

Yale University
Department of Political Science

THE BALANCE OF POWER: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Political Science 126
(Lecture Course)
Spring 2014
Syllabus

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Class: Mon. & Wed. 4:30-5:20PM, Linsly-Chittenden Hall, Rm. #101 (63 High St.);
Office Hours: Wed. 1:30-3:30PM, Rosenkranz Hall, Rm. #226 (book through my website or
using the following link: <https://www.timetrade.com/book/K5GM2>);
TF Office Hours: TBD by each TF;
Sections: Room and time TBD.

COURSE OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES

This lecture course explores the evolution of the international balance of power since the outset of the twentieth century. Specifically, we will cover the causes and conduct of World Wars I and II and the Cold War, as well as the evolution of international politics since the demise of the Soviet Union. We will frame this historical overview using different theoretical views on the role played by the balance of power in international relations. The emphasis is therefore both analytic and historical. By the end of the course, students should have a broad picture of the rise and fall of great powers in the last hundred years as well as of the challenges facing the contemporary United States. The course meets three times a week: twice for a lecture plus once for a discussion section.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

There are no pre-requisites for the course. The course will consist in a series of lectures with pre-assigned readings. Students are expected to do all the readings and attend both weekly lectures plus the weekly discussion section.

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

- Participation in discussion section: 20%;
- Three short response papers: 15%;
- Midterm exam: 25%;
- Final exam: 40%.

Note: In order to receive an overall passing grade, students must receive a passing grade in all four components of the final grade. In other words, failing one component of the course will lead to a failing grade in the overall course.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Participation: Students should do all the readings for each week in advance of the respective discussion section and come prepared to contribute to class discussion during the sections by bringing questions that stem from

the readings. As should be obvious, participation does not mean just attendance. Please be an active participant in the section discussion.

Response Papers: Each student will post a 2-page reaction to the readings for three different weeks. Your response papers should be posted on the Classes*V2 according to your TF's instructions by 8:00pm the day before the section meeting in which we will discuss these readings. Short papers received after the deadline but before the relevant discussion section begins will be dropped one full letter grade. Short papers will not be accepted after the relevant discussion section starts. Each of the three short papers will be worth 5% of the final course grade. These short statements should include an analysis of strengths or weaknesses of arguments made by the authors for the relevant week; questions with which you were left by the readings; or points of confusion that should be clarified. (You should not summarize the readings; assume that everybody else has done the reading as well and understands the basic arguments.) You do not have to discuss all of the readings assigned for the week; you may discuss just one or two pieces, or you can pick a broader range and compare them to each other (or to readings for earlier weeks). Likewise, within each reading you select to engage, you do not have to discuss the whole piece. You may do so, but you may equally well focus on a section, a paragraph, or even a sentence that piqued your interest. You are welcome to choose any three weeks in which to write your reaction papers, though spacing things out over the semester might be best.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will cover the first half of the course and consist in two sections, each with equal weight on the exam grade.

- In the first section, you will be asked to answer eight out of ten ID questions in no more than a paragraph of 5-8 lines each. Topics will include concepts as well as historical events and figures.
- In the second section, you will have to write two out of three possible short essays.

All questions and essays will address topics from the lectures and readings.

Final Exam: The final exam will cover *the entire course* and consist in three sections, each with equal weight on the exam grade.

- In the first section, you will be asked to answer eight out of ten ID questions in no more than a paragraph of 5-8 lines each. Topics will include concepts as well as historical events and figures. Two-thirds of the topics will be from the second half of the course, with the remaining IDs coming from the first half.
- In the second section, you will have to write two out of three possible short essays about topics from the second half of the course.
- In the third section, you will be asked to write one out of two possible long essays on topics that require you to reflect on the entire course.

All questions and essays will address topics from the lectures and readings.

COURSE POLICIES

Policy on Plagiarism: All assignments are non-collaborative and should be entirely your own work. Plagiarism is unacceptable and will result in penalties up to and including a failing grade for the assignment (and therefore the course) and referral to the university for disciplinary action. If you haven't done so yet, please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on academic honesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and document citation, by reading the relevant section of the *Yale College Undergraduate Regulations* handbook, available at the following location: http://yalecollege.yale.edu/sites/default/files/UREgs%2013-14_102413.pdf. It is your responsibility to understand and abide by this policy.

