

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

Government 150 W
Freshman Seminar: Democracy and War
Office: Morton #31 (MW 10-11:30)

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Course Themes: Many contemporary politicians and analysts claim that the recent proliferation of democracy throughout the world will have an important influence on the nature of states' foreign policies and the prospects for international cooperation. Specifically, democratic states are likely to be more successful at waging wars than their authoritarian counterparts, more restrained by moral and legal rules in their use of military force, and more cooperative in their foreign policies (especially toward each other). As a consequence, the rapid spread of democracy throughout the world means that the international system will be more peaceful than it has been during the 20th Century. All these claims contradict the conventional wisdom among theorists and practitioners of international politics. In this class we will critically examine the relationship between democracy and war in hopes of clarifying this contemporary debate. The debate has obvious and far-reaching consequences for citizens, soldiers and policy makers throughout the world.

Course Content: A large portion of the course content will be generated by student interest and student research. The instructor has intentionally offered a "bare bones" reading list that draws from classics in the field of philosophy and history as well as more contemporary works by political scientists, economists and journalists. However, these readings and films are only meant to serve as starting points for our discussion. As students engage the material they will be responsible for suggesting additional readings and for sharing their own research findings with the class. On average we will read one chapter or article per meeting that is chosen by the professor and one article selected by a member of the class. We will adopt this method for two reasons: First, its more interesting and more rewarding to learn about, write about and discuss ideas and historical events that you actually care about rather than those a professor believes you ought to care about. Second, people who are actively involved in their own education feel that they have a stake in the quality of the process, hence they learn more about both substantive issues and about the process of learning. As a consequence of this decision, the syllabus will be a living document. It will not be finalized until we have finished the course.

This is a seminar course. It is not a lecture course. The purpose of a seminar is to learn from other members in the seminar. Your instructor for this course does not know the truth and will not attempt to impart the truth to you. Instead, your instructor is another member of the seminar. All 16 people in the seminar room are responsible for the content and the learning that takes place in the seminar. Each member of the seminar will have ample opportunity to present their own ideas, research, and analysis of other's ideas to the rest of the group. You should make your own judgements about the quality of these contributions.

Course Goals: The central goals of this course will be to improve the ability of students to think critically, to make clear and logical oral arguments, and to make clear and logical written arguments. The most effective way to develop these skills is to practice them by writing, speaking, giving others critical feedback and receiving critical feedback from others. This feedback will come from the instructor and from other students in the seminar. Oh yeah, students will also learn a bit about democracy and war.

Reading Assignments: You will not be required to purchase any books for this course. The instructor and your fellow students will provide you with the required readings at least 2 days prior to the class meeting in which they will be discussed. Distribution of required readings may occur in class, over email, via web page, or as reserve readings in the Government Department copy room (Morton #19), or in Morton #2.

Grades: Your course grade will be the weighted average of your performance in class discussions, written assignments, and formal oral presentations. Grades will be weighted as follows:

Class Participation and Group Participation	30%
2 page response papers (three)	15%
3 page argument paper (one)	10%
10 page research paper (draft)	10%
2 page critique of fellow student's research paper	5%
10-20 page research paper (final)	30%

Your final research paper will be due on the date of the scheduled exam for this course. Thursday May 1.

Class Participation: Participation during seminar meetings is a required part of the course. All students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading for that day. Periodically, the instructor will assign primary responsibility for starting the discussion to a subset of class members. This does NOT mean that other members of the class are allowed to free-ride. In addition to participating in **class discussion**, your participation grade will be based on: 1) the **quality of your contributions**; 2) the quality of your **written comments** on other's papers, 3) your ability to **provide the seminar with quality reading/viewing material** on the subject you have decided to cover, 4) your ability to work cooperatively within your small group, and 5) the quality of your **formal oral presentation** to the class. Obviously, attendance is mandatory given the small size of this group. If you don't come to class you are not participating. If you are not participating, you will not get a good grade.

Response Papers: Response papers are brief and clearly written reactions to the assigned reading. Typically, response papers contain a **brief** summary of the work, your own concise and illuminating analysis, and some possible questions that you think should be raised about the work. If you feel the need to make a normative judgment or write a poem, then please do so if you think it would help you or others in the class to understand the issues raised in the reading. Some response papers will be shared with the class and will serve as the basis for class discussion. Response papers are due 24 hours prior to class meetings and they may be distributed to the rest of the class through our courseinfo site.

<http://courseinfo.wm.edu/courses/GOVT150W03-S03/>

Argument Paper: A formal thesis statement will be supported by logical and empirical evidence. The format and substance of this paper is more formal than the response papers.

Research Paper: A piece of original research that deals with one of the major themes covered in the course or a related theme agreed to by the instructor.

Critique of Research Paper: You will write a 2 page paper in response to another student's research. Your aim will be to help the student improve his/her draft of the research paper.

