

UNDERSTANDING WAR: WILL THE SECOND HORSEMAN RIDE FOREVER?

Professor Jack S. Levy

Rutgers University

SAS Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar

Fall 2014 (rev)

01:090:297:01

Office: 304 Hickman Hall; 732 932 1073

jacklevy@rci.rutgers.edu

<http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/levy/>

Office Hours: to be announced

The image of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse -- War, Famine, Pestilence, and Death -- is a powerful cultural symbol. It can be traced to chapter six of the Book of Revelation in the Bible, where the Second Horseman was given a "great sword" and "the power ... to take peace from the earth." The Second Horseman has been on quite a ride. War has been a recurrent theme in the relationships between tribes, societies, empires, and states since before the beginning of human civilization. It is undoubtedly the most destructive form of human behavior and a primary source of human suffering. Most of us would like to see an end to war, or, if that is not possible, at least a reduction in the frequency and destructiveness of war. This has led many to ask if war will always be with us. Will the Second Horseman ride forever?

Any serious attempt to forecast the future of war, or to attempt to reduce its frequency or mitigate its severity, requires that we first understand what causes war. Despite the enormous intellectual energy that has been devoted to this question by philosophers, historians, biologists, primatologists, social scientists in a variety of disciplines, and others as well, a scholarly consensus has yet to emerge on the question of what causes war. The only consensus is that war is complex and has many causes, though even this argument is questioned by some. The absence of a full understanding of war is compounded by the fact that most scholars tend to work within their own disciplinary boundaries, with little communication with those in other disciplines, and with little attempt to build on the insights of other disciplines. With these considerations in mind, this seminar focuses on war and its causes. We adopt an interdisciplinary perspective and try to draw on some of the best scholarship from a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, history, biology, primatology, anthropology, archaeology, sociology, psychology, political science, and economics.

We begin our study of war with a brief discussion of historical trends in war, to put our inquiry into context. The question of trends in war has attracted a great deal of attention

in the last few years with the publication of an influential book by Steven Pinker, a Harvard psychologist, entitled *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. Pinker argues, based on a thorough examination of the scholarly literature on war from a variety of disciplines and on detailed statistical analyses, that we are currently living in the most peaceful period in world history. Many but not all scholars accept Pinker's description of past trends, but some, including Professor Levy, have questioned the extrapolation of these trends into the future. We read a short excerpt from Pinker's book to start the semester. We also read, the following week, some famous short pieces on the experience of war from writers and poets. Our discussion of theories of war can get a little abstract at times, and the experience of war as seen from the trenches provides a useful reminder of the phenomena that we are studying, in case images from the media are not reminder enough.

Any study of something as varied and complex as war must begin with some consideration of what war is. This is a key focus of our second session. We examine definitions of war offered by anthropologists, historians, military theorists, and political scientists, who strive for a definition broad enough to encompass the many different forms war has taken over the millennia. No discussion of the definition of war is complete without a consideration of the ideas of Carl von Clausewitz, the 19th century military theorist whose book *On War* is one of the two or three most famous books on war ever written. (We will also be reading selections from the other two.) Clausewitz famously argued that war is a "continuation of politics." That leads to a broader discussion of the political nature of war and of the different ways in which military force has been utilized to advance political ends.

Most discussions of Clausewitz and of the political nature of war make the implicit assumption that when states and other actors use military force, they are trying to advance the interests of the state or group. We summarize this view in our description of the "rational unitary actor" model of group decision-making. However, anyone reading detailed historical accounts of past wars or of media accounts of current wars will sense that decisions for war involve other things besides calculations of the costs and benefits of war for the interests of the state (or non-state actor). This leads us to the "levels-of-analysis" framework, which is a typology or system for the classification of different causes of war (and of the sources of foreign policy behavior more generally). This framework will be useful in our analysis of theories of war advanced by philosophers, anthropologists, and political scientists and other social scientists.

Once we have a better sense of what war is, we begin a preliminary exploration of the causes of war by looking at the theories of war advanced by philosophers Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hobbes, writing in the 17th century, and Rousseau, writing a century later, each began with a description of the "state of nature," before the advent of human civilization. They disagreed, however, on the nature of the human condition in the state of nature. For Hobbes, the state of nature was a "war of every man

against every man,” in which life was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” In contrast, Rousseau saw a peaceful “golden age” inhabited by the “Noble Savage” existing before people became corrupted by human institutions.

A similar theme is central in debates about the origins of war in the disciplines of Anthropology and Archaeology. Some argue that war began with the onset of settled agriculture at the beginning of human civilization (implying a Noble Savage view of earlier times), while others argue that war began much earlier. We also look at debates among anthropologists on the causes of war among more recent tribal societies that have been isolated from modern civilization. Some feminists argue that many theories of war from anthropology and other social sciences are flawed because they neglect the role of gender in the form of patriarchal group structure and other factors. After considering a variety of feminist theories of war and peace, we look at research from primatology, where analysts debate the relevance of patterns of primate aggression for the study of human aggression. We continue this discussion with an examination of an explicitly evolutionary theory of war.

