OVERVIEW: Territorial conflicts are often 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 defines the character of any violent conflict in important ways. But why is it that states and non-state actors fight over territory? Is it because they seek economic benefits to be gained by additional territory, because they identify with specific territory, because they fear a rival taking over the territory, or for some other reason?

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.

Disputes over territory are central to much contemporary conflict in international relations. A few recent examples include: the fight for territorial control in Afghanistan, the cross-border fights between Turkey and Kurdish rebels in Northern Iraq, and the recent conflict between Georgia and Russia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Given the contemporary relevance of territory, students are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss current events, integrating what we have learned in the course into the discussions. To ensure that such discussions are fruitful, it is required that students consult print news sources (e.g., newspapers, periodicals) on a daily basis. Newspapers are available at numerous locations on campus as well as on internet sites such as:

**GRADING:** Final grades for this course are determined as follows:

- First Examination - 30%
- Second Examination - 30%
- Short Papers - 30%
- Participation - 10%

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

1. **Examinations:** Two in-class examinations will be given during the course. The exams will consist of two sections: identification of key concepts and essay. The identification section will list 8–10 key concepts or ideas from the course readings and lectures of which students will need to choose 6–8 to explain. The concept should be correctly explained and then briefly applied to an actual example from the readings or from current events. The essay portion of the exams will consist of 3 questions of which students must choose 2 to answer. All identification concepts and essay questions will come directly from the readings and lectures, so exams will reward all who have kept up with the work. The second examination will focus mostly on material covered since the first examination; however, concepts covered previous to the first examination will inevitably come up, as the topics in the course are all closely linked.

2. **Short Papers:** Two short papers, 3–5 pages each, will be due during the semester. The papers should be critical summaries of a set of literature between specified in-class discussion dates. Students have choice about when they must write these papers, as well as what the subject matter is as there are 5 in-class discussions. The purpose of the papers is to do three things:

   (a) Summarize the main ideas in the relevant literature;
   (b) Discuss how existing evidence provided by researchers does or does not connect to these ideas;
   (c) Suggest one major area, theoretical or empirical, in which an improvement is needed.

The first two points are fairly straightforward. The third is obviously a bit more difficult but really should follow from the first two parts. For instance, there might be an important issue that is absent theoretically but present in prominent cases (discussed in the literature). Alternatively, there may be theoretical ideas for which no empirical evidence has been provided. I will provide more guidance on the short papers during the first week of class.
These papers must be turned in one week after the relevant discussion day. Thus, if you want to write your discussion paper on Huth’s book *Standing Your Ground*, you must turn in your discussion paper by September 22.

3. **PARTICIPATION:** Active participation in class discussions are important to ensure that everyone benefits as much as possible from the course. A baseline for the participation grade is simply attendance. It is quite hard for me to award a good participation grade to students who are not in class. Beyond that, students are expected to weigh in on class discussions in a way that demonstrates they have done the readings and more importantly, given some serious thought to them. While there are no hard and fast rules, I should generally observe good contribution to discussions from each student at least once a week. However, please note that I assess contributions for their quality rather than their quantity.
Below is the grading scale for all parts of the final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**READING:** The readings are from the required book as well as numerous scholarly articles. Most of the articles are posted on ANGEL, otherwise they are all available electronically through the library website. The required book is:


**COURSE SCHEDULE**

1. **August 23:** Introduction of Course and Policies. No assigned reading.


6. **September 8:** Territorial Conflict in IR I. Paul K. Huth. *Standing Your Ground* Chapter 4, pp. 69–102.


9. September 15: Discussion – *Standing Your Ground*.


22. **October 15: Examination 1**


25. **October 22: No Class — Peace Science Society Annual Conference.**


29. **November 1: Discussion — Ethnic Conflict and Secession**


34. **November 12: Discussion — Geography and Civil War.**


38. **November 22–26**: No Classes – Thanksgiving Break


40. **December 1**: Discussion — Foreign Territory and Civil War.


45. **Final Exam Date and Time**: TBA
SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Students with documented disabilities who require special accommodations should meet
with me and express their needs during the first two weeks of the class. All discussions
will remain confidential. I want to do whatever possible to assure each student full and
rewarding participation in the course.

ABSENCES

If a student anticipates missing a day or more of class due to a scheduling conflict, please
let me know as far in advance as possible. I will try to be as accommodating as possible
for legitimate conflicts, but need to be informed at least a week in advance if possible.
If an emergency situation arises or a student needs to miss a course for medical reasons,
relevant documentation will be required to excuse the student for missing class.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the
University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in
one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the commu-
nity are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor
clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the
preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper
citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the
contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic in-
tegrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written
or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to
give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also
constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Po-
itical Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More
information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at:
http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

DISABILITIES

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to par-
ticipate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people
shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.