



Political Science 4004

Environmental Conflict

TuTh, 11:00am – 12:15pm, Middlebush Hall, Room 310

Prof. Bryce Reeder

Email: reederbw@missouri.edu

Office Location: Professional Building, Room 201

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2pm – 4pm (and by appointment)

Office Phone: (573) 882 – 0056

This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion.

Teaching Assistant:

Tiffanesha Williams

Office: Professional Building, Room 217

Office Hours: TuTh, 1pm – 4pm (and by appointment)

Email: tiwr62@mail.missouri.edu

Course Description: This course introduces advanced undergraduate students to the linkages between the environment and conflict. This includes the use of natural resources to fund rebellion, the relationship between human-induced environmental stress and political violence, and competition between states over resources. During the course students will develop a basic understanding of climate change science, conflict studies, and conflict management strategies employed by local, regional, and international actors.

Prerequisite(s): *junior or senior standing*

Note(s): Several topics, such as the use of violence during war, will be disturbing to all. Please talk to me if you have any questions/concerns about this content.

Credit Hours: 3

Required Text(s):

- Hough, Peter. 2014. *Environmental Security: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge. [ISBN: 978-0415516488]
- Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami. 2016. *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War*. London, UK: Pluto Books. [ISBN: 978-0745336220]
- Hazen, Jennifer M. 2013. *What Rebels Want: Resources and Supply Networks in Wartime*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. [ISBN: 978-0801451669]

Optional Text:

- Bennett, Jeffrey. 2016. *A Global Warming Primer: Answering Your Questions About The Science, The Consequences, and The Solutions*. Boulder, CO: Big Kid Science. [ISBN: 978-1937548780]

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will:

- be familiar with the scientific study of interstate conflict and civil war.
- understand and be able to describe the emerging literature that links resources to conflict.
- have an understanding of the topics of interest to scholars of armed conflict and how they relate to “real life” cases.
- have specialized knowledge of at least one ongoing armed conflict.
- understand the difficulty of managing resource-based insurgencies, and how this has serious implications for civilian populations.

Course Requirements:

- *Attendance:* Students are expected to attend and actively participate in this course. To this end, each student is allowed 1 “free day” – absences that will not lead to a penalty. After this free day, however, students will be penalized 1% off of their final grade for each additional course missed. **After 8 absences, the penalty becomes 1 letter grade for each additional class missed.**

Please note, however, that some of these missed points can be “earned back” by above-average participation during class discussion.

- *Essay Exams (3):* There will be three essay exams. These exams are non-cumulative and will only cover the material leading up to the exam. More information on structure and expectations will be provided in class.
- *Research Paper:* Students will write an 9-12 page research paper that uses the material covered in class to engage the scholarly debate surrounding the relationship among climate change, natural resources, and armed conflict. Students will choose from a list of contemporary wars provided by the professor. A detailed guide for the assignment will be distributed during the second week of class.
- *Extra Credit (optional):* Students can earn an additional 3% added to an exam score by using their essay response to create a short research paper (4-6 pages). This option is only available for Exam 1 and 2, and must be submitted via Canvas within 10 days of the exam date.

Grade Distribution:

Requirement	Percentage	Details
Attendance	10%	1 free day without penalty
Exam 1	20%	essay exam, climate change and interstate competition
Exam 2	20%	essay exam, climate change and civil war onset
Exam 3	20%	essay exam, resources as fuel for war
Research Paper	30%	10% outline; 20% paper
Extra Credit (optional)	up to 6%	exam essay response revisions

Letter Grade Distribution:

>= 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	<= 59.99	F

Course Policies:

- **General**

- Computers and other technology are only to be used for taking notes. **Students caught using technology for purposes unrelated to class will be banned from using said devices during class time.**
- All quizzes and exams are closed book, no notes (unless otherwise noted).
- No makeup quizzes or exams will be given. If you have a conflict you must discuss this with the instructor **before** the exam/quiz, not after.
- No recording devices are allowed in class, unless authorized in writing by the instructor.

- **Grades**

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- It is the responsibility of the student to follow up with their assigned teaching assistant with questions about grading. There are 4 steps to this process:
 - * Students **must wait 48 hours** before contacting their assigned teaching assistant.
 - * Grade inquiries **must occur within 2 weeks** after the assignment has been returned.
 - * Questions/concerns about grading **must be submitted in writing** to the teaching assistant, who will then respond in writing.
 - * If the dispute is not resolved, both written items will be given to the instructor and the assignment will be regraded. Note that during this process, **the assigned score may increase or decrease**.

