Introduction

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent counter-insurgency war were major events in both world politics as well as the domestic politics of the United States and Iraq. This course will use the Iraq War as a case study of the politics of war, asking what general lessons can be learned from the case. We will consider six main aspects of the theory of war: descriptive (what are the facts of war?), causal (what causes war?), legal (when is war legal?), normative (when is war justified?), process (how does war unfold?), and consequential (what are the results of war?). In each week, we will ask what lessons the Iraq War has for the politics of war in general. We will thus be engaged in an ongoing dialogue with understandings of war as they have evolved over the past century. Throughout, our purpose will be to examine the concept of war and to develop new insights that can be the basis of new policy prescriptions related to the role of war in international relations and comparative politics.

Course Aims

The Iraq War is the subject of much normative debate in the U.S. and elsewhere. In part, these normative debates rest upon empirical claims. A primary aim of this course is to provide students with a complex and multi-dimensional understanding of the empirical aspects of the war and how these relate to alternative normative arguments about its causes and consequences. Our aim is to think about the war both empirically and theoretically, as is appropriate in a university setting.

More generally, this is a social science course that aims to fulfill the purposes of all social science courses: to equip students with new tools of critical thinking; to enable
students to understand the practice of social analysis through the introduction of various social science methodologies; and to learn effective written, visual, and oral communications through participation and class assignments. Students will be introduced to different methods of inquiry and will be given the opportunity to make oral presentations to the class on some aspect of the war during our Virtual History Conference on the Iraq War.

Readings
There is no textbook for this class. All readings will be made available on the course D2L site. Additional readings are cited in the extensive bibliography of the war posted on the site.

Course Evaluation
Attendance: 10%
Participation: 10%
Virtual History Conference: 10%
Test #1: 20%
Test #2: 20%
Final Paper: 30%

Final Paper
The final paper is a 10-15 page research paper (1.5 spacing, normal margins, 12-point font, any citation style) that will be written using ONLY the published literature on the Iraq war contained in the course bibliography. Students must cite at least 10 different sources from the bibliography. In general, the paper should respond to one of the key questions asked in any one of the weeks of the course (for example, “What were the consequences of the war for the U.S.?” or “What role did the international system and diplomacy play in the causes of the war?”).

Course Outline
The course has been designed to cover the theory of war in the dimensions mentioned above. Our 10-section schedule proceeds as follows:

Section 2: Causes: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein
Section 3: Causes: The U.S. Before and After 9/11
Section 4: Causes: Major States and the International System
Section 5: Virtual History Conference
Section 6: Evaluative: Was the War Legal? Was the War Justified?
Section 7: The War Front: Invasion, Occupation, Counterinsurgency, and Withdrawal
Section 8: The Home Front: Public Opinion and Civil Society
Section 9: Consequences: Iraq and the Middle East
Section 10: Consequences: The U.S. and the International System
Class Schedule

Section 1: Theory and Description
Readings: Burgos (2008); Angstrom (2005)

Mon, Sept 26: Course Organization and Learning Plan
Wed, Sept 28: War Theory: An Introduction
Fri, Sept 30: Description of the Iraq War

Section 2: Causes: Iraq Under Saddam Hussein
Readings: Dawisha (2009); Hsieh and Moretti (2006)

Mon, Oct 3: Saddam’s Regime to 1991
Wed, Oct 5: The First Gulf War and Aftermath

Section 3: Causes: The U.S. Before and After 9/11
Readings: Feith (2008); Fukuyama (2006); Tunc (2005); Mazaar (2007); PNAC (1998); Iraq Liberation Act (1998); Smith (2005); Stroud & Sparrow (2011); Schmidt & Williams (2008)

Fri, Oct 7: Neoconservatism and the Anti-Saddam Movement
Mon, Oct 10: 9/11 and Its Effects
Wed, Oct 12: Intelligence and WMD

Section 4: Causes: Other States and the International System
Readings: Press-Barnathan (2004); Clarke (2004); Miller (2011)

Fri, Oct 14: Unipolarity and War
Mon, Oct 17: Diplomacy and Allies

Section 5: Virtual History Conference
Readings: Ferguson (1999); Blight, Lang, and Welch (2009), Harvey (2008)

Wed, Oct 19: Virtual History Conference: Theory and Planning Session and Sign-Up Sheet

Section 6: Evaluative: Was the War Legal? Was the War Justified?
Readings: Paulus (2004); Schmitt (2006); Teson (2005a, 2005b); Nardin (2005); Mellow (2006); Roth (2006); Fisher & Biggar (2011)

Fri, Oct 21: Was the War Legal?
Mon, Oct 24: Was the War Justified?

Wed, Oct 26: Test #1
Section 5 (Cont’d): Virtual History Conference
Fri, Oct 28: Day 1
Mon, Oct 31: Day 2
Wed, Nov 2: Day 3

Section 7: War Front: Invasion, Occupation, Counterinsurgency, and Withdrawal
Readings: Hendrickson & Tucker (2005); Sepp (2007); Wilbanks & Karsh (2010)

Fri, Nov 4: Invasion and Occupation
Mon, Nov 7: Counterinsurgency and Withdrawal

Section 8: Home Front: Public Opinion and Civil Society
Readings: Mueller (2005); Gelpi (2006); Chan & Safran (2006); Patrick & Thrall (2007)

Wed, Nov 9: Media and Civil Society
Mon, Nov 14: Casualties and Public Opinion

Section 9: Consequences: Iraq
Readings: Moon (2009); Spagat (2011); al-Sheikh & Say (2011); Bassam (2007)

Wed, Nov 16: Iraq: Political
Fri, Nov 18: Iraq: Economic and Social

Section 10: Consequences: Beyond Iraq

Mon, Nov 21: The Middle East: Democracy, Terrorism, and Relative Power
Mon, Nov 28: The International System

Wed, Nov 30: Test #2
(Fri, Dec 2: No Class)

Mon, Dec 5: Papers Due
Printed copies to be handed in by 4pm at Division of Political Science (6th Floor URBN Center)