

The study of contemporary conflicts

Instructors

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Objective

This course will provide students with the necessary methodological and epistemological knowledge to embark on a research project on contemporary conflicts. Researching contemporary conflicts is fraught with specific empirical difficulties, notably when it comes to access to relevant data in and about a conflict environment. The class will teach students how to face those difficulties through presentations and discussions of recent research related to contemporary conflicts. It will give them the relevant skills to produce high-quality independent analysis in a research and/or policy environment. The skills acquired will be helpful first for the master thesis, and throughout their entire career whenever they will need to use analytical skills. By systematically illustrating the methodological discussions with examples of research on contemporary conflicts, students will simultaneously acquire in-depth knowledge on the specific examples and understand the connections between data, methods, and analysis.

With this course, students will learn to:

- Understand the notion of causality, and its various meanings
- Understand the connection between theory development and empirical strategy
- Adjudicate knowledge claims based on an understanding of the fundamentals of epistemology
- Design a research project
- Select and apply the appropriate methods necessary to conduct this research project
- Collect and analyze the relevant data on contemporary conflicts
- Organize and present their results in a written and an oral form
- Assess the methodological quality of existing research and commentaries about contemporary conflicts

Course structure: One lecture per week, **Mondays, 12.00-15.00, Room U56**. Classes will involve a combination of lecturing and interactive class exercises.

Assessment: A research paper on a previously agreed-upon topic with the instructors. The paper must be maximum 15 pages (each with 2400 strokes incl. spacing, appendix and notes included, but table of content and bibliography excluded.) and in English. This page limit does not include title page and reference list.

Equity and Disability Policies: The University of Southern Denmark and us are committed to providing a supportive learning environment. If you are facing medical, emotional or personal circumstances that will affect your attendance and performance, please see us.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated and could result in a grade of zero for the course or expulsion from the University.

Mandatory readings

There are two compulsory books for purchase, available from the bookstore.

Christopher Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations*, Sage Publishers (2015).

Audie Klotz, Derek Prakasch (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, Palgrave (2006).

Other readings are available through the library or on blackboard.

The readings will be quite heavy during the first four weeks as they lay out the core epistemological foundations for conducting a research project. Please *do the readings* as they are necessary for the lecture and the in-class exercises, and for the writing of your research paper.

Session 1: What to look for? Understanding causation

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures. Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012. Read chapter 3, “Causes-of-effects versus effects-of-causes”, pp. 41-50.

Craig Parsons, *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Read the introduction, pp. 3-20.

Richard Ned Lebow, *Constructing Cause in International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Read chapters 2 and 3, “Inefficient Causation I and II”, pp. 46-98.

Readings for the in-class exercises

William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War (2nd ed.)*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Read the introduction, pp. 1-24.

Kenneth Waltz, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory”, in Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Conflict after the Cold War. Arguments on the Causes of War and Peace (5th ed.)*, Abingdon, Routledge, pp. 101-108.

Geoffrey Blainey, “Paradise Is a Bazaar”, in Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Conflict after the Cold War. Arguments on the Causes of War and Peace (5th ed.)*, Abingdon, Routledge, pp. 256-264.

Session 2: Structuring a research design

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations. Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2011.
Read chapter 2, “Philosophical Wagers”, pp. 24-40.

Christopher Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations*, Sage Publishers (2015).
Read chapters 1-2-3-4, pp. 13-76.

Readings for the in-class exercises

Robert A. Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work”, *International Security*, 22/2 (1997), pp. 90-136.

David A. Baldwin, “The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice”, *International Security*, 24/3 (1999-2000), pp. 80-107.

Session 3: Case selection

Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods (5th ed.)*, London, Sage Publishers, 2013.
Read chapter 2: “Designing Case Studies: identifying your case(s) and establishing the logic of your case study”.

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 2005.
Read Chapter 5: “Carrying out the case studies”.

Audie Klotz, “Case selection”, in Audie Klotz, Derek Prakasch (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, Palgrave, 2006, pp. 43-60.

Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, “Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield”, *Comparative Political Studies* 40/2, 2007, pp. 170 –195.

Readings for the in-class exercises

Paul Staniland, “Explaining Civil-Military Relations in Complex Political Environments: India and Pakistan in Comparative Perspective”, *Security Studies*, 17/2, 2008, pp. 322–362.