Policy on Electronic Devices: I reserve the right to ban the use of electronic devices (other than pacemakers and ankle-bracelet monitors for those on parole) in the classroom if it appears that they are serving purposes other than taking lecture notes. All cell phones must be turned off during lecture and section.

While all these policies will be strictly enforced, I know that emergencies and illnesses might arise during the term. If that happens to be the case, please let me know as early as possible so that we can work out alternative arrangements for you to complete your work within a reasonable period of time. In emergency cases, you will need to present a “dean’s excuse” in order to be allowed to turn in late work or justify a series of absences from class sessions.

READINGS

The selected texts were chosen to represent the major theoretical positions on the balance of power and cover the historical evolution of balances of power in the international system. They provide a wide range of views and differ in both the evidence they provide and their persuasiveness. As a whole, the selection is designed to encourage critical evaluation of existing academic literature. In order to best achieve this goal, keep in mind the following questions when doing the readings: What is the argument the author is trying to make? Why does it matter? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How convincing is it? What are possible counter-arguments? Above all, how does the argument advance our understanding of international politics?

The following books are required for purchase and will be placed on reserve in the library:

- Richard Overy, *Russia’s War: A History of the Soviet War Effort 1941-1945* (London: Penguin, 1997);
- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

This book may be purchased but is also available through the Yale library as an ebook by following the link below:

- Spencer C. Tucker, *The Great War, 1914-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998);
 - <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/yale/docDetail.action?docID=5005045>

All other readings are available in PDF format on the course website on the Classes*v2 server, under the “Resources” tab. The readings for each session are listed in the order you should do them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Session 1.1 (Monday, January 13) -- Introduction: Organizational Session

- No assigned readings.

Session 1.2 (Wednesday, January 15) -- The Balance of Power in the Nineteenth Century

- Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), chapters 5-6;
- Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: Routledge, 1983), chapters 3-4.

*****Note Friday Session*****

Session 2.1 (Friday, January 17) -- The Balance of Power in Theory

- John Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, editors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 71-88;
- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), chapters 2-3;
- Deborah Boucoyannis, "The International Wanderings of a Liberal Idea, or Why Liberals Can Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Balance of Power." *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2007): 703-727.

Week 2

Session 2.2 (Wednesday, January 22) -- Multipolarity and the Background to WWI

- Immanuel Geiss, "The Outbreak of the First World War and German War Aims," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1966): 75-91;
- Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1984): 108-146.

Week 3

Session 3.1 (Monday, January 27) -- Multipolarity and the Causes of WWI

- Scott Sagan, "1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense, and Instability," *International Security*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1986): 151-175;
- Keir Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2007): 155-191.

Session 3.2 (Wednesday, January 29) -- The Balance of Power and the Conduct of WWI

- Spencer C. Tucker, *The Great War, 1914-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), chapters 1-3.

Week 4

Session 4.1 (Monday, February 03) -- The Balance of Power and the Conduct of WWI (continued)

- Spencer C. Tucker, *The Great War, 1914-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), chapters 4-6.

Session 4.2 (Wednesday, February 05) -- The Balance of Power and the Causes of WWII (Europe)

- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, "A Theory of Economic Interdependence and War," Yale University mimeo;
- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), pp. 155-165, 181-190, 209-219, 267-272, and 305-322;
- John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), chapters 3-4.

Week 5

Session 5.1 (Monday, February 10) -- The Balance of Power and the Conduct of WWII

- David Reynolds, "1940: Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (1990): 325-350;
- Richard Overy, *Russia's War: A History of the Soviet War Effort 1941-1945* (London: Penguin, 1997), chapters 3-6.

Session 5.2 (Wednesday, February 12) -- The Balance of Power and the Causes of WWII (Asia)

- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), pp. 172-181, 219-224;
- Scott D. Sagan, "The Origins of the Pacific War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1988): 893-922;
- Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the United States Entry into WWII* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1971), chapters 2-3.