Turning to the modern world and modern warfare (defining “modern,” as most historians do, as the last five centuries), we look at a distinguished historian’s analysis of the evolution of war over the last five centuries of European history. With that historical context in mind, we begin a more focused analysis of the causes of war, organized by the levels-of-analysis framework developed earlier. Our objective here is not so much to answer the philosophical question of the “essence” or meaning of war in some abstract sense, or to explain why war has always been with us, but instead to deal with the more social scientific task of explaining variations in war and peace over time and space. Why is war more likely to occur at some times rather than other times, under some conditions rather than other conditions, between some states rather than other states, under some kinds of leaders rather than other leaders? In other words, as the late Stuart Bremer asked, “who fights whom, where, when, and why?”

We begin this part of the course with an exploration of system-level theories, with a focus on realist theory. To clarify what scholars mean when they basically argue that “the system made them do it” (referring to the states or other actors in question), we look at a model from economics that has been widely adopted in Political Science and in other disciplines, the Prisoner’s Dilemma model. We then turn to more specific realist theories, including balance of power theory and power transition theory. (Many of those writing about the current rise of China and its implications for the international system and possible conflict with the United States implicitly or explicitly adopt a power transition framework.) Next, we turn to the dyadic (bilateral) level and examine the strategic interaction within pairs of states or other actors. We look at the “bargaining model of war,” which originated in Economics, and at debates between the deterrence model and the spiral model.

Next, we examine economic theories of war, which cut across several levels of analysis. We look at Marxist, liberal, and realist theories of the influence of economic factors on war and peace. We then turn to societal-level theories of war, including the diversionary theory of war, democratic peace theory (the near absence of war between democracies), and theories of the impact of public opinion, ideology, and religion on war. Finally we turn to decision-making theories of war. We look at theories of individual and group decision-making from social psychology and related disciplines, and theories of organizational decision-making from management science, sociology, and political science.

Our theoretical investigations highlight a number of themes to consider when thinking about the outbreak of a particular war. Among them are the following: What is the relative importance of strategic, ideological, economic, and domestic political motivations in political leaders' decisions for war? Do states go to war primarily to increase their power and security, to increase their wealth, to promote certain principles of justice or other ideological or religious objectives, to consolidate the domestic positions of key elites, or to respond to pressures from private corporations or other groups? Are states driven more by ambition or by fear? How important are conflicts of interests over tangible issues as opposed to concerns over power, reputation, and internal politics? To what extent are decisions for war made through careful cost-benefit calculations based on interests and on international and domestic constraints, and to what extent are they driven by flawed information processing and other departures from a rational decision-making calculus? Does the political structure of the regime, the economic structure of society, or the country's political culture make any difference? Why do some wars escalate or expand, while others do not? Are the causes of great power wars any different than the causes of wars between weaker states?

One of the best ways to understand theories of war is to apply them to concrete historical cases. Throughout our discussion of theories of war we illustrate theoretical arguments with a variety of historical illustrations. We also undertake more detailed investigations of two historical cases. One is the First World War. This was the “the seminal catastrophe” of the 20th century, with profound consequences that are still being felt and with lessons that are still being debated. It needs to be explained, and the centenary of the war of 1914 is the perfect time to try to explain why it occurred. Our second case to explore in detail is the Cuban Missile Crisis, which is significant because it did not escalate to a war that could easily have gone nuclear. Understanding why this crisis escalated but did not lead to war is important both for historical reasons and for theoretical reasons. We cannot explain why some crises lead to war without understanding why other crises do not lead to war.

Although wars between states have been a central feature of the last five centuries of the global political system, playing a central role in the evolution of that system, they are not the most common form of warfare. In important respects, war has been transformed.

Non-state actors play an increasingly important role, and civil wars, insurgencies, and terrorism are much more common and increasingly central to the national security interests of states. This leads us to an analysis of the changing character of war. We look at “new wars,” along with debates about whether “new wars” are actually new. We examine different theories of civil wars, and also at the nature of terrorism and the interests and strategies of terrorist organizations.

After focusing most of our attention on causal questions, we end the course by turning to normative questions, and more specifically to the longstanding debate about just war. What kinds of wars (if any) are just, and under what conditions? Regardless of our answers to that question – and as a group we are bound to disagree – we then consider the more speculative question of the future of war. Will the Second Horseman continue his long ride, and if so in what direction and with what intensity?

READING

Books

The required reading for the course includes four paperback books. In the order that we read them, they are

Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Michael Howard, *War in European History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Sheldon M. Stern, *The Week the World Stood Still: Inside the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

These books are available for purchase (or perhaps for rental) at Rutgers Barnes & Noble Bookstore (100 Somerset Street, 732 246 8448) and New Jersey Books (37 Easton Avenue; 732 253 7666). These books are also available, perhaps at reduced prices or in a Kindle edition, on the internet. I asked Alexander Library to place on copy of each on Undergraduate Reserves.