Therefore, you will be asked to suggest improvements, act as editor, criticize logical flaws, and point out strengths that should be emphasized in the final draft.

A Flexible Outline of the Course: The course is designed around a series of questions. The reading is designed to help us think about these questions. If you would like to add or modify the questions as they are listed below, please contact the professor and make your preferences known.

Introductory Reading:

Michael Tierney, “How to Read.” Available online under “Assignments”

I. **What is war?**

- A. What other types of mass violence are not wars?
- B. Why does war recur in the international system?

Class Handouts, “Defining War and Aggression” and “What People Say About War”

Thomas Hobbes. “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery,” excerpted from *Leviathan*, Part I, Ch. 13.

Karl Von Clausewitz, “On the Nature of War,” excerpted from *On War*, Book I, Chapter 1, JJ Graham translation, 1874.

Margaret Mead, “Warfare Is Only an Invention, Not a Biological Necessity.” Excerpted from *Anthropology, A Human Science*. Princeton: Nostrand, 1964.

Kenneth Waltz, Chapter 1, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. 1954.

Carl Kaysen. “Is War Obsolete?” *International Security*, Spring 1990 (Vol.14, No. 4).

II. **What are the costs and benefits of war and to whom do they accrue?**

- A. Common American myths about war.
- B. Putting a human face on war.

Michael Cranna, “The Iraq Conflict.” In *The True Costs of Conflict: Seven Recent Wars and Their Effects on Society*. New York: The New Press. 1994, Chapter 2.

Steven Spielberg, *Saving Private Ryan*. Screening in Tucker Hall.

OR

Jerry Bruckheimer, *Blackhawk Down*. Screening in Tucker Hall.

III. **What is a democracy?**

- A. Distinction between a pure Democracy and a Constitutional Democracy: Athens
- B. Liberal Democracy: Does one imply the other?

Peter T. Mancias, "War and Democracy in Ancient Greece." *In War and Democracy*. New York: Basil Blackwell. 1989, Part I.

Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy is and is Not," *Journal of Democracy*, Summer, 1991.

Fareed Zakaria. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1997, pp 22-43.

IV. Are Democracies more successful at fighting wars?

A. The Conventional Answer: No.

Morganthau, Chpt. 9 and pgs 542-3. Walter Lippman, George Kennan, De Tocqueville, Thucydides. "The unique problems of war fighting as a Democracy."

Bennett and Stam, "The Declining Advantages of Democracy: A Combined Model of War Outcomes and Duration." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, June 1998, pp. 344-365.

B. The Ancient (and modern?) Answer: Yes.

Demaratus on the Law and Pericles Funeral Oration

Kenneth Schultz and Barry Weingast, "The Democratic Advantage: The Institutional Sources of State Power in International Competition." Working Paper, 1996.

Michael Desch, "Democracy and Victory: Why Regime Type Hardly Matters," *International Security*, Fall 2002.

V. Are Democracies more aggressive, more peaceful, or just better targets than other states?

A. Are democracies less likely to initiate wars?

B. Are democracies more constrained by legal or moral rules in the conduct of war?

Movie, *Breaker Morant*, on the Boer War.

Michael Walzer, *Just War Theory*

Jean Bethke Elsthtain, "How to Fight a Just War."

C. Is war simply one form of aggression? Do democracies manifest aggression in other ways?

D. Are democracies the best targets for terrorists?

Jesse Ferguson and Michael Tierney, "Perpetual Terror: Explaining the Terrorist Penchant for Attacking Democratic Regimes." Working Paper, 2003.

VI. Is there a separate "Democratic Peace"?

A. Aggregate Statistics – Is there a statistically significant relationship?

- B. Logical Exceptions and Methodological Problems with the “Democratic Peace.”
- C. Empirical Exceptions (See the Dominquez volume on Latin America. Mares article disputes finding. Ancient Greece? The Iroquois and the American Revolution? Finland? Spanish-American War? The American Civil War? India and Pakistan? Peru and Ecuador? The Fashoda Crisis? Others?)

Jack Leustig et al. “The Cauldron of War: Iroquois Democracy and the American Revolution,” A Film from Warner Video Series, *500 Nations*, 1995

VII Why don't democracies fight against each other?

- A. Constitutional Constraints: Electoral Connection, Public Opinion, Checks and Balances
- B. Normative Constraints: Ideals of non-violent dispute resolution, Trust through shared identity
- C. Economic Imperatives: Trade and Investment Interdependence
 - Russett and O'Neil, *Triangulating Peace*.
 - Holsti, “Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy”

VIII. Current Policy Debates: How should American foreign policy be pursued?

- A. Warfare as a means of spreading democracy?
- B. Conditional Trade and Economic Assistance as inducements toward democracy?
 - Mark Peceny, excerpts from *Democracy at the Point of a Gun*.
 - Drezner article in *The New Republic*