

POLS303033 Environment, Human Security, and Conflict

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WEEK 1 WORKSHOP

I want to start by thanking you for either joining me on Zoom, making the trip to Kambri, or figuring out another way to engage with the course material. We are all on this journey together this semester, so I want to make sure we make the most of this brief time we have.

This class is much larger than I expected. A few years ago, we were less than 1/3rd this size. Attribute the size difference how you will. I think it is both the topicality of the subject matter as well as the in-person workshops. However, if I am the only one at Marie Reay 2.02 on Fridays, I might update my beliefs.

As I said in the lectures, I am figuring this semester out at the same time as you are. I think I have the technology down, but then I am a firm believer (given experience) of Murphy's Law. I will try and adapt and refine the workshops as we progress to try and engage people as much as possible wherever they may be. Please bear with me.

In previous years, I tried to break up the three hours into roughly 30-minute chunks. Lectures or me talking were alternated with group activities. This semester, as in other semesters since March 2020, I have had to push all my talking to online to try and focus the remaining time to group and individual activities. Your participation in these activities will directly help your understanding of the lectures, readings, and your approach to writing essays. I will be monitoring student participation in these activities to make sure we are not leaving anyone behind and to accurately calculate your participation mark. For multiple choice workshop questions below, disregard any mark given for the answers. They are meant as survey questions, so I am interested in the overall distribution of answers and your engagement, not the answer you give.

Thank you to the majority of students who have completed the survey. If you have not completed it yet, please do!

Preliminary student survey results

- Same as most years
- Advanced undergrads from a number of fields
 - Some have taken my classes before
 - Some word of mouth
 - Some interested in topic
 - Some last semester before finishing and looked interesting
 - Some international students but many fewer than before 2020.
- Major obstacles to learning
 - Not enough time to study because of work and course load

- Insufficient feedback
- Time management
- Studying online only
- Internet connectivity
- Focus
- Stress, anxiety
- Consistent paycheck
- What you like/dislike about workshops
 - Like
 - Interactive
 - Engaging
 - Discuss topic with peers
 - Focus on problem-solving or simulations
 - Ability to ask questions
 - Current events
 - Debates
 - Mind-mapping
 - Dislike
 - Hard to focus for that long
 - Some students contribute/dominate discussion more than others
 - No visual aids
- Topics of interest
 - Institutions
 - Security
 - Natural resources/resource depletion
 - Links between our big three topics
 - Water
- Additional topics you want covered
 - I think that we are already going to cover most of what you posted. Great minds think alike.

A bit of Zoom coordination

- I will not be recording the Zoom and in-person workshops. Recording workshops have never worked for me in the past for logistical reasons.
- For this class I want to encourage lively discussion and participation and for people to turn on their microphones and video if they want to. Recording anything, I posit, is more likely to reduce the benefits of participation in the moment.
- Feel free to mute yourself in the main workshop and unmute in the breakout groups.

Communicating with me

- I have no tutor or grader this semester due to the delay in finalizing the 2022 budget.
- I will be answering all emails myself.
- I will be grading more than 150 students.
- Therefore, it may take a bit to respond to emails. I will try and respond to all emails within 48 hours (barring weekends).

Breakout groups (30 minutes)

PART #1: Student introductions

I will be joining random groups over the course of this session both in-person and on Zoom.

1. Why are the members of your group taking this class?
2. If you had to choose one of the four **elements** (for whatever reason), which would it be? Why?
3. Any implicit or explicit **assumptions** underlying this decision?
4. Initial **questions** you have about the class that were not addressed in the lecture or above?
5. Have one member of your group take notes and aggregate them in a post in Wattle/Week 1/Workshop question #1. Be sure to include all of your names.

PART #2: This week's readings

6. Draw a **mental map** (i.e., a path diagram) of the causes of conflict according to either reading. Include references if possible/feasible.
7. How is this map **similar or different** from those included in the lecture?
8. What is your map **missing**? Do you think your map will look different at the end of the semester?

Both readings are, in essence, **literature reviews**—a type of writing that you will be doing in this class.

9. What did you like about their **approach** to a literature review?
10. What did you dislike about their approach?
11. Is there any overlap between the **causal mechanisms** in these two articles?
12. If so, where is it? What does one include that the other leaves out?
13. What do you think it would take (if anything) for you to take up arms against an enemy either foreign or domestic? Why?

Take a picture of your map and type down the answers to the above questions and post both to the general Week 1 workshop forum with the names of your group members.

Bringing the group together (Whatever remaining time)

In person: go over the above questions and answer any new ones.

Zoom: Use hand raise function to let me know you have a question and I will call on you. If you do not feel comfortable asking a question, put the question in Zoom chat and I will try and respond during this time.

Student-organized Zoom/on your own: This time is not really applicable to your group. I would take the time to try and engage as a group on the Wattle questions and discuss links you think there will be between lectures, readings and your written assignments.