Articles and Book Chapters

The required reading for the course also includes a fair number of articles and book chapters. As you will see, many of these readings are fairly short excerpts, so please do not be deterred by the long list. All of these articles and chapters (but not the required books) are available on my Sakai site, www.sakai.rutgers.edu. I assume that most of you are familiar with Sakai. If not, go to the site and then login by entering your Rutgers ID and password. There should be a tab at the top for "Understanding War (SAS Honors)." Click that, and then go to "Resources" in the menu to the left. Folders 1-14 include all the reading (except for required books) for each week of the term. In alphabetical order:

- Allison, Graham T., and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications." *World Politics* 24 (Spring 1972): 40-79.
- Angstrom, Jan. "Introduction: Debating the Nature of Modern War." In Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom, eds., *Rethinking the Nature of War*. London: Frank Cass, 2005. Chap. 1.
- Art, Robert J., "The Four Functions of Force." In Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007. Pp. 141-48.
- Saint Augustine. "Augustine (354-430): Just War in the Service of Peace." Excerpts from *The City of God* and other writings. In Reichberg et al, chap. 7.
- Black, Jeremy. *Why Wars Happen*. New York: New York University Press, 1998. Chap. 1: "Introduction."
- Blainey, Geoffrey. "The Abacus of Power." In Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 3rd ed. New York: Free Press, 1988. Chap. 8.
- Blight, James G., and David A. Welch, "Appendix: Chronology." In Blight and Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux/Noonday Press, 1990. Pp. 405-17.
- Brown, Michael E. "The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview." In Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Coté, Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997. Pp. 3-25.
- Churchill, Winston. "We Shall Fight on the Beaches." Speech by the British Prime Minister to the House of Commons (UK), 4 June 1940.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTw3_PmKtc
- Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. Book I, chap. 1.
- Coser, Lewis. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1956. Pp. 87-95.
- Crane, Stephen. "The Red Badge of Courage." Selection from Melvin Small and J. David Singer, eds., *International War: An Anthology*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989. Pp. 63-79.
- Crenshaw, Martha. "Terrorism and Global Security." In Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007. Pp. 67-82.

- Cunliffe, Barry. "The Roots of Warfare." In Martin Jones and A.C. Fabian, eds., *Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 63-81.
- Doyle, Michael W. "Commercial Pacifism: Smith and Schumpeter." In Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. Chap. 7.
- Ferguson, R. Brian, "Materialist, Cultural and biological theories on why Yonomami make War." *Anthropological Theory* 1, 1 (March 2001): 99-116.
- Gat, Azar. "So Why Do People Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of War." *European Journal of International Relations* 15, 4 (2009): 571-99.
- Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. 38-58.
- Gray, J. Glenn. "The Soldier's Relation to Death" (excerpt from Gray, *The Warriors*). In Melvin Small and J. David Singer, eds., *International War: An Anthology*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989. Pp. 85-93.
- Gulick, Edward V. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955. Chap. II.
- Hagan, Joe D., "Does Decision Making Matter? Systematic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory." *International Studies Review*, 3, 2 (Summer 2001): 5-46.
- Hobbes, Thomas. "Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): Solving the Problem of Civil War." Excerpts from *De Cive* and from *Leviathan*. In Reichberg et al., chap. 33.
- Janis, Irving L. "Groupthink." In Neil J. Kressel, ed., *Political Psychology: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. New York: Paragon, 1993. Chap. 24.
- Jervis, Robert. "Deterrence, the Spiral Model, and the Intentions of the Adversary." In Ralph K. White, *Psychology and the Prevention of Nuclear War*. New York: New York University Press, 1986. Pp. 107-30.
- Jervis, Robert. "War and Misperception." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18, 4 (Spring, 1988): 675-700.
- Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Stanford University Press, 1999. Chap. 1.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): Cosmopolitan Rights, Human Progress, and Perpetual Peace." Excerpts from *Perpetual Peace* and from *The Metaphysics of Morals*. In Reichberg, et al., chap. 41.
- Kautilya. Excerpts from *Arthashastra*, entitled "The Strategy by which Rulers Should Protect their Interests." In Evan Luard, ed., *Basic Texts in International Relations*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. Pp. 126-29.
- Keeley, Lawrence H. *War before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Chap. 1.
- Kelly, Raymond C. *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. Pp. 1-10.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "Tommy."
<http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/tommy.html>
- Kydd, Andrew H., and Barbara F. Walter. "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, 1 (Summer 2006): 49-80.

