THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF WAR

Course topic: the causes and prevention of interstate war. Course goal: discovering and assessing means to prevent or control war. Hence we focus on manipulable or controllable war-causes. Covered topics include the dilemmas, misperceptions, crimes and blunders that caused wars of the past; the origins of these and other war-causes; the possible causes of wars of the future; and possible means to prevent such wars, including short-term policy steps and more utopian schemes.

Covered historical cases include World War I, World War II, Korea, Indochina, and the Peloponnesian, Crimean and Seven Years wars.

Requirements: Grades will be based on two short (4-6 doublespaced pages) analytical papers, one very short (1-2 doublespaced pages) response paper that react to the reading and lectures, two short (15 minute) quizzes, a final exam, and contribution to section discussion. Quizzes will occur in class during the weeks of March 12 and April 30. The response paper will be due on March 8. The two 4-6 page papers will be due on Thursday, March 22 and Thursday, May 10. I will hand out study questions for the final later in the term.

Your 1-2 page response paper should advance an argument relevant to the course. Specifically, your argument can dispute argument(s) advanced in the reading or lectures; can concur with argument(s) advanced in the reading or lectures; can assess or explain policies or historical events described in the reading and lectures; or can address current events that are relevant to course materials or issues. In other words, your choice of topic is quite open. Evaluation of policies or ideas covered in the reading or lecture is encouraged. Somewhere in your paper—preferably at the beginning—please offer a 1-2 sentence summary of your argument. This paper will not be graded but is mandatory and must be completed to receive full credit for class participation.

Before writing your papers, please familiarize yourself with the rules of citing sources (attached to the end of the 17.423 course syllabus), and make sure you follow them. Failure to cite sources properly is plagiarism.

Course grades will be determined as follows: Final = 35%; Papers = 35% (17.5% each); Quizzes = 15% (7.5% each); Section attendance/contribution = 15%.

Student-led debates on responsibility for World War I and World War II will be organized in section when those wars are covered (in April.)

Assigned readings total about 1650 pages, for a 14-week average of 118 pages per week, but they vary markedly in amount, so try to budget your time to be able to cover heavy weeks (e.g. the two World Wars, which together cover 770 pages in 4 weeks—i.e., nearly 200 pages per week.) Students are expected to do the readings before section meeting. This is important! (You may be called on in section from time to time.)

This is an undergraduate course, but is open to graduate students.

Students should buy these books at the MIT COOP:
Sebastian Haffner, The Meaning of Hitler (Harvard University Press, 1979)
Saburo Ienaga, The Pacific War, 1931-1945 (Pantheon, 1979)
Fred Iklé, Every War Must End, rev. ed (Columbia U. Press, 1991)


All other readings will be available as xeroxed course notes, and can be purchased from the Technology Copy Center, in the basement of building E52, which is on Wadsworth Street. These are denoted with a "C"; readings in books available in the COOP bookstore are denoted with a "BK".

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION

Feb. 6: The causes of war in perspective. Does international politics follow regular laws of motion? If so, how can we discover them? Can we use methods like those of the harder sciences?

II. 33 HYPOTHESES ON THE CAUSES OF WAR

Feb. 8, 13, 15: 8 Hypotheses on Military Factors as Causes of War.


BK 4. Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," in Lynn Jones, *Cold War and After*, pp. 193-203. Note: these page are 20% of the article; much of the rest (pp. 204-236) is assigned over the next two weeks. But please focus for now on pages 193-203, which discuss the crucial matter of offense, defense, and war.

I include this article partly to clue you to where I am coming from on the causes of war. Your skepticism is allowed.

For your optional delectation see also John Mueller's collection of predictions, "Various Shapes of Things to Come," appended to the course syllabus. Has our understanding of war made progress since the days of Henry Buckle, Randolph Bourne, and David Starr Jordan? And see also, for background, the appended data on war deaths from Ruth Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures*, pp. 28-31.
Feb. 22, 27, March 1: 10 Hypotheses on Misperception and the Causes of War: Hypotheses from Psychology; Militarism; Nationalism; Spirals and Deterrence; Defects in Academe and the Press; Accidental War.


C 2. Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1976), pp. 58-84. Some say conflict is best resolved by the carrot, while using the stick merely provokes; others would use the stick, warning that using the carrot ("appeasement") emboldens others to make more demands. Who's right? Probably both—but under what circumstances? and how can you tell which circumstances you are in?

BK 3. Van Evera, "Primed for Peace," pp. 204-211.