- **Assignments**

- Students are expected to work independently, unless otherwise specified. **Offering and accepting** answers from others is an act of **plagiarism**, which is a serious offense and **all involved parties will be penalized according to university policy**. Discussion amongst students is encouraged, but when in doubt, direct your questions to the instructor.
- **No late assignments will be accepted under any circumstances.**

- **Attendance and Absences**

- Students are allowed to miss 1 class without penalty. After 1 absence, students will be penalized 1% off of attendance grade for each additional day. **After the 8th absence, the penalty becomes 1 letter grade for each additional day.**
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

- **Students with Disabilities**

- If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.
- If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services, S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

- **Plagiarism and Other Violations of Academic Integrity**

- Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. **The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters.** Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

- **Intellectual Pluralism**

- The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities; the MU Equity Office, or equity@missouri.edu.
- All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

- **Intellectual Property Notice**

- All course materials including but not limited to the syllabus, course assignments, study guides, learning guides, online lecture videos and content, and lab book (i.e. course pack) are property of the instructor and University and may not be shared online or distributed in any manner to others. Students are prohibited from posting course materials or notes online and from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. Doing so will constitute both an academic integrity violation and a copyright violation. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to civil penalties and criminal liability. Violations of academic integrity may subject you to disciplinary action under University policies.

List of Topics

- Climate Change and Interstate Competition
 - A Primer on the Study of Interstate War
 - Why, When, and Where Do States Fight?
 - Climate Change as a Security Issue
 - Scarcity as a Source of Conflict
 - The Quest for Resources and Conflict
 - Alternative Future: Cooperation over Conflict?
 - Contemporary Case Discussions (South Asia & Opening of the Arctic)
- Climate Change, Grievances, and Civil War Onset
 - Climate Change and Human Security
 - Grievances as a “Cause” of Civil War
 - A Primer on Civil War Onset
 - Trends and Patterns of Civil War Onset
 - Climate Change and the Syrian War
 - Climate Change and the Darfur Crisis
- Resources as Fuel for Civil Wars
 - What Do We Know About the Dynamics of Civil Wars?
 - Opportunity and Willingness Framework for Understanding Rebellion
 - Resources as Opportunity (Grievance-based Rebellions)
 - Resources as Willingness (Greed-based Rebellions)
 - Rebellion or Criminal Activity?
 - Managing Resource-Based Insurgencies
 - Looking to the Future

Course Schedule (all readings should be completed prior to class)

01/16 – Introduction to Course

01/18 – A Primer on the Study of Interstate War

- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Wiley-Blackwell. (read Chapter 1 entitled “An Introduction to the Study of War.” Chapter can be found on Canvas.)

01/23 – Why, When, and Where Do States Fight?

- Levy, Jack S. 2011. “Theories and Causes of War.” in *The Handbook of the Political Economy of War* edited by Christopher J. Coyne and Rachel L. Mathers. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar (pages 13-33). (Chapter can be found on Canvas.)
- Peace Research Institute (PRIO). 2017. “[Trends in Armed Conflicts, 1949-2016.](#)”

01/25 – Climate Change as a Security Issue

- Hough, Chapters 1-2.
- Jill Colvin, Associated Press (2017): “[Under Trump, climate change not a national security threat.](#)”

01/30 – Scarcity as a Source of Conflict, Part I

- Hough, Chapters 3-4.
- Stephen Kinzer, Boston Globe (2014): “[America’s next security threat: resource wars.](#)”

02/01 – Scarcity as a Source of Conflict, Part II

- Hough, Chapters 5-6.
- Karl Mathiesen, The Guardian (2014): “[What’s the environmental impact of modern war?](#)”

02/06 – The Quest for Resources and Conflict, Part I

- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Wiley-Blackwell. (Pages 56-63. Available on Canvas.)

- Paul Watson, Time Magazine (2017): “[A Melting Arctic Could Spark a New Cold War.](#)”

02/08 – The Quest for Resources and Conflict, Part II

- Eisenstadt, Todd A. and Karleen Jones West. 2017. “[Public Opinion, Vulnerability, and Living with Extraction on Ecuador’s Oil Frontier: Where the Debate Between Development and Environmentalism Gets Personal.](#)” *Comparative Politics* 49(2): 231-251.
- The Economist (2008): “[China’s Quest for Resources: A Ravenous Dragon.](#)”

02/13 – Alternative Future: Cooperation over Conflict

- Dinar, Shlomi, David Katz, Luica De Stefano, and Brian Blankespoor. 2015. “[Climate change, conflict, and cooperation: Global analysis of the effectiveness of international river treaties in addressing water variability.](#)” *Political Geography* 45: 55-66.
- Diana Liverman, The Huffington Post (2014): “[What if Climate Change Triggers Cooperation, Not Conflict?](#)”

