

POLS303033 Environment, Human Security, and Conflict

Dr. Richard Frank
School of Politics and International Relations
richard.frank@anu.edu.au
@richwfrank

WORKSHOP—WEEK 4, 2022

Logistical notes

Topic questions

I have received a bunch of emails about potential literature review topics. I have tried to be honest about whether a topic is relevant to the class or not and help you refine your approach. If you have any questions about your literature review, do let me know. Also check out my literature review video now on Wattle/General.

Grading participation

I have now read through all students lecture and workshop questions for weeks 1-3. I think I have settled on a marking system that is easy to understand and gives direct feedback on your written participation.

Each week there are three lecture questions and a group of workshop questions. Each lecture question is marked out of one point.

Regarding expectations for grades, I came across three recent examples that may help a bit. I am always leery of posting sample answers, but I want to show the range of responses I am getting.

0 points out of 1

Which of these class' topics has the most meaning or reality (as Wallace describes) to you?

0.5 point out of 1

Which of these class' topics has the most meaning or reality (as Wallace describes) to you?

Human security

1 points out of 1

Which of these class' topics has the most meaning or reality (as Wallace describes) to you?

I think that this classes focus on the environment, more specifically climate change and resource scarcity (and how it will affect security, conflict and peace) ties in most appropriately with the Wallace video. This is because Wallace's video in my opinion highlighted two important things:

1. utilising your mind in a way that wont leave you feeling pessimistic, but rather activating your mind consciously and directing your focus into something productive,
2. acknowledging the "capital T truth with a whole lot of rhetorical niceties striped away".

I think that whilst it is easy to become pessimistic when learning about climate change, resource scarcity and its connection with conflict (etc), it is easy to become pessimistic, however the environment and its effects on living is more important than ever considering climate change and its potential impacts. It is important that the younger generation and climate ambassadors continue to direct their focus in this space in a productive manner and aim to create real change.

Secondly, within doing so it is clear that one aim within the reality of many is to have climate change properly understood, acknowledged and taken seriously within policy. This ties into Wallace's point about the stripping away of niceties and facing the facts, or as he puts it the "capital T truth".

Two things worth stressing.

First, you do not need to post these many words to get full credit. Often 2-3 great sentences are enough. This is just one 1pt posting I came across as I was thinking about the rubric. The goals are the same as in the course guide's participation description (p. 4): "Participation marks will be based upon evidence of having done the assigned readings, evidence of having thought about the issues, contribution and participation in class and consideration and respect for other class members."

Second, I want to be clear that the lectures and workshop exercises are ways to give you practice (1) reading and thinking about the assigned articles and book excerpts (2) determining the strengths and weaknesses of existing work, (3) connecting this literature to your own life and your own interests. Participation marks represent 10% of your final mark, but regularly participating will have spillover effects in the quality of your written work (and hopefully your life).

Let me know if you have any remaining questions. Let's get started!

Breakout group activity #1 (~40 minutes total)

Open up your copy of Hegre et al. (2001) from last week. Take a look at their hypothesis #1 (p. 34). This gives us a clear idea of their main expected relationship. Now imagine if they took the same approach as Homer-Dixon (1994) by only looking at cases with the outcome in question and the main explanatory factor included.

Question #1: What types of cases would they then look at?

Question #2: What types of cases would they then exclude?

Question #3: Can you create a simple 2x2 table like I did in the lecture to demonstrate the four types of cases included in their paper?

There is well over a decade between the two special issues of *Journal of Peace Research* that Saleyhan (2008) and von Uexkull & Buhaug (2021) appeared in.

Question #4: How are their descriptions of causal pathways similar and/or different?

Question #5: How are their areas for future research similar and/or different?

Breakout group activity #2 (~20 minutes total)

Hopefully, by now you are starting to (or already have) decide on a literature review topic. This is an opportunity to discuss your efforts and remaining questions with others faced with the same writing task (and likely the same questions).

Question #6: What topics are your group considering/studying?

Question #7: How would you define the literature's themes in your topic area?

Question #8: What remaining questions do you have about this assignment that I can answer?

Bringing the group together (~10 minutes)