- Machiavelli, Niccolò. "Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527: War is Just to Whom it is Necessary." Excerpts from *The Prince* and from *Discourses on the First Decade of Livy*. In Reichberg, et al., chap. 23.
- McCrae, John. "In Flanders Fields." <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/poems/john-mccrae-in-flanders-fields.htm>
- Mao Tse-tung, "Military Principles." In Lawrence Freedman, ed. *War*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. 320-323.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: War as an Instrument of Emancipation." Excerpts from *The German Ideology*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and other writings, in Reichberg, et al., chap. 47.
- Mason, T. David. "Evolution of Theory on Civil War and Revolution." In Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies III: The Intrastate Dimension*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009. Pp. 63-99.
- Mead, Margaret. "Warfare Is Only an Invention--Not a Biological Necessity." In Leon Bramson and George W. Goethals, eds. *War*, rev. ed. New York: Basic Books, 1968. Pp. 269-74.
- Mearsheimer, John J. "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power." In Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, eds., *International Politics*. 7th ed. New York: Longman, 2005. Pp. 50-60.
- Megargee, Geoffrey P. "Chronology, 1914." In Richard E. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, eds., *The Origins of World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Appendix A.
- Pearlman, Wendy. "Spoiling Inside and Out: International Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process," *International Security* 33, 3 (Winter 2009/09): 79-109.
- Pinker, Steven. "A History of Violence." Edge Master Class, 2011. Excerpt from <http://edge.org/conversation/mc2011-history-violence-pinker>
- Posen, Barry R. "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 27-47.
- Reichberg, Gregory M., Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, eds. *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. (selections)
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778): Supranational Government and Peace." Excerpts from *The State of War* and from the *Summary and the Critique of Abbé de Saint-Pierre's Project for Perpetual Peace*. In Reichberg, et al., chap. 39.
- Russett, Bruce. *The Prisoners of Insecurity*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1983. Chap. 5-6.
- Schelling, Thomas. "The Diplomacy of Violence." In Schelling, *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966. Chap. 1.
- Stein, Janice Gross. "Building Politics into Psychology: The Misperception of Threat." In Neil J. Kressel, *Political Psychology*. New York: Paragon House, 1993. Pp. 367-92.
- Sun-Tsu, *Art of War*. Trans. By Ralph D. Sawyer. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993. Chap. 3. Pp. 157-66.
- Tammen, Ronald L. et al. *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*. New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2000. Chap. 1.

- Tennyson, Lord Alfred. "The Charge of the Light Brigade"
<http://www.nationalcenter.org/ChargeoftheLightBrigade.html>
- Thomson, James C. "How Vietnam Happened? An Autopsy." *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1973: 47-53.
- Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*. In Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. New York: The Free Press, 1996. Book V. 5.84-5.116 (pp. 350-57).
- Waltz, Kenneth N. *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. Chap. 1.
- Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic Books, 1977. Chap. 2 & 5.
- Wrangham, Robert. "Why Apes and Humans Kill." In Martin Jones and A.C. Fabian, eds., *Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 43-62.
- Wright, Quincy. *A Study of War*. Abridged by Louise Leonard Wright. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942. Pp. 5-7.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

My major objectives in designing this seminar are to expose students to a wide range of scholarly thought about war, to encourage critical thinking about questions relating to war and peace, to facilitate informed and lively discussions in our weekly meetings, to provide students with the opportunity to conduct their own research projects on topics relating to war, and to give students as much guidance as possible with those research projects. Given these aims, I have decided not to schedule examinations to test students' comprehension of the reading and ability to use that reading to write and speak intelligently about issues relating to war and peace. That comprehension is essential to our larger objectives, however, and I will evaluate it based on a student's contributions to our weekly discussions, both in terms of quantity and quality of those contributions.

Thus one requirement for the class is to do all of the required reading in advance, and to come to class prepared to discuss the reading and to use it to engage in the wide-ranging discussions in class. Your active participation in class discussions is important. It is a central part of the learning experience; it is a skill that will serve you well in the future; it counts for a significant fraction of your grade; and it makes the class a lot more fun.

The more formal requirements for the class include two interrelated paper assignments that build on each other – a preliminary paper and a research paper, along with a prior written statement of your research topic. The two papers are described in more detail below. All page lengths are for single-space pages (with an extra space between paragraphs).

- 1) Statement of topic for research paper. Due October 8 (anytime). Email to me directly.
- 2) Paper #1. Preliminary paper. Length: 2-3 pages, including a preliminary bibliography

of at least ten sources. Due November 5 (anytime). Submit on Sakai, assignments tab.

3) Paper #2. Research paper. Due Friday December 19, noon. The length might vary depending on the project, but most papers should fall in the 12-16 page range. Submit on Sakai, assignments tab.

There is no mid-term or final examination.

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

		<u>due date</u>
statement of research paper topic	0%	October 8
preliminary paper	15%	November 5
research paper	60%	December 19 (noon)
contributions to class discussions	25%	

Students should email their paper topic to me, but they should submit their preliminary paper and research paper under the “Assignments” tab on Sakai. Papers should be in a Word or pdf format. Please do not submit your papers in an .odt or other format; Sakai will not accept them. For those who prefer to work with other word processing programs, please convert your papers to a Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format before you submit it. If you are not sure how to do that, I am sure someone at university computing services can help. Note that Sakai automatically runs papers through the “Turnitin” program. That program identifies passages in a paper that match passages in the “Turnitin” data base, which includes previous student papers and internet sources.

