent as possible, indicating the topic and approach, not be the same as the research question) • Name, student number, degree/program, email for contact, date, seminar name and reference, lecturer
Introduction (2-3 pages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and precise presentation of the research problem and question, as well as its relevance • Development of a research question (formulated as a direct question that is answerable)
Main part (10-12 pages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise presentation of the current literature on the topic • Argumentation for the selection of your theoretical approach • Formulation of theoretical propositions, eventually hypotheses • Presentation of the selected methods and scientific approach • Justification for case selection and empirical focus • Empirical research and evidence of one or more cases that can support (or falsify) the theoretical propositions • Evaluation, analysis and interpretation of the empirical results/evidence collected on the basis of the theoretical propositions
Conclusion (2-3 pages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear answer to the research question • Summary of results and conclusions from the theoretical analysis
References	Complete list of sources used (primary and secondary literature)
Appendix	Signed declaration of independence