This seminar will focus on the Conflict domain of world politics, with primary attention to interstate Crisis and War. An introductory session will present the organization of the seminar (course outline, readings, requirements, grading); its rationale – why study crisis and war; and an overview of central research questions about three closely-related but conceptually and empirically distinct phenomena.

Thereafter, the seminar will comprise three segments:

Concepts and Methods (Sessions 2-5)

Dissection of International Crises (Sessions 6-9)

Literature on Explanations of War (Sessions 10-13)

Session 1, overview lecture;

Sessions 2-4, assessments of Concepts and Qualitative Methods readings;

Session 5, Group exercise in coding an international crisis, to illustrate Quantitative/Aggregate Data analysis;

Sessions 6-9, student reports on multiple dimensions of his/her crisis, with questions and comments by the instructor;

Sessions 10-13, summary and analysis of journal articles and book chapters on war by students, followed by class discussion

For the oral presentations in Sessions 6-9 and the Seminar Paper, students should choose a preferred Crisis for in-depth research. Choose and rank-order three cases from the list of High Severity and High Impact international crises since the end of World War I. Send your list to me by e-mail, by 10 September, in order of preference, I will assign cases in Session 2. This will give students until 11 October to have read enough about their case to be able to begin their reports in Session 6.

The lists of High Severity and High Impact crises are to be found in M. Brecher, International Political Earthquakes, 2008, pp. 61, 62, 70, 71, and 74; see the Readings for Session 9 in this Outline-Reading List below.

Bibliography for these cases is to be found in Brecher and J. Wilkenfeld, A Study of Crisis, 1997, 2000, Part III, and the ICB website: www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/

SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS (in POLI 677 Course Pack)

OVERVIEW OF CRISIS AND WAR (Session 1) (September 6, 2017)

Brecher “Select Literature on Crisis and War”, typescript


POLI 677 Autumn 2017 -2- Michael Brecher

CONCEPTS (Sessions 2, 3) (September 13, 20)

Brecher

The World of Protracted Conflicts, 2016
Concepts” (Chap. 1)
Model I: Onset” (Chap. 4),
Model II: Persistence” (Chap. 6),
Model III: Resolution” (Chap. 12)

A Century of Crisis and Conflict in the International System, 2017
Chap. 2, Core Concepts, pp. 14-31; System and Crisis, 37-41
Chap. 3, Unified Model of Crisis, pp. 45-65 (line 3)
Chap. 5, Theory III, Interstate Conflicts
Chap. 10, What Have We Learned About Interstate Conflicts

International Political Earthquakes, 2008
Chap. 3 Crisis Escalation to War: Concepts, Model

Bar-Tal

Intractable Conflicts, 2013, Chap. 1

Goertz, and Diehl

“Enduring Rivalries”, in M.I. Midlarsky (ed.), Handbook of War Studies II, 2000, Chap. 8

Leng & Singer


METHODS (Sessions 4, 5) (September 27)

Qualitative Case Study (Session 4)

George & Bennett

Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences 2005, Chaps. 3-5

Brecher

International Political Earthquakes, 2008, 111-120, 236-245,275-283

Quantitative – Aggregate Data Analysis (Session 5) (October 4)

Hewitt

Engaging International Data in the Classroom: Using the ICB Interactive Data Library to Teach Conflict and Crisis Analysis”, in International Studies Perspectives, 2, 2001, pp. 371-383

Brecher and Wilkenfeld


Brecher, James, Wilkenfeld

Escalation and War in the Twentieth Century: Findings from the International Crisis Behavior Project”, in Vasquez, What Do We Know About War, 2000, Chap. 3.

Brecher

ICB Codebooks (rev. 2009) System Level (Internet – ICB)

ICB Code Sheets (rev. 2008) System Level, Actor Level

Berlin Blockade Crisis 1948-49 (Exercise in Coding a Crisis), Brecher, International Political Earthquakes, 2008, Chapter 9 (see above under Session 4 and Internet – ICB)

CRISES (Sessions 6-9)

Crisis Attributes – Trigger, Triggering Entity, Duration, Decisions, Decision-Makers, Attitudinal Prism, Threatened Values (Session 6, October 11)

Brecher The World of Protracted Conflicts, pp. 149-151, 152, 173,175, 177-178, 183-184.