RESEARCH PAPER

There is a “default” or “standard” paper topic for the course. You pick a war, any war, and analyze its causes. This project involves the combination of history, political science, and other social sciences, in that your historical analysis should be guided by and informed by some of the theoretical concepts developed in the course. However, given the wide range of backgrounds and majors in the class, I will also be receptive to other paper topics, which I will call an “alternative” track. Regardless of whether you take the standard paper track or the alternative paper track, you should consult with me early about your paper topic so I can give you proper guidance. I will continue to offer feedback throughout the process. Below I include a description of my expectations for both the research paper and the preliminary paper on the standard track, starting with the latter, which is due first. I also include suggestions on how to go about selecting your war. I then include a few ideas for papers on the alternative track, and am open to discussion of other paper topics as well.

Whatever track you adopt, you should understand that this is a research paper. I expect it to include extensive documentation in the form of footnotes and references. You can use

whatever reference style that you like, as long as you are consistent. In class I will discuss a couple of alternative reference styles. Whatever style you use, however, please include a list of sources cited in a “References” section at the end of the paper. Please use footnotes rather than endnotes.

“Standard” Track, Preliminary Paper: “Alternative Interpretations” paper (#1)

2-3 pages single space; includes preliminary bibliography of at least ten sources, due November 5 on Sakai.

Historians and other scholars usually vary in their interpretations of particular historical events or periods, including wars. One thing that motivates professional historians is the aim of demonstrating that an existing interpretation is wrong or at least incomplete, suggesting a new interpretation, and supporting it with evidence from documents or from other sources. If one accepts the conventional wisdom about a particular episode, then there is not much point to doing yet another study. This norm is if anything more pronounced in political science and other social sciences. Political scientists who want to test their own theory against the historical evidence identify several alternative theories and then try to demonstrate, based on the evidence, that their preferred theory provides a better explanation than do the alternatives.

Sometimes it is fairly easy to identify alternative interpretations of a particular crisis or war. Take the U.S. decision for war against Iraq in 2003 as an example. Some argue that it was “all about oil.” Others emphasize the ideological aim of overthrowing an evil dictator and bringing democracy to Iraq and to the region, the fear (however misplaced) of Iraq’s nuclear weapons program, the role of neoconservatives in the U.S. decision-making process, or the world view and personality of U.S. President George W. Bush. It is helpful to know what the leading alternative interpretations are before you write your own analysis. Thus the main purpose of this alternative interpretations paper is to help you write a better research paper.

Alternative interpretations are sometimes evident in the title of books and articles. The subtitle of Herbert Bass’s book on *American Entry into World War I* (1964), for example, is *Submarines, Sentiment, or Security*. This suggests that American motivations were either the German submarine threat to U.S. commerce or to the principle of freedom of the seas, the ideological commitment to liberal democracies in Europe, or the preservation of U.S. security by maintaining a balance of power in Europe. To take another example, in my co-authored study of the Crimean War (1853-56), which I wrote with a former Rutgers student who took a seminar like this with me fifteen years ago, we used the title “Crisis Mismanagement or Conflict of Interests? A Case Study of the Crimean War.” We framed the study as a debate between the argument that the wars was due to the mismanagement of the crisis by political leaders, and the argument that the primary cause of the war was a conflict of vital interests between the two parties.

Identifying alternative interpretations is often complicated by the fact that it is usually possible to identify one or two variations of each alternative interpretation. You have to use your own judgment as to whether a given variation is important enough to qualify as a separate alternative interpretation. The more you read about theories about war and about historical cases, the better the feel you have for the cases and the easier it is to make these judgments. I am generally looking for three to five alternative interpretations for a particular crisis or war.

If alternative explanations do not emerge naturally from debates among historians, you can suggest some yourself based on your understanding of theories of war. One easy approach would be to adopt an approach based on the levels of analysis framework. This might lead to the identification of an international system level (or realist) interpretation, a domestic politics interpretation, and an individual-level interpretation. Some might want to add a bureaucratic politics interpretation. Others might want to suggest two domestic interpretations – for example, one based on the diversionary theory of war, and another based on the pressure from powerful domestic economic interests.

My primary aim in assigning this preliminary paper is to help you write a better research paper. One thing that separates many excellent research papers from merely good papers (in my classes, at least) is that an excellent paper often includes a discussion of why a given interpretation is better than the leading alternative explanations. Note that parts of your preliminary paper, or preferably a revised version of it, can and should be incorporated into your final research paper for the course.

This “alternative interpretations” paper should include a bibliography of at least ten sources. You need not cite all of these sources in this preliminary paper. I will make your task easier by sending you a list of recommended sources after I learn of your research topic. The length of my list may vary depending on which war you select. In any case, I expect that you will incorporate some additional sources into your final research paper, beyond those I suggest.

Standard Track Research paper

12-16 pages, single space (space between paragraphs), due Friday, December 19, noon.

