Description: The course examines the origins of war from rationalist, human nature, political, social, and cultural perspectives as well as a wide range of theories on the causes of conflict and cooperation. Much of what is interesting in the study of international relations does not involve strategies of pure conflict (zero-sum games), so the course focuses on theories of interdependent decision-making in mixed-motive games, which model conflict as a bargaining situation. Given that the essence of international conflict is disagreement over policy choices and/or the allocation of scarce resources and that politics is, at its core, a process of bargaining to arrive at a mutual agreement that resolves these political disputes, the course examines and critiques non-cooperative bargaining theories of war – as well as putative causal drivers of war at all levels of analysis (systemic, domestic, and individual).

Requirements: Class participation and a 25-35 page critical analysis of the literature under one of the subheadings or a review essay that uses a recent and important book as a springboard for the paper.

Required Books:

3. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Theories of Imperialism (University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Topic 1: Origins of War: Human Nature or Cultural Invention?

Topic 2: Power
Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View, 2nd Ed. (Palgrave, 2005).

Topic 3: Theories of War
Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Theories of Imperialism (University of Chicago Press, 1982).
**Topic 4: Coercive Diplomacy**


*Supplementary Reading on Deterrence Theory:*

The following articles are all from a special issue of *World Politics* 41:2 (January 1989) on the deterrence debate: Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," 143-169; Alexander George and Richard Smoke, "Deterrence and Foreign Policy," 170-182; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter," 208-224.

**Topic 5: Bargaining Theories of War**


*Supplementary Reading:*

George Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom, “Is the Good News About Compliance Good News
Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, chaps 1-3.

**Topic 6: Critiques of Bargaining and Strategic Choice Theories of War**


*Supplementary Reading:*

**Topic 7: The Security Dilemma and Offense-Defense Balance Theory**

Supplementary Reading the Security Dilemma and Offense-Defense Theory:

Topic 8: Domestic Politics and War: Part 1

Supplementary Reading:

Topic 9: Domestic Politics and War: Part 2
contrary view to Caverley’s emphasis on the role of public opinion.]

**Topic 10: Leaders and Leadership**

**Topic 11: Misperception and Cognitive Processes: Does It Make a Difference How the Brain Works?**

**Supplementary Readings**

**Topic 12: Motivated Biases and Emotion**

Supplementary Reading:
Robert Jervis, Why Intelligence Fails (Cornell UP, 2010).

**Topic 13: Power Shifts and War**

Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Supplementary Reading of Power Shifts and Preventive War:

**Topic 14: Alliance Dynamics**


*Supplementary Readings on Alliances and War:*
Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (Columbia UP, 1998), chap. 3.

**Topic 15: Appeasement, Concerts, and Cooperation Theory**
Amitai Etzioni, "The Kennedy Experiment," *Western Political Quarterly* (June 1967).

*Supplementary Readings on Appeasement:*