

Spring 2010

GVPT409f. Seminar in International Relations and World Politics: Conflict and Crisis

Time and Location: Wed 3:00-5:45, Tydings 0139

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, 10:00-12:00 or by appointment

Introduction

The point of departure of this seminar is that interstate military-security crises have been the most frequent type of hostile interaction in international politics in the 20th and now 21st centuries. And while there is some evidence that the frequency of these crises is gradually declining in the post-Cold War era, one has only to think about the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the tension between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and the nuclear standoffs with Iran and North Korea to realize that dangerous crises remain a potential disrupting force for the international system and regional subsystems. Crises can present overwhelming challenges to established institutions and belief systems and can change forever the distribution of power within the international system or in a regional subsystem.

The destabilizing effects of crises, as of internal and international wars, are dangerous to global security. Understanding the causes, evolution, actor behavior, outcomes, and consequences of crises is possible by systematic investigation. This knowledge, in turn, can facilitate efforts by scholars and policy makers to develop better mechanisms for crisis prevention, management, and resolution.

We will begin with a brief analysis of the state of the field in the academic study of international conflict in general, and crises in particular. We will then discuss the basic framework and approach of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project, and its contributions to our enhanced understanding of major trends in crisis behavior. We'll examine some general findings on trends and patterns in international crises in recent diplomatic history, as well as the results of extensive experiments on crisis behavior involving human subjects. We will also look at case studies of specific crises in recent diplomatic history. Students will have an opportunity to test propositions about crisis behavior with large cross-national and experimental datasets.

The course will also focus on conflict within countries. Recent evidence suggests that as the number of *international* crises per year has declined in recent decades, civil wars, insurrections, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and other reflections of *intrastate* conflict and crisis have evidenced sharp increases. In particular, the increase in the number of "failed" and "fragile" states, and the impact on the international system as a whole, has become a great concern to both policy makers and academics.

Required Texts

Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Eds.), *Leashing the Dogs of War*. US Institute of Peace Press, 2007.

Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Eds.), *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*. US Institute of Peace, 2005.

Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2010*. Paradigm Publishers, 2010.

Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *A Study of Crisis*. University of Michigan Press, 2000. On reserve

Various case studies from the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University (to be assigned later). To be purchased online at http://www.guisd.org/case_page.cfm

Required Papers

Each student will be required to write two research papers (about 10-12 double-spaced pages each) during the course of the semester. The first will focus on the development of a research design utilizing the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) dataset to test propositions about the nature of international crises. The second will focus on issues in crisis management in civil conflict within states, and will be based on a case study approach.

Exams

There will be a mid-term examination and a final take home assignment.

Grading

The two research papers will each be worth 20% of the final grade. The mid-term will be worth 30%, and the final assignment 15%. 15% of the final grade will be based on seminar participation/discussion.

Posting Class Material

Generally, I will post my lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, and other relevant material to the following website: <http://www.icons.umd.edu/gvpt409/> .

Class Meetings and Assignments

January 27 – Introduction, crisis decision making exercise, a framework for foreign policy analysis, definitions of key concepts

February 3– Levels of analysis and conflict - systemic forces. Reading assignment: *Leashing the Dogs of War*, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5.

February 10– Level of Analysis – societal and individual forces. Reading assignment: *Leashing the Dogs of War*, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

February 17 – Intervention in international conflict and crisis. Reading assignment: *Leashing the Dogs of War*, Chapters 16, 20; *Grasping the Nettle*, Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6.

February 24 – *Grasping the Nettle*, Chapters 7, 8, 12, 15; *Pew Case Studies* by Daalder, Lamy, and Jesse. Go to http://www.guisd.org/case_page.cfm and download cases 467 (Daalder), 241 (Lamy), and 471 (Jesse).

March 3 – From conflict to crisis. Reading assignment: *Peace and Conflict 2008; A Study of Crisis* pp. 1-38.

March 10 – Discussion of dimensions of crisis. Set up for ICB analysis. Discussion of research hypotheses, research design, methodology. Reading assignment: *A Study of Crisis*, pp. 65-213 (close read not necessary, just grasp the key elements of each of the seven sections).

March 17 – Spring Break

March 24 – Mid-Term Exam

March 31 – ICB paper due. Reading assignment: *Concepts and Methods in the Study of Crisis Management*, in *Managing Sino-American Crises*. Set up for Pew case studies exercise.

April 7– Individual reports on Pew case studies and findings for 5 elements of *Concepts and Methods* chapter.

April 14 – Continue reports on Pew case studies. Case study paper due.

April 21 –Mediating international conflict and crisis, institutions and regimes. Reading assignment: *Leashing the Dogs of War*, Chapters 21, 22, 24, 25, 27.

April 28 –Institutions in conflict management – the UN, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Reading assignment: *Leashing the Dogs of War*, Chapters 28, 29, 30, 31.

May 5 - Final assignment distributed and discussed - take home