The paper should focus on the causes of the particular crisis or war that you select for investigation. I will circulate additional guidelines about the paper later, and we will talk more about it on and off throughout the course. In addition, I have set aside half of our December 2 meeting to talk more about the papers and about any questions you might have. Here I provide a preliminary summary of my expectations for the paper.

The paper must be more than a historical chronology of the events leading to the war. You need to analyze the causes of the war, and causes involve more than identifying a sequence of events. (At some point during the term we will have a discussion of what we

mean by cause and by different types of causes.) The paper must be analytically focused and guided by some of the theoretical concepts that we develop in the class. That is, you should use some of the theoretical concepts from the first part of the course (for example, balance of power, or diversionary theory) to help explain the outbreak of your war. The paper must include an evaluation of the relative importance of different causal factors at different levels of analysis in the processes leading to the outbreak of the war. I do not want a laundry list of ten or twenty causes of the war. You need to prioritize among the many causes, and identify primary and secondary causes of the war.

I want to emphasize that although your main aim is to provide a causal interpretation of the outbreak of your war, it is not just an interpretive essay. It is a piece of historical research that must be well grounded in and supported by the available historical evidence. This requires extensive research and extensive footnoting. In your first paper – on alternative interpretations of your war – you should include a list of sources that you have consulted. If something critical is missing I will let you know. If I recommend additional sources that you have omitted, you would be wise to follow up on my suggestions.

Selecting a Paper Topic (deadline: October 8, by email)

This is a major paper that will consume a fair amount of your time and determine over half of your grade for the course, so it is important that you pick a historical case that is of interest to you. Some of you may already have a pretty good sense of what war you want to analyze, or perhaps a short list from which to select, or maybe a time period or region or country that interests you – because of your previous school work or reading, a film, or your family history. But you need to reduce your choices to one. Let me suggest a reasonably quick way of gaining enough familiarity with some historical cases to help you make an informed decision.

Although internet sources like Wikipedia generally focus more on the history of particular wars and what led up to them than on causal explanations for the war, and hence are of limited value for your research paper, such sources can be quite useful for getting a basic sense of the war. Thus reading about a few wars on Wikipedia or other internet site would be one useful place to start. I would also be happy to make additional suggestions.

One thing to keep in mind for any of these wars is that this class focuses on the causes of the war, not how the war is fought. I suggest – for the purposes of this class, at least – that you stop reading when the shooting starts, assuming that the shooting marks the beginning of the war.

You are free to pick just about any war – recent or ancient, Western or non-Western, interstate or civil – as long as you get my approval in advance. We spend more time in class on theories of interstate war than theories of civil war, so you will have a better theoretical background for the analysis of interstate wars than for civil wars. It is fine,

though, if you want to study a civil war. In that case, I will suggest a handful of additional theoretical readings on civil war to provide a theoretical foundation for your analysis.

I have had students write on everything from the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431-404BCE) to the 2003 Iraq war and a lot of wars in between. This being the centenary of the First World War, some aspect of that war would be a great topic for a seminar paper, and I could give you a lot of guidance. Given the complexity of that war, however, you might focus on a single state and the processes through which it entered the war. For example, you could write a paper on “Germany and the Origins of the First World War” (or Austria-Hungary, Russia, etc.). For most other wars, however, I would want you to explain the war as a whole.

If you follow the standard track, the first requirement, the statement of your research topic, can be one or two sentences. The second requirement, the preliminary paper, will be a discussion of the leading alternative interpretations of the war. I will provide a memo with guidelines for the third and major requirement, the research paper itself. I can also provide a few examples of good research papers on the causes of a war (but not your own case).

After you have selected a war to investigate, it is important that you begin collecting research materials. A fair amount of material will be available on the internet, especially in the form of journal articles, but other material is available only in books. Hopefully most books will be available in Rutgers libraries. If not, you might have to go through EZ Borrow or Interlibrary Loan (if these are unfamiliar, ask the librarian at the Alexander Library Reference Desk for details, or bring your computer to class and I will show you). EZ Borrow or Interlibrary Loan are efficient systems, but they do not work overnight, so please do not put off your collection of research materials until the last minute.

“Alternative” Track Research Paper

My aim in offering this alternative track is to make it virtually certain that students with different backgrounds, majors, interests, and career goals will be able to find a research topic on which they will enjoy spending a fair amount of time and energy over the course of the semester. This track is harder for me to describe because it can take so many different forms, depending on student interest. One thing I can say, however, is that with few exceptions the paper should be a causal analysis. It cannot just be a description of a phenomenon or pattern. It must offer a causal explanation of that phenomenon.

It might be helpful if I gave a few examples, which might be of interest in themselves or give you some ideas about alternative topics. Three come to mind, but there are countless more. The first two were stimulated by my attendance at an interdisciplinary conference on the First World War in London a month or so ago.

