INR 6065: Seminar on War [ONLINE]

Summer D Term
Instructor: Thomas M. Dolan, thomas.dolan@ucf.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00-12:00 or by appointment
Credit: 3 Hours

Although major war has declined in frequency, war remains an important element of international politics. This course examines the nature of war as a military and political process, using classic texts, historical works, prescriptive manuals, and modern social science.

Learning Objectives

Students will understand the classical, prescriptive, and social scientific literature on war
Students will develop their abilities to do social scientific research on war-oriented topics
Students will improve presentation skills and writing ability

General Course Expectations

Reading
Students should complete all readings by no later than Tuesday of each week. As this is a graduate course, you are expected to grasp the core elements (question, theory, findings, and weaknesses) of each article through your own reading, and then further develop that knowledge through your participation in the online discussions. You should expect to be challenged by the nature and content of some of the readings, and you should plan enough time to complete them. (As this is a shortened term course, the reading schedule is aggressive.) If you encounter difficulties with the readings, please contact the instructor: there is an art to reading academic articles. If you are unfamiliar with how to interpret regression analysis, you are also encouraged to contact the instructor for advice, since many of the articles will use it. Only readings that are not available through library databases are provided for you in the files section.

Weekly Assignments.
Students will participate each week in the course in several different ways: papers, constructive comments on other students' papers, readings presentations, and questions about the readings. This participation is students' main interaction with each other and foundational to the course. Students should set aside sufficient time, at the right times, to participate effectively in these weekly activities. Students are evaluated on the quality of their participation. They should plan to demonstrate a clear understanding of the readings, ask thoughtful questions, make genuinely useful, constructive comments (i.e., critical but not cruel) on others' papers and articulate thoughtful, interesting arguments.

Research

Each student will produce a research design. A research design is, in essence, the first part of a research paper, and is appropriate for people whose course of study involves training to become political science researchers. It defines your research question, the dependent variable, reviews relevant literature, presents a theory (or at least a well-explained theoretical intuition) and a hypothesis, and then explains how you would test they hypothesis. When you explain how you would text your hypothesis, you need to be specific about the methods you would use, how you would operationalize your variables, and the sources you would use for your information/data. You should plan to have your question approved by your instructor no later than the end of the third week of class. Your discussion of relevant literature should include relevant readings from the courses but also at least non-required peer-reviewed academic journal articles or books.

Assignments

Research Design: 27%. 15 pages, double-spaced. Due 5 July.
Design a research project on war, complete with clear question, 4 page literature review referencing at least 15 peer-reviewed articles, 5 page theoretical discussion, specific and falsifiable hypotheses, and clearly identified and justified method of analysis, appropriate operational criteria, and proposed sources of evidence.

Article Presenter: 10%, 2 times = 20%

- Create and post by 23:59 on the Saturday before your week begins a narrated slide presentation (e.g. powerpoint) lasting not more than 5 minutes which effectively communicates the core elements of the text. For a social scientific article, your presentation should describe the question, the text's place in the literature, its theory, methods, and findings, along with a critical evaluation of the text. (*N.b.,* do not describe the article, communicate the arguments, theory, feedings, etc. of the article. There's a difference.) For a classic text that makes an argument or describes a method of doing something, be sure to effectively describe the author's task and explain how they execute that task (including a full discussion of the substance they present); again, include a critical evaluation of the text. *Please note that it can take a while for powerpoint to save the video file combining voice and slides. For technical assistance (for powerpoint) see https://goo.gl/PC6Sbp*
- By 23:59 on Wednesday, respond to all questions that have been posed by fellow students by 23:59 on Monday (if fewer than 5 are posted contact instructor).
- Sign up for the texts that you would like to present during week 1. At least 1 presentation should be from weeks 2, 6, 7, 8, or 9.

Staff Ride Role Presentation: 10%
During Week 2, each student will be assigned a role to present in the Week 4 (virtual) Staff Ride. They will prepare a 3-5 minute narrated powerpoint presentation on what the person that they are representing did during the battle, and why. They will respond to questions from other students about why the person they are representing behaved as they did.

Weekly Papers: 3% per paper, 1 paper per week (totaling 9 Papers) = 27%
With the exception of the first week, by 23:59 on Monday, each student will post two 400-500 word papers per week, in response to the posted prompts. One of these papers will be turned in for grading by 9:00 AM on Fridays. [The other paper is factored into the participation grade.] Students should use the comments they receive on their papers to identify the stronger paper, and take advantage of those comments improve the paper—the final version, turned in for grading, should be a substantial revision of the draft that they posted on Monday.

