17.950: Territorial Conflict

Fall 2004
Wednesdays, 3-5pm
E56-249
Taylor Fravel

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Course Description

This graduate seminar introduces an emerging research program within International Relations on territorial conflict. While scholars have recognized that territory has been one of the most frequent issues over which states go to war, territorial conflicts have only recently become the subject of systematic study. This course will examine why territorial conflicts arise in the first place, why some of these conflicts escalate to high levels of violence and why other territorial disputes reach settlement, thereby reducing the likelihood of war. Readings in the course draw upon political geography and history as well as qualitative and quantitative approaches to political science. Undergraduates may enroll with the instructor’s permission.

Requirements

The main requirement for this seminar is a research paper on a topic to be agreed upon in consultation with the instructor. Within the broad area of territorial conflict, any theoretical or empirical angle may be explored. The paper should seek to advance the purpose of the course – to improve the theoretical understanding of territorial conflict. The paper, for example, may seek to develop a theoretical explanation for some aspect of territorial conflict, test the validity of a particular hypothesis or examine alternative explanations for a specific case. The paper should be 25-40 pages in length.

As a seminar, the other requirement for this course is to participate in class discussion. The success of any seminar depends on the degree to which members of the seminar prepare readings in advance and actively participate in the discussion. Depending on the size of the course, participants may be asked to serve as discussion leaders.

Grading for the course will be as follows:

Research Paper:  70%
Class Participation:  30%

Key dates

- October 8th: research proposal due
- December 10th: research paper due
Course Materials

The following two books are available for purchase at the bookstore:


All other readings are available through the Stellar website, [http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/fa04/17.950/index.html](http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/fa04/17.950/index.html)

September 8th Introduction

September 15th Scope and Definitions


Paul K. Huth. *Standing Your Ground*, Ch. 2


September 22nd  Sources I: Territoriality, Nationalism and Homelands


September 29th  Sources II: Geography, Resources and the State


Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins. “Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I.” The American Political Science Review. Vol. 33, No. 3 (June 1939), pp. 391-410. [focus on 391-403]


October 6th

Revisionism, Expansion and Territorial Conflict

Paul K. Huth. *Standing Your Ground*, Ch. 4


Cases: Africa and Serbia


October 8th

***RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE***

October 13th

Anarchy, Power and Territorial Conflict

Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, Ch. 5


Cases: Badme and the Gulf Islands


October 20th Diversion, Domestic Mobilization and Territorial Conflict


Krista E. Wiegand. “Enduring and Escalated Territorial Disputes: Why Settlement is Not Always the Best Strategy,” unpublished manuscript, Duke University, 2004


Case: The Falklands


October 27th  Boundary Management and Territorial Conflict


November 3rd  Settlement I: Empirics

Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, Ch. 6


Ron Hassner. “The Path to Indivisibility: Time and the Entrenchment of Territorial Disputes.” Unpublished manuscript, Berkeley

Case: Algeria-Morroco

Patricia Wild. “The Organization of African Unity and the Algerian-Moroccan Border Conflict: A Study of New Machinery for Peacekeeping and for the Peaceful Settlement of

**November 10**

**Settlement II: Mechanisms**

Jeffrey Herbst. *States and Power in Africa*, Ch.3-4


**November 17**

**The Future of Territorial Conflict**


**November 24**

No class [work on papers]

**December 1**

Student Presentations

**December 8**

Student Presentations

**December 15**

***RESEARCH PAPER DUE***
REFERENCE WORKS

Websites

- International Boundaries Research Unit, University of Durham
- US Department of State, International Boundary Studies
- Paul Hensel’s Homepage
- Border Base
- International Court of Justice

Books

World Boundaries and Borderlands. London: Routledge, 1994
  • Volume 1: Global Boundaries
  • Volume 2: Middle East and North Africa
  • Volume 3: Eurasia
  • Volume 4: The Americas
  • Volume 5: Maritime Bound


SUGGESTED READINGS

Definitions

Norman L. Hill. *Claims to Territory in International Law and Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1945


Paul Hensel, *Codebook for Issues Correlates of War* (www.icow.org)

Quantitative Research on Territory and War


Territoriality and Homelands


Nationalism


Geography


Resources


V.I. Lenin. Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), Chs. VI-VII.


**Revisionism, Expansion and Territorial Conflict**


**Boundary Management**


**Settlement**


The Future of Territorial Conflict


