OVERVIEW: Territorial conflicts have been found to be the most contentious and difficult to resolve in international politics. Territorial conflict is also found to be one of the most frequent causes of interstate and intrastate violence. At a theoretical level, territory is central to almost any aspect of international relations, as it is what physically defines states, where any kind of violent conflict takes place, and influences the character of violent conflict in important ways. A large empirical literature convincingly shows that territory is a key determinant of international conflict. However, much remains unexplored both theoretically and empirically.

In this course, we explore the role that territory plays in a wide variety of contexts in international relations. We motivate the course by noting that although territory has been shown to be empirically central to the majority of violent disputes, explanations for why this is the case lag behind the evidence that it is the case. Subsequently, we study the role territory plays in international conflict, the settlement of disputes, international trade, the effectiveness of treaties, civil wars, the settlement of civil wars, third-party intervention in civil wars, and rebel groups’ choice of terrorism or insurgency in civil conflicts. In studying each of these topics, particular attention is paid to the central theoretical role territory plays in international relations.
GRADING: Final grades for this course are determined as follows:

- Research Paper - 60%
- Peer Review - 15%
- Participation - 25%

Below are more detailed explanations of each of the components to the final grade.

1. **Research Paper:** The most significant portion of your course grade is a research paper that is due at noon on January, 18. The paper must be an original research paper that has something to do with territory. Beyond the requirement that the paper relate to the course, I encourage you to work on something you are interested in. This is really a nice opportunity to start something that may become a conference paper or publication. Papers can be either theoretical, empirical, or both. The bar for a purely theoretical paper is very high. Students must clear their topics with me before writing the paper. You should immediately start to think about what interests you for your research paper, as parts of it are due relatively early in the semester. I really want the emphasis to be on producing a potential publication rather than “putting an X in the box” of the course requirement.

   The paper is to be completed in two parts. The first part is due on December 15. The first part is a first draft of the front-end of the paper. Thus, you should have an introduction, literature review, theory, and a description of your data or empirical strategy, depending on the approach in the paper. The paper will be turned in to a colleague for peer review as well as me. The final paper is due to me on January 18.

   I strongly encourage you to write the final paper. However, I understand the need to balance responsibilities across multiple classes. Thus, if you do not wish to do a final paper, please speak to me about an alternative. The alternative involves a weekly response paper and a final exam. The time commitment will be very similar.

2. **Peer Review:** When the first part of your paper is due, we will distribute the papers amongst ourselves for peer reviews. Thus, you will write a review of a colleague’s work which must be provided to him or her (and me) by January 3. Your colleague will use the review to improve his or her paper, and I will ensure that everyone is writing conscientious and helpful reviews.

3. **Participation:** Given that active participation from everyone is essential to making the seminar fruitful, participation is a significant part of the final grade. Students are expected to contribute to our discussions of the readings on a weekly basis. Good discussion necessarily highlights the shortcomings of articles; however, the discussion of what should be done to advance the current literature is also an essential component of class discussions. Without active and wide participation, a graduate seminar of this type is unlikely to be successful.
READING: Most of the readings are from articles that can be obtained online. I also assign readings from the books listed below.


COURSE SCHEDULE

1. September 15: Why Territory is Important.


4. October 6: Territory and Identity.


6. October 20: Territorial Disputes.


7. October 27: Dynamics of Boundaries.


8. November 10: Regime Type and Territorial Disputes.


11. December 8: Geography and Civil War.


