COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The claim that democracies behave differently in international politics owing to the nature of their domestic political institutions or norms of appropriate behavior has gained widespread currency in both the scholarly and policymaking community. The so-called “democratic peace”—the contention that democracies do not fight one another—is just the tip of the iceberg: scholars have used regime type to explain a wide variety of outcomes in international relations, including military effectiveness, war outcomes, alliance formation, war termination, and violence against civilians, to name but a few. Spreading democracy around the globe is now at the top of America’s national security agenda: not only are democracies just and equitable societies domestically, according to this argument, but they are also peaceful internationally.

The goals of this course are twofold: (1) to introduce students to the burgeoning literature on democracy and international relations, and (2) to evaluate critically the arguments and evidence found therein, both on their own merits and in comparison to alternative explanations. First we will examine normative and institutional variants of democratic peace theory, as well as assess the value of some prominent critiques. The second main focus of the course will be democracy, military effectiveness, and victory in war: are democracies smarter at choosing their fights and better at prosecuting them? Is democracy a hindrance in winning certain types of wars, such as protracted guerrilla insurgencies? We will also examine whether—or under what circumstances—democracies wage preventive wars, the extent to which democracies victimize noncombatants in warfare, and the pros and cons of spreading democracy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is a senior seminar intended primarily for political science or history majors with some background in international relations theory. Enrollment for the course is limited to 18 students. The reading load for the course is heavy, equivalent to one book per week. It is absolutely essential that students read all of the material carefully for each session so as to be able to participate in the discussion in an informed manner. You may find it helpful to take notes and/or prepare outlines of the readings as well. Grades will be based on three criteria:

- **Seminar Preparedness and Participation (20%)**: This will include leading class discussions on particular readings.

- **Two 5-Page Papers (15% each)**, due at the beginning of class—that means 2:50PM—on Week 6 (October 3) and Week 10 (October 31). Questions will be distributed in class the week before the due date. You will be asked to analyze a current policy problem using the theories examined in class and in the readings, and make policy recommendations based on your analysis. Papers turned in after the start of class will be penalized one letter grade, and will not be accepted at all after 24 hours (from the beginning of class) unless special permission is obtained from the instructor. If you are ill, use the Short-Term Illness notification form available from T-Reqs (www.aas.duke.edu/trinity/t-reqs) and we will arrange an extension. In general, if you have a health issue or other emergency that may force you to miss a deadline, let me know as soon as possible.

- **20-Page Research Paper (50%)**, due on Wednesday, December 14, by 5PM. The objective of the class is to learn and evaluate theories that use regime type (specifically democracy) to explain various dependent
variables in international politics and foreign policy. The goal of the term paper is similar: students should
examine how well democracy explains a particular outcome of interest compared to other theories. The
subject can be one that we studied in class or something else, but you must consult with me regarding your
topic. Students will turn in a short research design (outline) at the beginning of class in Week 8 (October
17), which should clearly lay out the question to be asked or puzzle to be addressed, the competing
explanations you will explore, and your analytical or empirical strategy for answering the question. A
rough or partial draft will be due in Week 12 (November 14), which I will return to you with comments the
following week. While you are not required to turn in an entire draft, it is in your interest to turn in as
complete a draft as possible in order to receive more feedback on your work. The final two class sessions
will be devoted to student presentations of their papers. Papers turned in after 5PM on December 14 will
be penalized one letter grade per 24 hours of lateness.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to comply with the Duke Community Standard in their work for this course (see
www.integrity.duke.edu/ugrad/student.html). I will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of academic
dishonesty. If you have questions about what constitutes proper use of published or unpublished sources, please
consult me.

BOOKS

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase at the Duke University Textbook Store.

Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge: MIT


H.E. Goemans, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War* (Princeton:

Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in


Natan Sharansky, with Ron Dermer, *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and

ARTICLES

Articles, papers, and book chapters that are not in the required books are available either on e-reserve—indicated by
the term “e-res” in parentheses after the citation—or through databases in the library’s website—indicated by the
term “online” and followed by instructions on how to retrieve the article. Material listed under “For Further
Reading” is not required, but is provided for those who wish to delve deeper into a subject on their own or for those
interested in writing term papers on that subject.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

1.  **Introduction and Course Overview**  

   •  No readings.

   August 29
2. Democratic Peace I: Norms


For Further Reading:

3. Democratic Peace II: Institutions


For Further Reading:

4. Democracy and Crisis Bargaining


For Further Reading:
5. **Democratic Peace III: Critiques**

*First Memo Question Distributed*


*For Further Reading:*


6. **Spreading Democracy: For and Against**

*First Memo Due*


*For Further Reading:*


7. **Fall Break: No Class**

8. **Democracy and Victory**

*Term Paper Research Design Due*


*For Further Reading:*

9. **Democracy and Victory: Critiques**
   
   **Guest Facilitator:** Jasen Castillo, Ph.D, Associate Political Scientist, RAND Corporation
   
   **Second Memo Question Distributed**
   
   - Responses to Desch by Ajin Choi, David A. Lake, Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, and Desch’s rejoinder in *International Security* 28, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 142-94 (online: e-journals; international security; Project Muse).

   **For Further Reading:**
   

10. **Democracy and Preventive War**
    
    **Second Memo Due**
    

    **For Further Reading:**
    
    - Scott A. Silverstone, “The Preventive War Taboo and American Democracy,” paper presented at the 2004 meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada (online at www.isanet.org, click on “Paper Archive,” then search under author’s name).

11. **Democracy and Small Wars**
    
For Further Reading:

12. Democracy and Civilians

**Term Paper Rough Draft Due**

For Further Reading:
- Seymour Hersh, “Torture at Abu Ghraib,” “Chain of Command,” and “The Gray Zone,” in *The New Yorker* 80, nos. 11, 12, and 13, 10 May, 17 May, and 24 May 2004.

13. War Termination


For Further Reading:

14. Student Presentations

15. Student Presentations

- Class at my house followed by dinner

16. Exam Week: No Class

- Final draft of term paper due Wednesday, December 14, by 5PM.