Poli 351 The Causes of Major War: World War I

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Office Hours: M & W, 1-2 pm

McGill University
Dept. of Political Science
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Course Description

This course examines the development of theories explaining the outbreak of major wars. In particular, we will focus on the case of World War I. Theories to be discussed are drawn from all levels of analysis and from varied perspectives.

Course Requirements

All readings are available online; all assignments will be submitted via MyCourses. The grade consists of two short papers, one longer paper, and conference participation,. Each short paper has a 1500 word limit, and is worth 25% (together accounting for 50%). The first is due Feb. 19, the second March 19. The longer paper (2250 word limit, worth 40%) is due April 9. Suggested topics for papers will be posted in advance. Participation in a conference led by a TA accounts for 10%.

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Short Paper 1	25%	Feb. 19 (5 pm)
Short Paper 2	25%	March 19 (5 pm)
Long Paper	40%	April 9 (5 pm)
Conference Participation	10%	throughout term

Course Materials

All assigned readings for this course will be available on MyCourses. There will also be videos recommended, associated with some suggested paper topics. For those who would like an historical overview of the outbreak of World War I, there will be several recommended books listed on MyCourses.

Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Copyright of Lectures

All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for purposes of your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation). You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

Policy on Academic Honesty

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Policy Regarding Use of AI

You may use AI writing tools to assist you in the writing process for assignments in this class, but all artificially generated text must be explicitly labeled. You may use AI tools for gathering information from sources and assimilating it for understanding, for critiquing and editing an assignment for purposes of revision, but the first draft must be original work produced by the individual student alone. The new ideas introduced by the AI during the critique or editing process must be appropriately cited as generated by the AI tool. In handing in your assignment, you agree to disclose the extent to which you used #chatGPT or other AI writing tools in your assignment. All text written by AI must be quoted with the source of the model in parentheses (e.g. chatGPT). At the end of your paper, please include the following statement: "This paper used (did not use) AI for the following components of the writing process:" Choose none to three of the following: brainstorming, editing, sentence generation. Failure to adequately disclose your AI use will result in a 0 for the assignment

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Note: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Course Schedule

Lecture 1 (Jan. 8): Causation and Prevention
Michael Howard, "Men Against Fire," *International Security* 9 (1) 1984: 41-57.
Joseph Nye, "Old Wars and Future Wars," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (4) 1988: 581-590.

Lecture 2 (Jan. 10): The Outbreak of the War
Charles Maier, "Wargames: 1914-1919," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (4) 1988: 819-849.

Lecture 3 (Jan. 15): World War I as a Case
Samuel Williamson, "The Origins of World War I," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (4) 1988: 795-818.
Bruce Russett, "Cause, Surprise, and No Escape," *Journal of Politics* 24 (1) 1962: 3-22.

Lecture 4 (Jan. 17): Idiosyncratic Explanations
Saul Friedlander and Raymond Cohen, "The Personality Correlates of Belligerence in International Conflict," *Comparative Politics* 7 (2) 1975: 155-186.

Lecture 5 (Jan. 22): Idiosyncratic Explanations
Wolfgang Mommsen, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and German Politics," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (2/3) 1990: 289-316.

Lecture 6 (Jan. 24): Perception and Misperception
Ole Holsti, "The 1914 Case," *American Political Science Review* 59 (2) 1965: 365-378.
William Wohlforth, "Perception of Power: Russia in the pre-1914 Balance," *World Politics* 39 (3) 1987: 353-381.

CONFERENCES BEGIN THE WEEK OF JANUARY 29th

FIRST PAPER TOPICS AVAILABLE

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Lecture 7 (Jan. 29): July 1914 as a Period of Crisis
L. L. Farrar, "The Limits of Choice: July 1914 Reconsidered," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16 (1) 1972: 1-23.

Lecture 8 (Jan. 31): July 1914 as a Period of Crisis
Alan Ned Sabrosky, "From Bosnia to Sarajevo: A Comparative Discussion of Interstate Crises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 19 (1) 1975: 3-24.

Lecture 9 (Feb. 5): July 1914 as a Period of Crisis
Jack Levy, "Preferences, Constraints and Choices in July 1914," *International Security* 15 (3) 1990-91: 151-186.
John Oneal, "The Rationality of Decision Making during International Crises," *Polity* 20 (4) 1988: 598-622.

