

M.St. International Relations 2011/13

Debates in International Relations: Thinking about War (Core 3)

Charles Jones

Course Description

The aim of this third module of the core course is to exercise some of the material already studied by relating it to policy debates of the post-Cold War era. Will democratization create a more peaceful or stable world? Can the use of military force be justified? Should we worry about or rejoice in a relative decline in the power of the USA? As well as exposing some features of the relationship between theory and policy, these four sessions are designed to promote further discussion of methodological issues raised in the first module of the course. Do international relations provide fruitful ground for inductive inquiry and statistical analysis? Are systemic theories falsifiable (and should we worry if they're not)? Are there any universal truths about international relations? Does it make sense to talk about normative theory? Does history offer lessons? Do theorists speak truth to power or did power get to them first?

Preparation

Most of the readings selected for study have been drawn from journals available to students through JSTOR. The others are also available electronically (see below). Remote location and distance from libraries cannot excuse lack of preparation for the seminars. The exceptions are two very well known books, both worth owning and studying at your leisure. Aside from these, and the journal articles, isolated chapters from a dozen or so other volumes together with some essays of my own, published in co-authored or edited books, which — along with a series of my unpublished lectures on IR Theory (2008) that do not map precisely into this module but overlap considerably with it — **are all available on the VLE (&/or in Mill Lane Library via CAMTOOLS)**. The two books worth owning (though they do **not** cover the course or act as text-books) are:

- Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979)
- Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977)

Workload

Each student is expected to have selected at least four of the items listed for each session and, ideally, all of them. How many each candidate reads in advance will depend on his or her reading speed. For some, four chapters/articles will constitute a hard day's work, so the remainder will have to wait. Others will knock off eight or nine without much difficulty. Some guidance on content and overlap is offered below, to aid selection, and a possible set of core readings indicated in bold. Successful participation in seminars will depend on each candidate having put in a minimum of 40 hours' preparatory reading. Success in the examination will depend on that comprehensive understanding of the syllabus that will only come from wide reading and discussion.

Timetable

Date	Time	Session	Topic
Monday 5.12.11	14.00- 15.00	Session 1 Introduction	The Causes of War
Monday 5.12.11	15.30- 17.00	Discussion	Correlates of War and Democratic Peace
Tuesday 6.12.11	9.00- 10.00	Session 2 Introduction	Balancing, Polarity and Conflict
Tuesday 6.12.11	10.30- 12.00	Discussion	The Unipolar Moment; Reductionist and Systemic Theories
Tuesday 6.12.11	14.00- 15.00	Session 3 Introduction	The Just War Tradition
Tuesday 6.12.11	15.30- 17.00	Discussion	Intervention; Alternatives to the Just War Tradition
Wednesday 7.12.11	9.00- 11.00	Film	'The Battle of Algiers'
Wednesday 7.12.11	11.30- 13.00	Presentation (CJ) and Discussion	'The Battle of Algiers'
Wednesday 7.12.11	14.30- 15.30	Session 4 Introduction	War as an Institution of International Society
Wednesday 7.12.11	16.00- 17.00	Discussion	Ways of War; Ways of Thinking about War
Thursday 8.12.11	10.00- 12.00	Discussion	Summary and Consolidation of the Module

Assessment

Students are required to sit an invigilated, closed-book hand-written examination, answering three questions from a list of ten within three hours.

Learning Outcomes

After following the course students will have a clearer understanding of the variety of methods of inquiry used by scholars and public intellectuals when dealing with one of the most pressing issues in international relations and of the importance of decisions about the appropriate level of analysis in directing research in the social sciences. They will also have a better sense of how academic and policy concerns interact, and have studied in some detail the thought of two major figures in recent thought about international relations, one ostensibly scientific and working within the disciplinary framework of political science, the other normative and historical in method, and generally classified as a political theorist.