02/15 – Contemporary Case Discussion (South Asia & Opening of the Arctic)

- Richard Shiffman, Yale Environment 360 (2017): “[Running Dry: Seeking Solutions to South Asia’s Looming Water Crisis.](#)”
- The Economist (2011): “[Unquenchable Thirst: A growing rivalry between India, Pakistan and China over the region’s great rivers may be threatening South Asia’s peace.](#)”

02/20 – **Exam 1, Interstate Competition**

02/22 – Climate Change and Human Security, Part I

- Hough, Chapters 7-8.
- Kelly M. McFarland and Vanessa Lide, The Monkey Cage, Washington Post (2017): “[The effects of climate change will force millions to migrate. Here’s what this means for human security.](#)”

02/27 – Climate Change and Human Security, Part II

- Hough, Chapters 9-10

03/01 – Grievances as a Cause of Civil War

- Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, Chapters 1-2
- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Wiley-Blackwell. (Pages 192-195. Available on Canvas.)

03/06 – Civil War Onset, Trends & Patterns, Part I

- Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, Chapters 3-4
- Jean-Marie Guehenno, Foreign Policy Magazine (2017): “[10 Conflicts to Watch in 2017: From Turkey to Mexico, the list of the world’s most volatile flashpoints got a lot more unpredictable this year.](#)”

03/08 – Civil War Onset, Trends, & Patterns, Part II

- Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, Chapters 5-6
- Joshua S. Goldstein and Steven Pinker, The Boston Globe (2016): “[The decline of war and violence.](#)”
- John Gray, The Guardian (2015): “[Steven Pinker is wrong about violence and war.](#)”

03/13 – Climate Change and Syria, Part I

- Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, Chapters 7-8
- Kelley, Colin P., Shahrzad Mohtadi, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager, and Yochanan Kushnir. 2015. “[Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought.](#)” *PNAS* 112(11): 3241-3246.

03/15 – Climate Change and Syria, Part II

- Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, Chapters 9-10
- Selby, Jan, Omar S. Dahi, Christine Frohlich, and Mike Hulme. 2017. “[Climate change and the Syrian war revisited.](#)” *Political Geography* 60: 232-244.

03/20 – Climate Change and Darfur, Part I

- Mazo, Jeffrey. 2010. “[Darfur: The First Modern Climate-Change Conflict.](#)” *The Adelphi Papers* 49(409): 73-86.

03/22 – Climate Change and Darfur, Part II

- Stephen Faris, *The Atlantic* (2007): “[The Real Roots of Darfur: The violence in Darfur is usually attributed to ethnic hatred, but global warming may be primarily to blame.](#)”
- Butler, Declan. 2007. “[Darfur’s climate roots challenged: Experts criticize UN view of Sudan Conflict.](#)” *Nature* 447(1038).

03/27 – No class, spring break.

03/29 – No class, spring break.

04/03 – Exam 2, Climate Change and Civil War Onset

04/05 – No class, away at conference.

04/10 – Primer on the Dynamics of Wars

- Hazen, Introduction.

04/12 – Opportunity and Willingness for Rebellion

- Hazen, Chapters 1-2.

04/17 – Resources as Opportunity (Grievance-based Rebellions)

- Ben Hubbard, Clifford Krauss, and Eric Schmitt, *The New York Times* (2014): “[Rebels in Syria Claim Control of Resources.](#)”
- Adam Coutts, *The Guardian* (2011): “[Syria’s uprising could have been avoided through reform.](#)”

04/19 – Resources as Willingness (Greed-based Rebellions)

- Erin Banco, *The Atlantic* (2011): “[Is Your Cell Phone Fueling Civil War in Congo?](#)”
- BBC News (2015): “[Central African Republic conflict ‘part-funded by European firms’](#)”

04/24 – Rebellion or Criminal Activity?

- Barnes, Nicholas. 2017. “Criminal Politics: An Integrated Approach to the Study of Organized Crime, Politics, and Violence.” *Perspectives on Politics* 15(4): 967-987.

04/26 – Managing Resource-Based Insurgencies

- The United Nations. 2012. *Renewable Resources and Conflict: Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict*. (Read pages 42-84. Available on Canvas.)

05/01 – Film Screening

05/03 – Film Screening (finish film) & Discussion

05/10 – **Final Research Paper Due by 11:59pm (must be submitted via Canvas)**

Date/Time TBA – **Exam 3, Resources as Fuel for War**