Week 6

Session 6.1 (Monday, February 17) -- The Balance of Power and the Conduct of WWII (continued)

- Richard Overy, *Russia's War: A History of the Soviet War Effort 1941-1945* (London: Penguin, 1997), chapters 7-9;
- Robert A. Pape, "Why Japan Surrendered," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993): 154-201.

Session 6.2 (Wednesday, February 19) -- Midterm exam, covers all materials up to and including session 6.1

Week 7

Session 7.1 (Monday, February 24) -- Bipolarity and the Cold War

- Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (1964): 881-909;
- John Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System," *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1986): 99-142;
- R. Harrison Wagner, "What was Bipolarity?" *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1993), pp. 77-106.

Session 7.2 (Wednesday, February 26) -- The Origins of the Cold War

- George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in *American Diplomacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985);
- Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), chapters 2 & 5.

Week 8

Session 8.1 (Monday, March 03) -- The Nuclear Revolution & the Balance of Terror

- Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 37 (1959): 211-34;
- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), chapters 1-3;
- Robert Jervis, "Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn't Matter," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (1979/80): 617-633.

Session 8.2 (Wednesday, March 05) -- The Balance of Power and Peripheries

- Steven David, "Why the Third World Matters," *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1989): 50-85;
- Stephen Walt, "The Case for Finite Containment: Analyzing U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1989): 5-49;
- Stephen Van Evera, "Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn't," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1990): 1-51.

Week 9

Session 9.1 (Monday, March 24) -- Unipolarity and the Post-Cold War

- Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1993): 44-79;
- Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70 (1990/91): 23-33;

- Jack Levy and William Thompson, “Hegemonic Threats and Great Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-2000,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2005): 1-30.

Session 9.2 (Wednesday, March 26) -- The Basis of American Preponderance

- William Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1999): 5-41;
- Barry Posen, “Command of the Commons,” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2003): 5-46;
- Eliot Cohen, “A revolution in warfare,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (1996): 37-54.

Week 10

Session 10.1 (Monday, March 31) -- The Strategies of American Preponderance

- Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1996/97): 5-53;
- Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), chapter 2.

Session 10.2 (Wednesday, April 02) -- Small Wars I

- Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming in 2014), chapters 6-7;
- Daryl G. Press, “The Myth of Air Power in the Persian Gulf War and the Future of Warfare,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2001): 5-44.

Week 11

Session 11.1 (Monday, April 07) -- Small Wars II

- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, “Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (2014), forthcoming;
- Stephen Biddle, “Allies, Airpower, and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2005/06): 161-76.

Session 11.2 (Wednesday, April 09) -- Occupation and Insurgency

- David Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2004): 49-91;
- Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, “Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars,” *International Organization*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2009): 67-106;
- Matthew A. Kocher, Adria Lawrence, and Nuno P. Monteiro, “The Rabbit in the Hat: Nationalism and Resistance to Foreign Occupation,” Yale University mimeo.

Week 12

Session 12.1 (Monday, April 14) -- Nuclear Proliferation

- Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation," Yale University mimeo;
- Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), chapters 1-2;
- Charles Glaser and Steve Fetter, "National Missile Defense and the Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2001): 40-92.

Session 12.2 (Wednesday, April 16) -- The Transformation of the Contemporary Balance of Power

- Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming in 2014), chapters 4 & 8;
- Daniel H. Nexon, "The Balance of Power in the Balance," *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2009): 330-359.

Week 13

Session 13.1 (Monday, April 21) -- The Rise of Peer Competitors

- Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming in 2014), chapter 5;
- Aaron Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2005): 7-45;
- Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2001): 5-40;
- Avery Goldstein, "First Things First: The Pressing Danger of Crisis Instability in U.S.-China Relations," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2013): 49-89.

Session 13.2 (Wednesday, April 23) -- What Can We Learn from the Balance of Power?

- Richard Ned Lebow and Robert Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 27 (2001): 593-609;
- Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1992): 391-425.

Final Exam -- Saturday, May 03, 9:00am