SYLLABUS
International Relations 502: Conflict and Cooperation  
Fall 2009
Mondays 2-4:50, Von KleinSmid Center 104  
Professor Jacques E. C. Hymans (hymans@usc.edu)
Office hours: Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 and by appointment.  
Version of August 23, 2009

Introduction to the course:

The study of international relations is to a large extent synonymous with the study of the causes of war and peace. Both the ideas and the institutions that dominate our field were forged by war. For instance, the carnage of World War I led to the founding of the USC School of International Relations. USC President Rufus Bernhard Von KleinSmid hoped that this school, the first of its kind in the country, might help to advance the work of the new League of Nations and thereby prevent another world war from breaking out. We failed, but the “war against war” continues.

This course is split into two main sections. In the first section, we will discuss major theoretical approaches to the study of war. Some of these approaches will be familiar to those of you who have taken previous courses in IR, but it is valuable for all of us to continually deepen our understanding of them. Thus, in this section of the course we read substantial portions of some of the most important books published in our field over the last 30 years.

In the second section, we turn to a specific topic: the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The destruction of Hiroshima changed forever what we think about when we think about war. And for the last twenty years or so, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has widely been cited as the number one threat to global security. This section of the course also focuses on one book per week. The goal in assigning these particular books is twofold. First, it is to demonstrate how scholars deploy the seemingly abstruse theoretical propositions introduced the first half of the course to illuminate messy political reality. Second, particularly the books by Solingen, Rublee, and Hymans may provide helpful models for those of you who are puzzling over how to structure and write a dissertation.

Course readings:

This is a “book-a-week” course. For about half of the class sessions you are asked to read an entire book; for the other half you are asked to read very substantial portions of a book (and you are encouraged the read the whole thing). Unfortunately, this means that you will need to buy the books themselves, rather than a course reader. I apologize for the financial outlay that I am asking you to incur for this course, but in many cases I think you should be able to find most of these books online for a very reasonable price, particularly if you buy used. It may also comfort you to realize that the books assigned in the first half of the course deserve to be every IR scholar’s bookshelf. I will also be placing the books on reserve at the library.

Course requirements:
• 25% for participation. This is a graduate-level course, which means that you do most of the talking. Come prepared and ready to spout.
• 20% for weekly 1-page memos (no fewer than 10 in total) on some aspect of the week’s reading that caught your interest. These must be emailed to me no later than 5 PM on the day before class.
• 10% for discussion leadership. Each week, one of you will be the designated “discussion leader.” This means you will develop the class outline and main questions to be addressed. Prior to the class date, you and I will meet together to compare notes and think through the lesson plan.
• 5% for 1-2 page description of a concrete empirical puzzle about international relations, which you would like to address in your seminar paper. This puzzle need not have anything to do with nuclear weapons. Due October 22.
• 5% for in-class powerpoint presentation of your draft paper (duration of 5 minutes, then another 5-10 for questions and comments). These presentations should begin on October 26. Note that the earlier you do the presentation, the less far along you will be expected to have gotten on your project. Also, the earlier you do the presentation, the more quickly your project will advance.
• 35% for final seminar paper. The paper should compare the value of the theories discussed in section 1 as they relate to your empirical puzzle. These must be emailed to me no later than 11:59 PM on December 15.

Course schedule:

Session 1: 8/24. Course introduction and assignment of discussion leadership duties.

Section I: Big Books.


**Section II: Topic: Big Bombs.**


Session 12: 11/9. CLASS CANCELED.

Session 13: 11/16. **Liberalism and the bomb.**

Session 14: 11/23. **Sociological constructivism and the bomb**

Session 15: 11/30. Course wrap-up.