(1) How was literature, art, film, and/or music (pick one or all) used as propaganda in the First World War? You can focus just on the United States or on Britain (or on another state if you have the language skills). If you prefer, you can focus instead on the Second World War. If you pick this topic, your initial statement of your research topic should be a half page summary. You would follow that up, for the second “preliminary paper” assignment, with a 2-3 page paper that basically refines and extends your initial statement of your research topic. You would elaborate on your summary, outline how you plan to proceed, and summarize any themes you hope to develop. Like papers for the other track, it should also include a preliminary bibliography with at least ten sources.

(2) How did the First World War affect the role of women in American society over the long term – in the workplace, in the political arena, and/or at home? (you should feel free to pick another country if you prefer) This paper would go beyond a description of what happened to include an analysis of how it happened and why the changes were enduring or short-lived. You would need to make an argument that these changes were (or were not) the causal result of the war and not something that would have happened anyway given current social, economic, and political trends. Note that I am looking for an argument, not proof. If you pick this topic, your initial statement of your research topic should be a half page summary. Your preliminary paper (#2) would be a refined and extended statement of your paper topic, a review of existing research on your topic, a preliminary summary of scholarly debates about your topic, and a preliminary bibliography of at least ten sources.

(3) How important is the profit motive as a cause of war? Pick a war, make some theoretical arguments, informed by the theoretical literature, as to how the profit motive might lead to war, and provide evidence that supports or contradicts those causal arguments. Make sure you specify who it is who would profit – the state and society as a whole, a private corporation or economic sector, individual, or particular bureaucracy – and how that entity attempted to influence government policy. The importance of the profit motive can only be expressed relative to the importance of other causal factors, so you need to incorporate other factors into your analysis. In that respect this topic begins to look a little like the standard track topic. For this reason, if you select a paper topic like this one, you would still do an “alternative interpretations” paper on the leading alternative interpretations of the war. Your initial statement of research topic should be a half-page summary.

Please feel free to consult with me about other topics for research papers.

NOTE #1: Please turn off your cell phones before class begins. If you need to have your cell phone on for medical or other reasons, please get a note from your dean. You are free to use laptop computers, iPADS, or other devices to take notes, to look at the syllabus or reading material online, or to look up other factual material relating to the course, but not

for any other purpose – texting or emailing is not permitted.

NOTE #2: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. The University, the SAS Honors Program, and I each take academic integrity very seriously. The University imposes heavy penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If the meanings of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty are not clear, please see the Rutgers website on academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> .

NOTE #3: ABSENCES. Attendance is required at all sessions.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: number indicates the week of the term (beginning Sept. 2); letters represent multiple topics each week.

For each week, please read the different items in the order in which they appear here, not in the alphabetical order in which they appear on Sakai.

- 1a. **Course Introduction** (September 2)
focus, aims, organization, requirements

- 1b. **Historical Trends in War**
Please read this short piece (or watch the video) for our first day of class if you can. If you do not have time, no problem, read it for next week.
Steven Pinker, "A History of Violence" (excerpt); or watch the video at <http://edge.org/conversation/mc2011-history-violence-pinker>; focus on the section on "The Long Peace," about a sixth of the way in, starting just before the figure on "The 100 Worst Wars & Atrocities."

- 2a. **The Experience of War: Perspectives from Literature, Poetry, and the Front Lines** (September 9)
Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854)
<http://www.nationalcenter.org/ChargeoftheLightBrigade.html>
Stephen Crane, "The Red Badge of Courage" (1895, excerpt)
John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields" (1915)
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/poems/john-mccrae-in-flanders-fields.htm>
Rudyard Kipling, "Tommy" (1892)
<http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/tommy.html>
Winston Churchill, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches." Speech by the British Prime Minister to the House of Commons (UK), 4 June 1940.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTw3_PmKtc
J. Glenn Gray, "The Soldier's Relation to Death" (1970)

- 2b. **What Is War?**
Quincy Wright, "Definitions of War"
Raymond Kelly, "Introduction" to *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*
Jeremy Black, *Why Wars Happen*, "Introduction"
Levy & Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 1-14

- 2c. **The Politics of War**
 Sun-Tsu, *The Art of War*, excerpts
 Clausewitz, “What Is War?”
 Mao Tse-tung, “Military Principles”
 Robert J. Art, “The Four Functions of Force”
 Thomas Schelling, “The Diplomacy of Violence”
- 2d. **The Rational Unitary Actor Model**
- 3a. **A Framework for Understanding the Causes of War:
 The Levels of Analysis** (September 16)
 Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, “Introduction”
 Levy & Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 14-27
- 3b. **Three Interpretations of the Question “What Causes War?”**
- 3c. **Political Philosophers on the State of Nature: Hobbes and Rousseau**
 Thomas Hobbes, excerpts from *De Cive* and from *Leviathan*
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, excerpts from *The State of War* and from the *Summary*
 and the *Critique* of Abbé de Saint-Pierre’s *Project for Perpetual Peace*.
- 4a. **The Origins of War: Perspectives from Anthropology and Archaeology**
 (September 23)
 Lawrence Keeley, “The Pacified Past: The Anthropology of War”
 Brian Ferguson, “Materialist, Cultural and Biological Theories on Why
 Yanomami Make War”
 Barry Cunliffe, “The Roots of Warfare”
 Margaret Mead, “Warfare Is Only an Invention – Not a Biological Necessity”
- 4b. **Feminist Theories of War and Peace**
 Joshua Goldstein, “Feminist Theories of War and Peace”
- 4c. **The View from Primatology**
 Robert Wrangham, “Why Apes and Humans Kill”
- 4d. **Aggression and War: An Evolutionary Explanation**
 Azar Gat, “So Why Do People Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of
 War”
5. **History of War: The European Experience** (September 30)
 Michael Howard, *War in European History*