Walter C. Ludwig, “Influencing Clients in Counterinsurgency: U.S Involvement in El Salvador’s Civil War, 1979-92”, *International Security*, 41/1, 2016, pp. 99-146.

Session 4: Concept development and measurement

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures. Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012.
Read chapter 10, “Concepts: Definitions, Indicators and Error”, pp. 127-138 and chapter 13 “Conceptual Opposites and Typologies”, pp. 161-173.

David Collier, Fernando Daniel Hidalgo and Andra Olivia Maciuceanu, “Essentially Contested Concepts: Debates and Applications”, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11/3, 2006, pp. 211-246.

Felix Berenskroetter, “Approaches to Concept Analysis”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 45/2, 2016, pp. 151-173.

Readings for the in-class exercises

Antoine Bousquet, “War”, in Felix Berenskroetter (ed.), *Concepts in World Politics*, London: Sage, 2016, pp. 91-106.

Nicholas Sambanis, “What is a Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48/6, 2004, pp. 814-858.

Andrew Lawrence, “Imperial Peace of Imperial Method? Skeptical Inquiries into Ambiguous Evidence for the ‘Democratic Peace’”, in Richard Ned Lebow and Mark Irving Lichbach (eds.), *Theory and Evidence in Comparative Politics and International Relations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2007, pp. 199-228.

Session 5: Counterfactual analysis

Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, “Introduction”, in Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin (eds.), *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological and Psychological Perspectives*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 1-38.

Richard Ned Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit. Counterfactuals and International Relations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010.

Read chapter 2, “Counterfactual Thought Experiments”, pp. 29-68.

Readings for the in-class exercises

Mischa Hansel, Kai Oppermann, “Counterfactual Reasoning in Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of the German Nonparticipation in the Libya Intervention in 2011”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 12/2, 2016, pp. 109-127.

Stephen Biddle and Peter D. Feaver, “Assessing Strategic Choices in the War on Terror”, in James Burk (ed.), *How 9/11 Changed our Ways of War*, Palo Alto, Stanford UP, 2013, pp. 27-55.

Session 6: Process tracing

Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Process Tracing”, in Audie Klotz, Derek Prakasch (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, Palgrave, 2006, pp. 114-130.

Jason Lyall “Process tracing, causal inference, and civil war”, in Andrew Bennett, Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds.), *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 186-208

Readings for the in-class exercises

Tang, S., Xiong, Y., & Li, H, “Does Oil Cause Ethnic War? Comparing Evidence from Process-tracing with Quantitative Results”, *Security Studies*, 26/3, 2017, pp. 359-390.

John M. Owen, (1994) “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace”, *International Security*, 19/2, 1994, pp. 87-125.

Session 7: Fieldwork and ethnographic enquiry

Hugh Gusterson, “Ethnographic Research”, Audie Klotz, Derek Prakasch (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, Palgrave, 2006, pp. 93-113.

Wedgeen, L., “Reflections on ethnographic work in political science”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13, 2010, pp. 255-272.

Readings for the in-class exercises

Ivana Maček (2009). *Sarajevo under siege: Anthropology in wartime*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Chapter 2 “Death and Creativity in Wartime pp. 34-61

Schia, N. N. (2013). Being part of the parade—“going native” in the United Nations Security Council. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 36(1), 138-156.

Neumann, I. B. (2005). To be a diplomat. *International Studies Perspectives*, 6(1), 72-93.

Session 8: Discourse analysis

Iver B. Neumann, “Discourse Analysis”, in Audie Klotz, Derek Prakasch (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, Palgrave, 2006, pp. 61-77.

Hansen, Lene. *Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Routledge, 2013, Chapter 2 “Discourse analysis, identity, and foreign policy”, pp.14-32

Readings for the in-class exercises

Krebs, R. R., & Lobasz, J. K. (2007). Fixing the meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, coercion, and the road to war in Iraq. *Security Studies*, 16(3), 409-451.

Hansen, Lene. *Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Routledge, 2013, Chapter 6 “The basic discourses in the Western debate over Bosnia” and chapter 7 “Humanitarian responsibility versus ‘lift and strike’: tracing trans-Atlantic policy discourses” pp. 84-130

[Session 9: Using archives \(guest lecture by Jan Lemnitzer\)](#)

[Session 10: Seminar on research papers](#)

Prepare a presentation on your research paper (including research question, lit. review, methods, sources).