Session 1. The Causes of War: I

The Correlates of War and the Democratic Peace

Each war has distinctive causes, but social scientists have been keen to find general causes, sometimes believing that a robust explanation will help policy-makers avoid future wars. Session 1 concentrates on explanations that rely on statistical analysis of antecedents of war including alliances, expenditure on armaments and regime type. The infrequency of war between democratic states seems to be one of the few reliable regularities in IR. As such it has attracted behaviourists associated with the Correlates of War project. But it has also intrigued political theorists, anxious to explain the observed regularity and assure themselves that it is not merely trivial. This debate captured the attention of policy-makers following the end of the Cold War because its stress on democracy seemed to some in the USA to justify a foreign policy promoting democratisation. Its emphasis on domestic politics brought it to the forefront of academic debate as well, since this unit-level analysis challenged the extreme structuralism of neo-realists, dominant in the 1980s. The first of the core readings for this session provides an overview of the Correlates of War method and an assessment of its prospects. Wallace and Diehl illustrate the kinds of policy-relevant debate that take place between scholars employing this method and was chosen partly because Diehl is the current director of the project. Selections by Doyle, Layne and Russett seek underlying explanations for the seeming link between democratic regime type and avoidance of conflict with other democracies. The essay by Fearon is an outlier in this session, using a rational choice rather than an empirical—inductive method to identify obstacles to the resolution of conflicts between states, but is included here because it falls short of the systemic emphasis of the explanations considered in session 2. A link to the Correlates of War website is offered for the curious.

- Dessler, 'Beyond Correlations: Toward a Casual Theory of War,' *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (1991), 337-55.
- **Michael D. Wallace, 'Armaments and Escalation: Two Competing Hypotheses' *International Studies Quarterly*, 26 (March 1982) 37-56.**
- **Paul F. Diehl, 'Arms Races and Escalation: A Closer Look' *Journal of Peace Research*, 20:3 (1983) 205-212.**
- **Michael W. Doyle, 'Liberalism and World Politics,' *American Political Science Review* 80 (December 1986) 1151-69.**
- Christopher Layne, 'Kant or Cant: the Myth of the Democratic Peace,' *International Security* 19:2 (Fall 1994), 5-49.
- **Bruce Russett, 'The Classical Liberals were Right: Democracy, Interdependence and Conflict, 1950-1985,' *International Studies Quarterly* 41:2 (June 1997), 267-94.**
- James Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War,' *International Organization*, 49:3 (1995).
- <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>

Session 2. The Causes of War II. Balancing, Polarity and Conflict

Many IR theorists have felt that explanations of war based on characteristics of participant states (or pairs of states) in the international system are insufficient, and that distribution of power (or capabilities) across the system as a whole is the key explanatory variable. This neorealist position is most closely associated with Kenneth Waltz, whose *Theory of International Politics* (1979) offered a powerful justification of bipolarity (chapter 8). The first two readings for this session provide succinct and easily available statements of his position. The collapse of bipolarity led to fierce debate in the USA about the future configuration of the international system. Was automatic balancing a universal law of international politics? Did it imply that the military dominance of the USA following the collapse of the Soviet Union was necessarily fleeting? Was balancing a consistent feature of states-systems over time and space? Nexon reviews the state of the literature. The next four readings (Mearsheimer, Kegley and Raymond, Layne and Wohlforth) illustrate the 1990s debate in the USA. Wohlforth et al. is included to show the way in which policy-related debate may motivate historical inquiry and for local colour. Waltz's reading of Lenin (*Theory*, chapter 2) makes him out to be a reductionist. Did Waltz misread Lenin? The selections by Alker and Biersteker and Eric Stokes help to raise questions of how scholarship may be influenced by the current political climate. The former raises important general questions about IR theory. My own essay questions the analogy drawn by Waltz between balance of power and oligopoly and may be thought obliquely relevant to the question of Waltz's reading of Lenin.

- Kenneth N. Waltz, 'War in Neorealist Theory' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (September 1988).
- **Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World,' *Daedalus* 93:3 (1964).**
- **Daniel H. Nexon, 'The Balance of Power in the Balance' *World Politics* 61 (2009) 330-359.**
- Charles W. Kegley and Gregory Raymond, 'Must we fear a Post-Cold War Multipolar System?' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36:3 (1992).
- Christopher Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion: Why Other Great Powers will Rise,' *International Security* 17:4 (1993).
- **William C. Wohlforth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World,' *International Security* 24 (Summer 1999).**
- **William C. Wohlforth et al. 'Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History' *European Journal of International Relations* 13:2 (2007) 155-185, and subsequent debate with Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni).**
- Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/)
- Eric Stokes, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Colonial Expansion and the Attack on the Theory of Economic Imperialism: a Case of Mistaken Identity' *Historical Journal*, 12 (1969) 285-301.
- Hayward Alker and Thomas Biersteker, 'The Dialectics of World Order' *International Studies Quarterly*, 28:2 (June 1984), 121-142.
- Charles A. Jones, chapter 11 'Analogy or Metaphor?' in Barry Buzan, Charles Jones and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

Session 3. Justifying War: Theory, Tradition and Doctrine.

