

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS AND STRATEGY

Course code	<i>POL148</i>
Compulsory in the programmes	<i>Economics and Politics</i>
Level of studies	<i>Undergraduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS (48 contact hours + 2 consultation hours, 106 individual work hours)</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Assist. Prof. Dr. Simonas Čepėnas</i>
Prerequisites	<i>Introduction to Politics</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE:

This course introduces students to the strategic analysis of international conflict using game theory and formal models. It explores the causes of war, cooperation under anarchy, bargaining and signaling in crises, and the domestic and psychological drivers of conflict. Students will analyze real-world international crises using both theoretical tools and empirical evidence. By the end of the course, students will be able to evaluate strategic behavior in international politics through formal reasoning and critical thinking.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	Degree level learning objectives (Number of LO)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. Review the fundamentals of Microeconomic theory and introduce students to the basics of game theory.	ELO1.1., ELO1.2.	Midterm, final exam, problem sets	Lecture, Seminars
CLO2. Learn how to model interactions between individuals and firms.	ELO1.1., ELO1.2.	Midterm, final exam, problem sets	Lecture, Seminars
CLO3. Learn about different game theoretic models: static games of complete information, static games of incomplete information, dynamic games of complete information, and dynamic games of incomplete information.	ELO1.1.	Midterm, final exam, problem sets	Lecture, Seminars
CLO4. Gain familiarity with key concepts of game theory: complete information, incomplete information, normal form, dynamic form, bargaining, principal-agent relation, mechanism design, adverse selection, moral hazard, conditional probabilities, partial equilibria.	ELO1.1., ELO1.2.	Midterm, final exam, problem sets	Lecture, Seminars
CLO5. Learn about different solution techniques: backwards induction, IESDS, Nash Equilibria, Mixed Strategy Nash Equilibria, Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibria, Bayesian Nash Equilibria, Perfect Bayesian Equilibria, and Maximin-Minimax Method.	ELO1.1., ELO1.2., ELO2.1.	Midterm, final exam, problem sets	Lecture, Seminars

CLO6. Hone your skills for working in groups and individually, while facing time constraints.	ELO4.1.	Problem sets	Individual and group work
CLO7. Acquire critical thinking, logical reasoning, and problem-solving skills.	ELO4.1.	Problem sets, midterm, final exam	Seminars

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty, and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM remind students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours	Readings
The Formation of the State and Interstate Conflict. Why Did Europe Conquer the World?	4	(HOFFMAN 2015) Excerpts TBA
Actors, Preferences, Anarchy and the Security Dilemma	4	(Kydd 2015, Ch. 1)
Levels of Analysis: Structural/Systemic Causes of War.	4	(Strassler and Hanson 1998) Excerpts TBA, (Kydd 2015, Ch. 2)
Cooperation Theory: Diplomacy, The Shadow of the Future, Cheap talk and Reputation.	4	(Axelrod 2009) Excerpts TBA, (Kydd 2015, Ch. 8-9)
Domestic Causes of War	4	(Kydd 2015, Ch. 11; Weeks 2012)
Individual and Small-Group Causes of War	4	(Haas 2001)
Midterm	4	
War Bargaining	4	(Fearon 1995; Kydd 2015, Ch. 4, Ch. 6)
Democracy, Autocracy and War	4	(Owen 1994)
Multilateral Cooperation	4	(Kydd 2015, Ch. 10)
Economics and International Crises	4	(Copeland 2014; Pape 1997)
How Wars End?	4	(Reiter 2003)
	Total: 48 hours	
CONSULTATIONS	2	
FINAL EXAM	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	%
<i>Group Components (20%)</i>	
Case Study	20%
<i>Individual Components (80%)</i>	
Attendance/Seminar Participation	10%
Midterm examination	30%
Final examination	40%
Total:	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

(Provide short descriptions and grading criteria of each assignment)

Case study will be a semester long group project that will have the following components: (1) Analysis of a chosen international crisis using a chosen theory and (2) Presentation. These will make up 20% of the grade.