- During the first week, each student will be responsible for posting (by 23:59 on Wednesday only one paper, which will be submitted for grading by 23:59 on Friday.
- While students will be able to see other students' papers after their initial posts, they should take care to not duplicate others' papers.

Weekly Participation: 2% per week, with the lowest week dropped = 16%
With the exception of the first week, the staff ride week, and week 5, each student is responsible for asking one question about three different readings and making three critical but constructive comments on other students' papers (all three comments cannot be made in response papers addressing the same prompt). During the first week, students will be responsible for making two critical, constructive comments on other students' papers. During Staff Ride week, each student will ask question to at least 3 role-players, and critical, constructive comments on three papers (again, not all comments can be made in response to papers addressing a single prompt). The lowest weekly participation grade will be dropped. During week 6, in addition to asking 3 questions and making 3 critical constructive posts, you will complete the tactics activity.

- Participation is graded in terms of the aggregate quality and timeliness of posted questions, prompts, and papers.

Note: See appendix at end of syllabus for advice on posts.

Weekly Course Activity Pattern

Week 1 Deadlines

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			23:59 +All week paper addressing the nature of war		**23:59 PM** +All make comments on two other peoples' papers by this point.	**23:59** + All turn in 1 paper for grading +Article presenters post presentations for next week by this point

Typical Week Deadlines

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	23:59 + All post Papers to discussion board by this point + All post response questions on presentation pages by this point		**23:59** +All post comments on others' papers by this point +Article Presenters post answers to questions by this point		**9:00 AM** +All turn in 1 paper for grading by this point	**23:59** Article presenters post presentations for next week

Staff Ride Week Deadlines (Week 5)

Saturday of Week 4	Sunday (of week 5)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday of week 5
23:59 All post Staff Ride Presentations by this point		**23:59** + All post Papers to discussion board by this point + All post response Questions on presentation pages by this point		**23:59** +All post comments on others' papers by this point +(All) Role Players post answers to questions by this point		**9:00 AM** +All turn in 1 paper for grading by this point	**23:59** Article presenters post presentations for next week

Miscellaneous Course Policies

Grades

Grades are assigned to both individual pieces of work and cumulatively. The grade scale I use for both is below (note that "g" refers to the numerical grade you receive). I do not usually curve grades, but reserve the right to do so if I deem it necessary. All material is graded on its own terms, rather than through comparison with other students' work. For the cumulative grades, I do not round: what you get is what you get.

100>g≥93: A	90>g≥88: B+	80>g≥78: C+	70>g≥68: D+	60>g: E
	88>g≥83: B	78>g≥73: C	68>g≥63: D	
93>g≥90: A-	83>g≥80: B-	73>g≥70: C-	63>g≥60: D-	

Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc). Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade.

I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Relevant UCF Policies

Course Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone (407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable.

Accommodations for Students with Military Obligations
Students who serve in the US military [defined as individuals on active duty in the US military OR individuals who have received training, activation, or deployment orders associated with service in either the US military reserves or the National Guard] may receive accommodations when unexpected military obligations interfere with the timely completion of assignments/participation in discussions, etc. Unless they are university approved excused absences, regularly scheduled ROTC activities do not qualify for accommodations.

Campus Safety
Emergencies on campus are rare. Still, everyone should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with basic safety and security concepts. Students may ensure that they are informed about situations on campus by signing up for UCF text alerts via my.ucf.edu. The locations of campus first aid equipment can be found at http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html. UCF's emergency guide is available at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html. Students who feel that they have experienced abuse or harassment may wish to consult https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu/ or UCF victim services https://www.ucf.edu/services/s/victim-services/. Students who feel that they may be in danger should contact UCF Police (Emergencies 911, Non-Emergencies (407) 823-5555).

Changes to the Syllabus:
In the event that there is a need for there to be any changes to the syllabus, an e-mail will be sent to all students' knights-mail accounts (as maintained by the registrar). Changes become effective immediately after the sending of the e-mail.