C 4. William Zimmerman, "Yugoslav Disintegration, Social and Economic Change, and Balkan Transformation, (unpublished manuscript, November 1991), Table 5: "National Identity and Perceptions of National Inequality in Croatia." The Croats and Serbs of Croatia inhabited the same country but different realities. Did this help cause the Serb-Croat war of 1991-95? What if the gulf between their perceptions had been narrower?

C 5. Chris Hedges, "In Bosnia's Schools, 3 Ways Never to Learn From History," New York Times, November 25, 1997, p. A1. More about separate Balkan realities. It was once said that "war begins in the classroom." Is that such a silly notion? Do the Balkans' separate realities, and the Balkans' wars, stem from separate and divergent teaching of the past?

C 6. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Purpose of Political Science," in James C. Charlesworth, ed., A Design for Political Science: Scope, Objectives, and Methods (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1966), pp. 69-74. Are scholars part of the solution or part of the problem? An eminent professor of international relations says his colleagues are gutless wonders who won't tell the state or society when they are wrong.


Note: there is no class Tuesday Feb. 20 (President's Day).
March 6, 8: 15 More Causes of War and Peace: Culture, Gender, Language, Democracy, Social equality & social justice, Minority rights & human rights, Prosperity, Economic interdependence, Revolution, Capitalism, Imperial decline and collapse, Cultural learning, Religion, Emotional factors (revenge, contempt, honor), Polarity of the international system; Causes of civil war.


BK 4. John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," in Lynn-Jones, Cold War and After, pp. 147-155, 165-167, 176-187; five theories of war-causation are discussed there. Note: you might skim the rest of the Mearsheimer article as well, to get his whole drift.

BK 5. Van Evera, "Primed for Peace," pp. 211-236. On the democracy and polarity questions, who is more persuasive, Mearsheimer or this guy?


III. CASES: WARS AND CRISES

March 13: The Seven Years War


general theories of war causes does his account support? How might this war have been prevented? By whom?

March 15: The Crimean War


C 2. Smoke, War, pp. 147-194 ("The Crimean War"). A good synopsis of the strange events leading up to the outbreak of this war.

March 20: The Wars of German Unification: 1864, 1866, and 1870; and segue to World War I

C 1. Ziegler, War, Peace & IR, Chapter 1, "The Wars for German Unification," (pp. 7-20), a (very) basic history.

March 22, April 3, 5: World War I

C 1. Palmer & Colton, History of the Modern World, 7th ed., pp. 695-718 ("The First World War"). This is assigned to provide basic background for non-aficionados of WWI.

C 2. Imanuel Geiss, German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914 (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), pp. vii-ix, 75-83, 106-181, 206-207; the key pages are pp. 121-127, 142-150, 206-207--focus on these pages and read the rest more lightly. (Make sure not to miss the tale of the War Council of 8 December 1912, including Admiral Müller's notes on the Council). This book summarizes the views of the "Fischer School," which argues that German aggression was a prime cause of World War I. Others believe Fisher and Geiss blame Germany unduly. Who's right?


C 4. Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 96-142 ("The Army and the Idea of Preventive War," and "The Army and the Civilians.") In Germany the army also purveyed the concept of preventive war, the notion that war was healthy and beneficial, and other exotic ideas; and within Germany it became a law unto itself—a "state within the state," in Gordon Craig's phrase.


For more on World War I origins see the documents collection at www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1914.html

Note: there is no class March 27, 29 (Spring break).

April 10: Interlude: Hypotheses on Escalation & Limitation of War; and Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Strategy and the Causes of War.


April 12, 19, 24, 26: World War II


BK6. Ienaga, *The Pacific War 1931-1945*, pp. vii-152, 247-256. Was the Japanese decision for war a rational response to circumstances, or in some sense "irrational"? Ienaga and Sagan disagree--who's right?


Note: no class Tues. April 17 (Patriots' day).

May 1, 3: The Cold War, Korea and Indochina.


BK2. John Stoessinger, *Nations at Dawn*, pp. xi-119. Paterson et al. is a standard history; Stoessinger is interpretive.

May 8, 10: The Peloponnesian War.


IV: THE FUTURE OF WAR

May 15, 17: Testing & Applying Theories of War Causation; the Future of War, Solutions to War.

BK1. Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete?" in Lynn-Jones, *Cold War and After*, pp. 81-103. Kaysen says past causes of war are already gone. But if he's right, why does war continue?

"Collective Security," pp. 127-45, 179-203. Many people have offered these answers. Do you think they would work? (Why haven't they been implemented yet?)