6. **System Level Explanations** (October 7)
- 6a. **Realist Theory**
 John J. Mearsheimer, “Anarchy and the Struggle for Power”
 Thucydides, “The Melian Dialogue,” from *The Peloponnesian War*
 Kautilya, excerpts from *Arthasastra* on “Strategy”
 Levy & Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 2, pp. 28-38.
- 6b. **The Prisoner's Dilemma Model**
 Bruce Russett, *The Prisoners of Insecurity*, chap. 5-6
- 6c. **Balance of Power Theory and Power Transition Theory**
 Edward V. Gulick, “The Aims of Europe’s Classical Balance of Power”
 Ronald L. Tammen, et al. *Power Transitions*, chap. 1
 Levy & Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 2, pp. 38-50.
7. **Dyadic-Level Theories: Strategic Interaction** (October 14)
- 7a. **The Bargaining Model of War**
 Geoffrey Blainey, “The Abacus of Power”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 63-70
- 7b. **The Deterrence Model and the Spiral Model**
 Robert Jervis, “Deterrence, the Spiral Model, and the Intentions of the Adversary”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 55-63
- 7c. **International Rivalries**
- 8a. **Economic Theories of War** (October 21)
 Michael W. Doyle, “Commercial Pacifism: Smith and Schumpeter”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 70-77, 83-93.
- 8b. **Societal-Level Causes of War**
 Lewis Coser, “Conflict with Out-Groups and Group Structure,” pp. 87-95 only.
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 93-104, 117-127
- The Democratic Peace**
 Immanuel Kant, excerpts from *Perpetual Peace* and from *The Metaphysics of Morals*
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, pp. 104-117

9. **Decision-Making Theories** (October 21)
- 9a. **The Individual Level: The Psychology of Decision-Making**
 Joe Hagan, “Does Decision Making Matter? Systematic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory”
 Janice Gross Stein, “Building Politics into Psychology: The Misperception of Threat”
 Robert Jervis, “War and Misperception”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 5 & pp. 180-182
- 9b. **Decision-Making in Organizations and Groups**
 Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, “Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications”
 Irving L. Janis, “Groupthink”
 James C. Thomson, “How Vietnam Happened? An Autopsy”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 6
10. **The First World War** (November 4)
 William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*
 Geoffrey P. Megargee, “Chronology” and “Dramatis Personae”
 No need to read, but this is a useful reference on names and dates.
11. **The Cuban Missile Crisis** (November 11)
 Sheldon Stern, *The Week the World Stood Still*
 See lists of dramatis personae at
<http://www.cubanmissilecrisis.org/background/dramatis-personae/excomm/>
 See James G. Blight and David A. Welch, “Chronology”
 No need to read the last two, but these are useful references on names and dates.
- 12a. **The Transformation of War** (November 18)
 Mary Kaldor, “Introduction” to *New and Old Wars*
 Jan Angstrom, “Introduction: Debating the Nature of Modern War”
- 12b. **Civil War**
 Brown, “The Causes of Internal Conflict”
 Barry R. Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict”
 T. David Mason, “The Evolution of Theory on Civil War and Revolution”
 Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, chap. 6

- 12c. **Terrorism**
 Martha Crenshaw, “Terrorism and Global Security”
 Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, “The Strategies of Terrorism”
 Wendy Pearlman, “Spoiling Inside and Out: International Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process” (pp. 79-96 only)
- 13a. **Theories of Just War** (December 2)
 Thucydides, “The Melian Dialogue,” from *The Peloponnesian War* (recall from section 6a)
 Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chap. 2 (“The Crime of War”) & chap. 5 (“Anticipations”)
 Saint Augustine, from *The City of God* and other writings, in Reichberg et al, “Augustine (354-430): Just War in the Service of Peace”
 Machiavelli, from *The Prince* and from *Discourses on the First Decade of Livy*, in Reichberg, et al., “Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527): War is Just to Whom it is Necessary”
 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, from *The German Ideology*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and other writings, in Reichberg, et al., “Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: War as an Instrument of Emancipation”
- 13b. **Discussions of Research Papers** (December 2)
 Come with general questions about style and presentation, and with specific questions about your topic.
14. **Whither the Second Horseman? Will He Ride Forever?** (December 9)