Readings
Each student should obtain the following books:
Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret.
Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*, 1974.
Other readings can be found via library databases and, when unavailable through those means, the files section of the webcourses page.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: What is War?
Clausewitz, *On* War, Book 1, Chapters 1, 2, and 8
Recommended:
John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, selection
Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, selection
Jack Snyder, "Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War," *International Organization* 56:1, pp. 7-45.
Thomas Schelling, *On Conflict*

R. Harrison Wagner, *War and The State*
Thomas Rid, "Cyber-War will not Take Place," *Journal of Strategic Studies.* 2011, and responses in *Journal of Strategic Studies'* 2013 "Cyber Round-table," in Vol. 34, Issue 1

Week 2: Proximate Causes of War
Fearon, J. (1995) "Rationalist Expectations for War," *International Organization*.49:3, pp. 379-414.
Branislav Slantchev and Ahmer Tarar, "Mutual Optimism as a Rationalist Explanation for War," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2010
Rachel Stein, "War and Revenge," *American Political Science Review*, 2015
Jonathan Renshon, "Status Deficits and War," *International Organization*, 2016
Todd Hall, "On Provocation," *Security Studies*, 2016.

Recommended:
Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 1973
Hein Goemans and Mark Fey, Risky but Rational: War as an Institutionally Induced Gamble." *Journal of Politics.* Vol. 71, Issue 1, (January) 2009: 35-54.
Peter Lieberman, "Punitiveness and US Elite Support for the 1991 Gulf War" *Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 51, #1* (February 2007), pp. 3-32.
N. Sambanis, Do Ethnic and Non-ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1) The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Jun., 2001), pp. 259-282
Johnston, D. (2004) *Overconfidence and War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Alastair Smith and Allan Stam, "Bargaining and the Nature of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2004.
Muhammet Bas and Robrt Schub, "Mutual Optimism as a Cause of Conflict: Secret Alliances and Conflict Onset," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2016
Thomas M. Dolan, "Demanding the Impossible," *Security Studies*, 2015

Week 3: Strategy
Clausewitz, *On War*, 1:7; 3:1, 11; 6: 3-8; 7: 1-6, 15, 16, 22
Sun Tsu, *The Art of War* (any version, including those online)
Reading from Luttwak, E. (2001) *Strategy: The Logic of Peace and War* (Revised and Enlarged edition). Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Thomas Schelling. *Strategy of Conflict*. Harvard, 1960. Selection.
Betts, R. (2000) "Is Strategy an Illusion? *International Security*.

Recommended:
Liddell Hart, B. (1954) *Strategy*. New York: Praeger.
Jomini, A. H. *The Art of War*.
Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*.
Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security,* 1995

Jennifer Mitzen, "Illusion or Intention? Talking Grand Strategy into Existence," *Security Studies,* 2015

Week 4: The Practice of War

Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Part II, "Theory of Naval War," available at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15076/15076-h/15076-h.htm
Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare.* [Available online in a variety of places]
Mearsheimer, J. (1984) *Conventional Deterrence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (selection)
Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 1996 (selection) AND R. Pape, "The True Worth of Air Power," *Foreign Affairs*. March 2004.
John Nagl, *Learning to eat Soup with a Knife*, Chicago, 2002. (selection)
Austin Long and Brendan Green, "Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2015.
Nadia Kostyuk and Yuri Zhukov, Indivisible Digital Front: Can Cyber Attacks Shape Battlefield Events?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2019

Recommended:
Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Princeton, 1986.
Owen Cote, *The Third Battle: Innovation in the Navy's Silent Cold War Struggle with Soviet Submarines*. Newport: Paper #16, US Naval War College Press, 2003.
Bernard Brodie, *Sea Power in the Machine Age*, 1943
Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, Princeton University Press, 2002.
US Strategic Bombing Survey, Summary Reports, 1945-46
Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars" *International Security*, 2001
D. Reiter and M. Horowitz, "When Does Aerial Bombing Work? Quantitative Empirical Tests, 1917-1999", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45:2 (2001)
D. Scott Bennett and Allan C. Stam III, The Duration of Interstate Wars, 1816-1985, *The American Political Science Review,* Vol. 90, No. 2 (Jun., 1996)
Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars," *World Politics*, 1975
Patricia Sullivan and Johannes Karreth, "Strategies and Tactics in Armed Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2019
Trinquier, R. (1965) *Modern Warfare*.
US Army Field Manual FM 100-5, Operations, 1982
US Army/US Marine Corps Counter-Insurgency Manual, FM 3-24
Albert J. Marckwardt and Michael Burgoyne, *The Defense of Jisr al-Doreaa*. and E.D. Swinton, *Defense of Duffers Drift*
E. Rommel, *Infantry Attacks*.
Michael Horowtiz, Sarah Kreps and Matthew Fuhrmann, "Separating Fact from Fiction in the Debate over Drone Proliferation," *International Security*, 2018

Providing for the Common Defense: The Assessment and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission, Eric Edelman and Gary Roughead, Co-Chairs. 2018.
https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf
Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*, Princeton, 1960.
R. Harrison Wagner, Nuclear Deterrence, Counterforce Strategies, and the Incentive to Strike First. *American Political Science Review*, 1991

Week 5: Virtual Staff Ride Gettysburg
Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels* [ALL]

Week 6: Military Power
*Do Tactics Assignment, and post answer on relevant discussion page.
Stephen Biddle, *Military Power*, Princeton, 2006 (selection)
Kenneth Pollock, *Arabs at War*, Nebraska, 2002 (selection)
Michael Beckley, "Economic Development and Military Effectiveness," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2010.
Stephen Biddle and Stephen Long, Democracy and Military Effectiveness, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2004.
Caitlin Talmadge, "The Puzzle of Personalist Performance," *Security Studies*, 2013.
Ryan Grauer, "Uncertain Victory: Information Management and Military Power," *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 2017

Recommended:
Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, Democracy and Battlefield Miltiary Effectiveness, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1998.
David Lake, Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War, *American Political Science Review*, 1992.
Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, Democracy, War Initiation, and Victory, *American Political Science Review*, 1998
Alexander Downes, How Smart and Tough are Democracies? Reassessing Theories of Democratic Victory in War. *International Security,* 2009
Caitlin Talmadge, Different Threats, Different Militaries: Explaining Organizational Practices in Authoritarian Armies. *Security Studies*, 2016.
Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation for the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review*, 1999
Ryan Grauer and Michael Horowitz, "What Determines Military Victory? Testing the Modern System," *Security Studies*, 2012
Michael Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power*, Princeton, 2011.

Week 7: Learning and Innovation in War
Scott Gartner, S. (1997) *Strategic Assessment in War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selection.

Stephen P. Rosen, (1991) *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military,* selection
David Welch. (2005) *Painful Choices*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Selection
Thomas M. Dolan, "Go Big or Go Home," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2015
Alex Weisiger, "Learning from the Battlefield," *International Organization*, 2016.
Todd Lehmann and Yuri Zhukov, "Until the Bitter End? The Diffusion of Surrender Across Battles," *International Organization*, 2019

Recommendation
Jonathan D. Caverley, The Myth of Military Myopia: Democracy, Small Wars, and Vietnam," *International* Security, 34, 3 (Winter, 2009/2010)
Thomas M. Dolan, "Emotions and Strategic Learning in War," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2015

Week 8: War Termination
Hein Goemans, *War and Punishment*, Princeton, 2000. Ch. 1, 2, 4. [Available online via the library website]
Elizabeth Stanley, "Ending the Korean War: The Role of Domestic Coalition Shifts in Overcoming Obstacles to Peace, *International Security*, 34:1 (Summer, 2009)
Slantchev, B. (2003). "The Principle of Convergence in Wartime Negotiations," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 97, No. 4, pp. 621-632.
Patricia Sullivan, *Who Wins? Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict*, Oxford, 2012, Ch 2-5. [Available online via the library]
Sarah Croco, "The Decider's Dilemma: Leader Culpability, War Outcomes, and Domestic Punishment," *American Political Science Review*, 2011
Shawn Cochran, "Gambling for Resurrection versus Bleeding the Army," *Security Studies*, 2018.

Recommended
Dan Altman, "By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2017
Symposium on War Duration, *Polity* 50:2, 2018
Ikle, F. (1971) *Every War Must End.*
Kecskmeti, P. (1958) *Strategic Surrender*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Michael Koch and Patricia Sullivan, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Partisanship, Approval, and the Duration of Major Power Democratic Military Interventions," *Journal of Politics* 2010
Alexandre Debs and H. E. Goemans. 2010. "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War," *APSR* 104, 3: 2
Shawn T. Cochoran, "The Civil-Military Divide in Protracted Small War," *Armed Forces and Society*, 2014.
Alex Weisiger, *Logics of War*, Cornell, 2013
Dan Reiter, *How Wars End*, Princeton, 2009.

Week 9: The Rules?

Brian Orend, "War," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2005.
https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/war/
Lazar, Seth. 2017. "Just War Theory: Revisionists versus Traditionalists," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20:4, 37-54.
James Morrow, "When Do States follow the Laws of War?" *American Political Science Review*, 2007.
Nina Tannenwald, "The Nuclear Taboo," *International Organization*, 1999
Scott Sagan and Benjamin Valentino, "Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans Really Think about Using Nuclear Weapons and Killing Non-combatants," *International Security*, 2017.
Jeffrey Legro, Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the "Failure" of Internationalism," *International Organization*, 1997.

Recommended:

Scott Sagan and Benjamin Valentino, "Not Just a War Theory: American Public Opinion on Ethics in Combat," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2018.
Daryl Press, Scott Sagan, and Benjamin Valentino, "Atomic Aversion" Experimental Evidence on Taboos, Traditions, and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons," *American Political Science Review*, 2013.
Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*, Cornell, 1997.
Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization*, 1997.
Thomas Dolan, "Unthinkable and Tragic," *International Organization*, 2013
Vaughn Shannon, Norms are what states make of them: The Political Psychology of Norm Violation," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2000.

If I had another week…<u>War and the Public</u>

John Mueller, "Presidential Approval from Truman to Johnson," *APSR*, 1970.
Gelpi, C., P. Feaver, and J. Reifler. (2005/6) "Success Matters: Casualty Sensitivity and the War in Iraq," *International Security*. 30:3, pp. 7-44.
Matthew A. Baum and Tim Groeling, "Reality Asserts Itself: Public Opinion on Iraq and the Elasticity of Reality," *International Organization*, 64:3,(2010) pp 443 -479
Scott Gartner, "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach, *American Political Science Review*, 102:1 (2008) pp.95-106.
Adam Berinsky, "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict," *Journal of Politics*, 69:4, (2007) pp. 975-997.
Michael Horowitz and Matthew Levendusky, "Drafting Support for War" Conscription and Mass Support for Warfare," *The Journal of Politics,* 2011.

Recommended:

John Mueller, "Presidential Approval from Truman to Johnson," *APSR*, 1970.
Scott Gartner, Gary Segura, and Michael Wilkening, "All Politics Are Local," *JCR*, 1997.

Douglas Foyle, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable," *International Studies Quarterly*, 1997.
Douglas Kriner, "Examining Variance in Presidential Approval: The Case of FDR in World War II," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70:1, (2006), 23-47.
Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics,* Harvard University Press, 2006,
Richard K Herrmann, Philip Tetlock, and Penny Visser, "Mass Public Decisions to Go to War," *APSR*, 1999, 93:3.

Appendix 1: Advice on Participation (Papers, Comments, and Questions)

In general, effective posts in an online discussion should:

- Articulate a clear, overarching argument
- Demonstrate clear understanding of text
- Note that reasonable mistakes in understanding are not do not necessarily inhibit a high mark, if they are well grounded in the reading.
- Address key concerns of the text rather than superficial ones
- Engage critically with the text and its subject.
- Explains why problems are problems in a persuasive way
- Connect the text/issue with other texts, theories, and findings
- Demonstrates an understanding of core social science principles

Kinds of questions/comments that receive somewhat lower marks:

- Demonstrates superficial grasp of the material/indicates that the questioner/commenter did not read
- Asks simple definition questions like "how does the author define X" when the answer clearly appears in the text
    - (critical definition questions like 'given Y, is the author correct to define X in the way that they do?" can be appropriate)
- Asks simple clarifying questions, when the answers are plainly evident in the text
- Asks irrelevant questions
- Asks questions/makes criticisms addressing tangential issues
- Criticizes the author for not doing something irrelevant to the issue they are concerned with
- Comments purely on matters of style or ease of reading.
    - (if a fellow student seems to be having difficulty with writing, a private message could be a generous and appropriate way of helping them.)

Key issues for Papers:

- Does the paper have a clear argument, expressed from the very beginning? Is that argument well-founded and persuasive?
- Does it effectively address the prompt?
- Does the paper evince a clear understanding of social science principles?
- Does the paper evince a correct understanding of the readings?
- Has the author taken into account relevant feedback from other students, and possibly the instructor?
- Is the paper well-written?