FURTHER READING

I: THE CAUSES OF WAR

The causes of war, general & theoretical works:

Kenneth N. Waltz, Man, the State, and War (NY: Columbia University Press, 1954)

Arms and war:


Misperception:


**Gender and War:**

Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart, eds., *The "Man" Question in International Relations* (Boulder: Westview, 1997)

**Militarism:**


See also representative writings on war and international affairs by military officers, e.g., Friedrich von Bernhardi, Ferdinand Foch, Giulio Douhet, Nathan Twining, Thomas Powers, and Curtis LeMay.

**Nationalism—general works:**


**Nationalist mythmaking:**


**Democratic peace theory, dictatorial peace theory:**


Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace: An International Security Reader* (Cambridge: MIT Press,
Human instinct theories of war:

Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations* pp. 274-288.

Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, pp. 16-79.


Civil war, its control:


Negotiation & diplomacy:


**Mediation:**


**Limited War:**


For more references, see Smoke's bibliography.

**Arms races:**


II: **HISTORICAL SOURCES**

General surveys of global international history include:


For more sources see the bibliography in Palmer and Colton. Another excellent bibliographic source is Jürgen Förster, David French, David Stevenson and Russel Van Wyk, eds., *War and Society Newsletter: A Bibliographical Survey* (Munich: Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, annual since 1973); it lists articles and book chapters relevant to international relations and war.

General surveys of European international history:


Also pertinent are the relevant books in four series of general histories:

1. The "Langer" series, published by Harper Torchbooks, 15-odd volumes covering western history since 1200, under the general editorship of William Langer (e.g. Raymond Sontag, *A Broken World, 1919-1939*).
2. The Longman's "General History of Europe" series, covering western history since Roman times, published by Longman, under the general editorship of Denys Hays (e.g. J.M. Roberts, *Europe 1880-1945*).
3. The Fontana "History of Europe" series, published by Fontana/Collins, covering history since the middle ages, under the general editorship of J.H. Plumb (e.g. J.A.S. Grenville, *Europe Reshaped, 1848-78*);
4. The "New Cambridge Modern History" and "Cambridge Ancient History" series, covering western history from the beginning.

**The Seven Years War:**

An overview:


On the Franco-British conflict in the Seven Years War:


On the Prussian-Austrian-Russian-French war of 1756:


**The Crimean War:**

The Italian Wars of Independence:

The Wars of German Unification:

World War I:
Basic histories include:
D.C.B. Lieven, Russia and the Origins of the First World War (New York: St. Martin's, 1983)
Imanuel Geiss, German Foreign Policy 1871-1914 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976)

Surveys of debates about the war's origins are:

Other sources on the origins of the war include:
Fritz Fischer, War of Illusions (NY: Norton, 1975)
Contemporary descriptions of the political climate in Germany are:

William Roscoe Thayer, ed., Out Of Their Own Mouths (NY: Appleton, 1917)
Wallace Notestein, ed. Conquest and Kultur: Aims of Germans in Their Own Words (Washington: Committee on Public Information, 1917)
J.P. Bang, Hurrah and Hallelujah: The Teaching of Germany's Prophets, Professors and Preachers (NY: Doran, 1917)

Other works on themes pertinent to this course include:

Louis L. Snyder, German Nationalism: Tragedy of a People (Port Washington NY: Kennikat, 1969), esp. chapters 6 ("Historiography") and 10 ("Militarism").
Louis L. Snyder, From Bismarck to Hitler (Williamsport: Bayard, 1935)
Antoine Guillard, Germany and Her Historians (NY: McBride, Nast, 1915)
Tim Travers, The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918 (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987)
Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), Chapter 6, pp. 115-142 ("The Army and the Civilians").
Readable accounts of the war itself include:


On Versailles an introduction is:


World War II in Europe:

Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors* (NY: Yiddish Scientific Institute, 1946)
Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon, 1989)
Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977)
The Pacific War:

Michael A. Barnhart, Japan Prepares for Total War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

The origins of the Cold War:


The Korean War:

James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, United States Foreign Policy and World Order, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985), pp. 113-156.
Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1960)


**The Indochina War:**


Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*, pp. 113-222.

David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1972)


**The Peloponnesian War:**


The 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War:


Rick Atkison, Crusade (NY: Random House, 1993)

The Cuban Missile Crisis:


Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968)

Graham Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971)


Robert A. Divine, ed. The Cuban Missile Crisis (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971)

On Soviet military policy Western analyses are:


Raymond Garthoff, Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age (NY: Praeger, 1958)


Leon Goure, Foy Kohler and Mose L. Harvey, The Role of Nuclear Forces in Current Soviet Strategy (Miami: University of Miami, 1974)

Joseph Douglass and Amoretta Hoeber, Soviet Strategy for Nuclear War (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1979)

Translated Soviet writings on this subject include:


**Contemporary wars:**