Crisis Management/Coping Mechanisms – Information Processing, Consultation, Decisional Forum, Alternatives (Sessions 7 and 8, October 18, 25)

Brecher, International Political Earthquakes, pp. 195-198 (Also see Course Pack for Session 4);

Severity and Impact of Crises (Session 9, November 1)

Brecher International Political Earthquakes, pp. 45-49, 58-67, 145-146 (Severity)

pp. 49-57, 67-75, 146-147 (Impact)

Readings on your selected international crisis, for Sessions 6-9 and your seminar paper: draw from the bibliographies at the end of each crisis summary, in Brecher and Wilkenfeld, A Study of Crisis, 1997/2000, and Brecher, International Political Earthquakes, 2008 (and the Internet – ICB)

WAR (Sessions 10-13)

GENERAL EXPLANATIONS:

Session 10 (November 8)


Diversionary Theory of War Levy, in Midlarsky, Handbook of War Studies, Chap. 11

Power Transition Theory Kugler and Lemke, in Midlarsky, (ed.), Handbook of War Studies II, 2000, Chap. 5

Session 11 (November 15)


**SPECIFIC EXPLANATIONS**

**Regime Type/Democratic Peace**


**Session 12 (November 22)**

**Ethnic Conflict and Civil War**


**Session 13 November 29)**

**Territory and War**

Hensel, “Territory: Theory and Evidence on Geography and Conflict”, in Vasquez, *What Do We Know About War*, 2000, Chap. 4


Huth., “Territory: Why Are Territorial Disputes between States a Central Cause of International Conflict”, in Vasquez. *What Do We Know About War?*

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Oral:**

**Participation** – assessments of selected literature -- in weekly discussions (Sessions 3-4, 10-13), coding an international and foreign policy crisis (Session 5)

**Reports** on attributes and dimensions of one’s selected crisis, 20-30 minutes each (Sessions 6-9)

**Presentation** on articles or book chapters, 20 minutes each (Sessions 3, 4, 10-13)

**Written:**

**Précis (maximum, 3 double-spaced typed pages), Font 10, on the crisis attributes and dimensions (Sessions 6-9), and on assigned readings for presentation (Sessions 3, 4, 10-13), with Summary of**
Contents, an Assessment, and suggested Question(s) for discussion in the seminar; the précis to be sent as an e-mail Attachment (as a Word Document) to all participants in the Seminar by the Monday noon preceding the relevant weekly session.

Seminar Paper, 30-35 double-spaced typed/pages, plus notes and bibliography, Font 10: case study on the crisis for which you will be responsible in Sessions 6-9. Alternatives to case study are possible:

- an aggregate data analysis (e.g., democracy and initiation of war in the bipolar period 1945-62 or the bipolarcentric period, 1963–89, severity and impact of Europe or Asia or Africa crises, 1945-2005); OR

- a critique of the literature on a specific topic (e.g., causes of war, causes of protracted conflict/enduring rivalry, crisis management, with empirical illustrations); OR

- an interstate protracted conflict, e.g., U.S./USSR; Yugoslavia; India/Pakistan, over Kashmir; Arab/Israel. The ICB dataset is available in Brecher and Wilkenfeld, A Study of Crisis, edition, 2000, and on the ICB web site: www.cidem.umd.edu/icb/

Students who choose an alternative to a crisis case study for the seminar paper will also be responsible for the oral reports on an international crisis in each of the Sessions 6-9.

Deadline for submission of the Seminar Paper is 8 December 2017, 9.00 a.m. Students are advised to select a case for the Seminar Paper by Session 3 and begin work on their paper no later than 1 October, after securing approval for their topic, outline-contents, and bibliography. Students are expected to be knowledgeable on the entire reading list for Sessions 1-5, 10-13 and will be evaluated for written and oral presentations.

FINAL GRADE for POLI 677 will be based upon the following: seminar paper 50%; oral and written presentations, 25% and participation in the discussions 25%.

OFFICE HOURS (Room 528, Leacock): Tuesday 3.00-5.00 and Thursday, 5.30-7.00; e-mail: michael.brecher@mcgill.ca For discussions, office hours are preferable.

NOTE:

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

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

“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.”