Course attendance/Seminar participation. The course covers complex topics and individual participation is essential for a consistent and continuous learning process. Thus, it will make up 10% of the grades and include attendance, tests, active participation and other activities.

The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice and open-ended modeling questions. It will comprise 40% of the final grade. The midterm will be based on topics 1-6.

Final exam will consist of multiple choice and open-answer modeling questions. It will comprise 40% of the final grade. The final exam will be based on topics 8-12.

Assessment requirements, procedures, and other important regulations may be communicated verbally during lectures. Failure to attend a lecture where such information is provided does not exempt the student from the responsibility to comply with these requirements.

COURSE SPECIFIC AI GUIDELINES

All course participants must comply with the ISM University of Management and Economics Artificial Intelligence Policy published on E-learning platform.

Students may use AI tools while preparing their **Case Presentations** to enhance their understanding of the topics, brainstorm, identify relevant theories, and find applicable examples. AI-generated content is not a reliable academic source; it must be cross-verified with scholarly sources and should not be cited as a source.

Appropriate AI tools may also be used to improve efficiency of data analysis, as well as to improve the quality of written English, including grammar and style. Students cannot copy-paste AI-generated text into their papers, and they must indicate where and how they used AI tools at the end of their Case presentation. Any use of AI tools beyond the purposes specified above must be aligned with the course instructor.

No use of AI tools whatsoever is permitted during the **Midterm and the Final Examinations**.

RETAKE POLICY

In case of a final grade that is lower than 5, students can sit for a retake exam. Such an exam will cover all course material. The weight of the retake is 80%. Seminar participation grade and problem sets are not subject to a retake but their evaluation (if positive) will count towards the final grade with the retake exam.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

The syllabus is subject to small changes. Specific chapters from the books are TBA. All readings other than the Kydd's textbook will be available online on the course website.

Math can feel hard sometimes – do NOT be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help. Use office hours and feel free to ask questions in class. If you do NOT understand something, clarify immediately. A small question now will likely turn into more confusion later.

REQUIRED READINGS

Axelrod, R. 2009. *The Evolution of Cooperation: Revised Edition*. Basic Books.
<https://books.google.lt/books?id=SwU4DgAAQBAJ>.

Copeland, D.C. 2014. *Economic Interdependence and War*. Princeton University Press.
<https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691161594/economic-interdependence-and-war>.

Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.

Haas, Mark L. 2001. "Prospect Theory and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *International Studies Quarterly* 45(2): 241–70.

HOFFMAN, PHILIP T. 2015. *54 Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* ed. Joel Mokyr. Princeton University Press.
doi:10.2307/j.ctvc778hd.

Kydd, Andrew H. 2015. *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139225816.

Owen, John M. 1994. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19(2): 87–125.
doi:10.2307/2539197.

Pape, Robert A. 1997. "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work." *International Security* 22(2): 90–136. doi:10.2307/2539368.

Reiter, Dan. 2003. "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1): 27–43.
doi:10.1017/S1537592703000033.

Strassler, R.B., and V.D. Hanson. 1998. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. Free Press. <https://books.google.lt/books?id=YXrlu4fXY24C>.

Weeks, Jessica L. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *The American Political Science Review* 106(2): 326–47.

ANNEX

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

Programmes:
International Business and Communication,
Business Management and Marketing,
Finance,
Industrial Technology Management,
Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines
	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Social Science

Programmes:
Economics and Data Analytics,
Economics and Politics

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	ELO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the key economics disciplines
	ELO1.2. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions and logical consistency of causal statements
Students will have skills to employ economic thought for the common good	ELO2.1. Students will have a keen sense of ethical criteria for practical problem-solving
Students will be technology agile	ELO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	ELO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	ELO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	ELO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	ELO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper