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Zero Textbook Cost Syllabus for POL 3345 (Contemporary International Conflict)

Aaron M. Zack

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Pol 3345- S2BA (7967)
Contemporary International Conflict
Summer 2018
M/W/Th 11am- 1:30pm

Instructor: Aaron M. Zack
Email:

The title of the course is Contemporary International Conflict; however, since significant political violence takes place within states and is conducted by non- state actors, the course will not confine itself to conflict between states. After first considering sovereignty and the parameters of violent conflict, we shall explore three subjects in particular depth: terrorism; the actual and potential impact of nuclear weapons on global conflict; and the risk of great power war between America and China. We will also discuss transnational criminal organizations.

No text is required for purchase: all readings will be freely available through Blackboard, the Baruch Library website, or open access on the internet.

Examinations, Required Presentations and Grading:

Class Attendance, Participation, and Reading Quizzes: 20%

Examination 1, Wed. July 25th: 20%

Examination 2, Mon, Aug. 6th: 20%

Final Examination, Thur. Aug 16: 20%

Research Paper and Presentation: 20%

Each student must write a 14- 18 page (double spaced, 12pt font) research paper. A bibliography and footnotes should be included with the paper (the bibliography and notes count against the page limit.) A printed copy of the paper is due at the beginning of class on August 16th (no late papers accepted.) A printed copy of the topic of your paper and a preliminary bibliography are due at the beginning of class on July 26th. You may choose the topic of your paper, and should consult with me before turning in your topic and and bibliography. Formatting should follow the Chicago Manual of Style. You should read the College's plagiarism policies.

Beginning Aug. 8, each student will present to the class their preliminary or final research findings. This will also facilitate a discussion about the research, which should improve the final paper. The quality of the presentation will comprise part of the research paper/presentation grade. Each presentation should be at least 10 minutes, and no longer than 12 minutes. The class will then discuss the presentation. We will determine the presentation schedule in class on July 19th.

Class Policies: No work will be allowed for extra credit or as a substitute for exams, and no exam grade, final grade, or other grades will be changed. I will not discuss at all grades with students beyond the comments and suggestions I note on your exams. No excuse will be



accepted for missing an exam other than a medical or similar emergency. In that case, you must contact me before the exam and note your reason for requesting a postponement.

No eating is allowed in class. Texting or emailing are not allowed in class. I will note in class the reading assigned for the next class and the material covered by the examinations. You are therefore responsible for knowing what reading is assigned for class and what the exams will cover, and you should not email me to ask about these issues. It is recommended that you exchange contact information with another member of the class to remain informed in case of absence. If you will miss a class due to medical reasons or religious observance, you need not contact me. If you expect to miss two or more classes, either speak to me in class (preferred) or email me. According to university policy, students who miss an excessive number of classes will be dropped from the course.

Websites and Media to consult on a regular basis:

The Financial Times

Institute for the Study of War

For the Middle East in particular:

The Lebanon Daily Star

RT.com

ynet news

Robert Fisk (The Independent)

Debka (website)

The exact reading schedule is flexible, a function of pace, emphasis, and interest.

Broad Reading and Topical Schedule:

Class Organization and Introduction: Sovereignty, Power Transitions, and the Scope of

Violent Conflict

July 16.

No Reading. Handout: Demmers, *Theories of Violent Conflict*; Bin Laden, Declaration of War;

Congressional Authorization for the Use of Force: Sep. 18, 2001; Statistical Data, AJP Taylor,

The Struggle for Master in Europe; NATO Treaty; Video: Hans Rosling, Statistical Analysis of

Health and Wealth.

July 18. Reading: Huntington, ‘Clash of Civilizations?’ (Blackboard); Mackinder, ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’ (Blackboard); Kurth, ‘Splitting Islam’: <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/splitting-islam/>

Terrorism, Political Violence, and Transnational Criminal Organizations

July 19, 23, 25, 26, 30.

Reading, Films and Audio:

Grabosky and Stohl, *Crime and Terrorism* (Blackboard); *Provos* (Video in class); Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Blackboard); Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (Blackboard); ‘Mao Tse-tung and the Search for 21st Century Counterinsurgency’: <https://ctc.usma.edu/mao-tse-tung-and-the-search-for-21st-century-counterinsurgency/>; Michael Vlahos interviews, ‘Stages of Civil War’ (audios in class); Law, ‘White Supremacy and American Racial Terrorism’ (Blackboard); Ikle, *Annihilation From Within* (Blackboard); Muslim Brotherhood: <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/muslim-brotherhood>; Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words* (Blackboard); ‘An Explanatory Memorandum On the General Strategic Goal for the Group In North America’: <https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/20.pdf> ; In New York: <https://ctc.usma.edu/nypd-vs-revolution-muslim-inside-story-defeat-local-radicalization-hub/>; Technology and Insurgency: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/wars-none-ai-big-data-and-future-insurgency>; ‘The Mexican Zetas and Other Private Armies’: <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdf/PUB940.pdf>; Hamm, *Terrorism as Crime* (Blackboard).

Nuclear Weapons and Global Conflict

Aug. 1,2,6,8.

Reading and Films:

Freedman, 'The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists' (Blackboard); Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (Handout); Albright, 'Khan Network': <https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/11090/albrightJul06.pdf;sequence=1>; *Nuclear Tipping Point* (Film in class); 'Clouds Over Cuba' (Film in class); Krepinevich, 'War Comes to America' (Blackboard); Bracken, *The Second Nuclear Age* (Blackboard); Kroenig and Kahl, 'Iran' (Blackboard).

Great Power Conflict: America and China

Aug. 9, 13,15, 16.

Grygiel 'Frontier States' (Blackboard); Zack, 'Hegemonic Decline' (Blackboard), Friedberg, 'US and China' (Blackboard); Halloran, 'AirSea Battle': <http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2010/August%202010/0810battle.aspx> ; Kurth 'Confronting a Powerful China' (Blackboard); Kraska, 'How the United States Lost the Naval War of 2015' (Blackboard.)