

## University of Rochester Political Science

PSC 577  
Theories of Conflict

Prof. Mark Fey  
Spring 2014

### Syllabus & Reading List

This course examines the formal literature on conflict that has developed in the last two decades. It is meant to expose students to the techniques and models used in this line of research. The course will help graduate students identify the broad direction of international conflict studies and will also permit graduate students to pursue topics or ideas of their own interest. To that end, we set aside two classes for “model building sessions” where students can explore approaches to formalize some of the ideas in the substantive literature, or explore extensions of the current formal literature. The course covers both complete and incomplete information models and thus students must have completed PSC584 (or its equivalent) prior to taking this course.

There are three main obligations for students taking the course. Reading the required articles and participating in class is the first and most important of the obligations. The second obligation is taking a turn presenting one of the topics from the reading list. Assignments of topics will be worked out at the first class meeting. The last requirement for the course is a final paper. The two model building sessions during the semester will be focused on helping students develop their ideas for final papers.

**Schedule:** Starting on the next page is the list of topics and the scheduled readings for the course. Naturally, this schedule may change as the semester unfolds.

## Week 1 Introductory Thoughts and Review of Bargaining

## Week 2 Rationalist Explanations for War

- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49:379–414.
- Fearon, James D. 1996. "Bargaining over Objects that Influence Future Bargaining Power"
- Powell, Robert. 2006. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60:169–203.

## Week 3 Bargaining and Fighting

- Powell, Robert. 2004. "Bargaining and Learning While Fighting." *American Journal of Political Science* 48.2:344-361.
- Slantchev, Branislav. 2003. "The Principle of Convergence in Wartime Negotiations." *American Political Science Review*,47:621–632.
- Wolford, Scott, Dan Reiter and Clifford J. Carrubba. 2011. "Information, Commitment, and War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55:556–579.

## Week 4 Signaling and Audience Costs

- Fearon, James D. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88:577-592
- Kurizaki, Shuhei. 2007. "Efficient Secrecy: Public versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy." *American Political Science Review* 101.3:543-558.
- Tarar, Ahmer and Bahar Leventoğlu. 2013. "Limited Audience Costs in International Crises." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57.6:1065-1089.

## Week 5 General Results on Crisis Bargaining

- Banks, Jeffrey S. 1990. "Equilibrium Behavior in Crisis Bargaining Games." *American Journal of Political Science* 34.3:499–614.

- Fey, Mark and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2012. "Uncertainty and Incentives and Crisis Bargaining." *American Journal of Political Science* 55.1:149–169.
- Fey, Mark, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2013. "Credibility of Peaceful Agreements in Crisis Bargaining." *Political Science Research and Methods*
- Fey, Mark and Brenton Kenkel. 2014. "Choosing to Make an Ultimatum"

#### Week 6 Mutual Optimism

- Fey, Mark, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2007. "Mutual Optimism and War." *American Journal of Political Science* 51:738–754.
- Branislav L. Slantchev and Ahmer Tarar. 2011. "Mutual optimism as a rationalist explanation of war." *American Journal of Political Science*, 55:135–148
- Fey, Mark, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. "Mutual Optimism and Choosing to Fight"

#### Week 7 Model Building Session

#### Week 8 Communication and Diplomacy

- Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2011. "Cheap Talk Diplomacy, Voluntary Negotiations, and Variable Bargaining Power." *International Studies Quarterly* 55.4:1003–1023.
- Trager, Robert F. 2010. "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters." *American Political Science Review* 104.2:347–368.
- Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2011 "Cheap Talk Diplomacy, Voluntary Negotiations, and Variable Bargaining Power." *International Studies Quarterly*

#### Week 9 Mediation

- Andrew Kydd. 2003. "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation." *American Journal of Political Science* 47:597-611.

- Robert W. Rauchhaus. 2006. "Asymmetric information, mediation and conflict management." *World Politics*, 58:207–241
- Fey, Mark, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2010. "When is Shuttle Diplomacy Worth the Commute? Information Sharing through Mediation." *World Politics* 62:529–560.

#### Week 10 Alliances and Coalitions

- Smith, Alastair. 1995. "Alliance Formation and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 39.4:405–426.
- Benson, Brett V., Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. "Inducing Deterrence through Moral Hazard in Alliance Contracts." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- Wolford, Scott. 2014. "Showing Restraint, Signaling Resolve: Coalitions, Cooperation, and Crisis Bargaining." *American Journal of Political Science* 58:144-156

#### Week 11 Reputation

- Sartori, Anne E. 2002. "The Might of the Pen: A Reputational Theory of Communication in International Disputes." *International Organization* 56:121–149.
- Daniel Treisman. 2004. "Rational Appeasement", *International Organization* 58:345–373
- Sechser, Todd S. 2010. "Goliaths Curse: Coercive Threats and Asymmetric Power." *International Organization* 64(4):627-60.

#### Week 12 Model Building Session

#### Week 13 Contest Models

- Hirshleifer, Jack. 1991. "The Paradox of Power." *Economics and Politics* 3:177-200.
- Michelle R. Garfinkel and Stergios Skaperdas. 2000. "Conflict without Misperceptions or Incomplete Information: How the Future Matters", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44:793–807

- Roland Hodler and Hadi Yektas. 2012. "All-pay War." *Games and Economic Behavior* 74:526-540

Week 14 Models of Peace