Lecture 10 (Feb. 7): Domestic-Based Explanations
David Kaiser, "Germany and the Origins of the First World War," *Journal of Modern History* 55 (3) 1983: 442-474.

Lecture 11 (Feb. 12): Domestic-Based Economic Explanations
Kevin Narizny, "The Political Economy of Alignment: Great Britain's Commitments to Europe, 1905-1939," *International Security* 27 (4) 2003: 184-214.

Lecture 12 (Feb. 14): Domestic-Based Political Explanations
Michael Gordon, "Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and German Cases," *Journal of Modern History* 46 (2) 1974: 191-226.

FIRST PAPER DUE: FEB. 19 — SECOND PAPER TOPICS AVAILABLE

Lecture 13 (Feb. 19): Marxist Explanations for the War
V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism*, excerpts

Lecture 14 (Feb. 21): Kehr and Fischer
James Joll, "The 1914 Debate Continues: Fritz Fischer and his Critics," *Past & Present* 34, 1966: 100-113.

Lecture 16 (Feb. 26): Snyder's *Myths of Empire*

Lecture 17 (Feb. 28): Bureaucratic Politics - A Cult of the Offensive?
Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9 (1) 1984: 58-107.
Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security* 9 (1) 1984: 108-146.

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Lecture 18 (March 12):Bureaucratic Politics - Mobilization

Scott Sagan, "1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense, and Instability," *International Security* 11 (2) 1986: 151-175.

Marc Trachtenberg, "The Meaning of Mobilization in 1914," *International Security* 15 (3) 1990-91: 120-150.

Lecture 19 (March 14):Bureaucratic Politics - Technological Change

Jonathan Shimshoni, "Technology, Military Advantage and World War I," *International Security* 15 (3) 1990-91: 187-215.

David Stevenson, "War by Timetable? The Railway Race before 1914," *Past & Present* 162, 1999: 163-194.

SECOND PAPER DUE: MARCH 19 —FINAL PAPER TOPICS AVAILABLE

Lecture 20 (March 19): System-Level Explanations - Distribution of Power

Paul Kennedy, "The First World War and the International Power System," *International Security* 9 (1) 1984: 7-40.

Kenneth Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (4) 1988: 615-628.

Lecture 21 (March 21): System-Level Explanations - Deterrence

Sean Lynn-Jones, "Détente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911-1914," *International Security* 11 (2) 1986: 121-150.

Frank Zagare and Marc Kilgour, "The Deterrence-versus-Restraint Dilemma in Extended Deterrence: Explaining British Policy in 1914," *International Studies Review* 8 (4) 2006: 623-641.

Lecture 22 (March 26): System-Level Explanations - Power Dynamics

Charles Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History & the "Single Dynamic" of Power Cycle Theory," *International Political Science Review* 24 (1) 2003: 13-49.

Richard New Lebow, "Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?" *International Security* 9 (1) 1984: 147-186.

Lecture 23 (March 28): System-Level Explanations - Alliances

Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization* 44 (2) 1990: 137-168.

Marc Trachtenberg, "The Question of Realism: A Historian's View," *Security Studies* 13 (1) 2003: 1-38.

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Lecture 24 (April 2): Interdependence in 1914

Stephen Van Evera, "Why Cooperation Failed in 1914," *World Politics* 38 (1) 1985: 80-117.

Dale Copeland,, "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations," *International Security* 20 (4) 1996: 5-41.

Paul Papayoanou, "Interdependence, Institutions and, the Balance of Power: Britain, Germany and World War I," *International Security* 20 (4) 1996: 42-76.

Lecture 25 (April 4): World War I as a Hegemonic War

Margaret Macmillan, "The Rhyme of History: Lessons of the Great War," 2013: http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2013/rhyme-of-history

Mark R. Brawley, *Liberal Leadership*, Cornell UP, 1993, ***excerpts***.

LONG PAPER DUE: APRIL 9

Lecture 26 (April 9): Pulling Arguments Together; Conclusions

Paul Schroeder, "World War I as a Galloping Gertie," *Journal of Modern History* 44 (3) 1972: 319-345.

Keir A. Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory," *International Security* 32 (2) 2007: 155-191.