It is often claimed that the Just War tradition has been a continuous and significant influence on international politics since ancient times and continues to provide the central theoretical tradition for thinking about the justification of war and how it may best be regulated. While it is not the only way to think about war – two obvious alternatives being straightforward realism and pacifism — the tradition has proved sufficiently flexible to approximate to, and thereby marginalise its rivals.

- Michael Walzer. *Just and Unjust Wars: a Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. (New York: Basic Books 1977)
- **Nicholas Rengger. ‘On the Just War Tradition in the Twenty-First Century’.** *International Affairs*, 78 (2002)
- **James Turner Johnson, ‘The Just War Idea: the State of the Question,’** *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 23:1 (2006) 167-96.
- Michael Walzer, ‘The Triumph of Just War Theory (and the Dangers of Success)’ *Social Research* (Winter 2002) (Reprinted in Walzer, *Arguing About War* (2004))
- Charles A. Jones, ‘Three Parables about War’ in Timothy Blewett, Adrian-Hyde Price and Wyn Rees (eds.) *British Foreign Policy and the Anglican Church: Christian Engagement with the Contemporary World* (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008).
- James Turner Johnson, *Morality and Contemporary Warfare*, 8-40.

Intervention

Under what circumstances may armed intervention by a state be (a) justified and/or (b) a duty?

- **Jennifer M. Welsh, *Edmund Burke and International Relations* (1995) chapter 5: ‘Interventionism’ 115-140.**
- **John Stuart Mill, ‘A Few Words on Intervention’ (1859) Michael Walzer ‘The Politics of Rescue’ *Social Research* 1995 (or 6). (Reprinted in Walzer, *Arguing About War* (2004)) and/or chapter 6 of *Just and Unjust Wars* (see above).**
- **Michael Walzer ‘The Politics of Rescue’ *Social Research* 1995 (or 6). (Reprinted in Walzer, *Arguing About War* (2004)) and/or chapter 6 of *Just and Unjust Wars* (see above).**
- Georgios Varouxakis ‘John Stuart Mill on Intervention and Non-Intervention’ *Millennium* 26:1 (1997) 57-76.
- David P. Fidler and Jennifer M. Welsh (eds.) *Empire and Community: Edmund Burke’s Writing and Speeches on International Relations* (1999), Chapter 3 (part) ‘Intervention’ and ‘Burke’s Place in International Relations Theory’ 49-56.
- Stanley Hoffmann, ‘The Politics and Ethics of Military Intervention,’ *Survival* 37:4 (Winter 1995/6) 29-51.

Session 4: The Nature of War: An Institution in Crisis?

Traditionally, this question might have been interpreted in one of three overlapping ways: 'Is there any place for morality in warfare?', 'Has the manner in which wars are fought changed out of all recognition?' or 'Is war to be regarded as an institution for the maintenance of international order or a symptom of the breakdown of international order?' Increasingly, these questions are giving way to more fundamental ones, as distinctions between combatant and non-combatant, participant and spectator, performance and rehearsal eat away at assumptions common to all parties in earlier debates. Many feel there has been a radical destabilization of a network of concepts including war, violence, terror, and anxiety. This line of thought, though generally conducted at arm's length from debates within the thought-world of the just war, has strong ethical implications relating less to justice than to identity, self-esteem, sacrifice, community and rationality itself. The readings, as listed, start from quite conventional questionings of styles of war-fighting and the function of war in the international system and proceed to more radical assessments.

- **Hedley Bull, *Anarchical Society*, chapter 8: 'War and International Order'.**
- **Charles A. Jones 'War in the Twenty-First Century: An Institution in Crisis' in John Williams and Richard Little (eds.) *The Anarchical Society in a Globalized World* (2006), 162-188 (A reflection on Bull's chapter).**
- John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 1-15
- Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998) 1-12.
- **Nazih Richani, *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2002) 11-35.**
- Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (Vintage, 2001) 184-205.
- Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass, 'Epilogue as Prologue: The Apotheosis of Terrorism Foretold' in their *Terror and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 227-239.
- **Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War did not take place* (Indiana, 1995) 61-87.**
- James Der Derian, *Virtuous War* (2001) chapter 9 — 'Toward a Virtual Theory of War and Peace' 205-221.

Those disappointed by the brevity of the reading list or needing something lighter to read on the plane might try Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* (multiple rationalities intersecting and pushed to the point of absurdity) and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5* (where war becomes the metaphor for a post-modern collapse of identity and rationality). On more conventional 'ways of war' it is still worth reading James Fennimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, which examines dissonances between three.

Session 5: Summary and Consolidation of the Module

CAJ, Cambridge May 2011.