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Political Science
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Education

- Ph.D. Politics, Princeton University** 2016
Primary Field: International Relations
Secondary Fields: Formal and Quantitative Methods, Political Theory
Dissertation: *Bargaining During War*
Committee: Kristopher Ramsay, Adam Meirowitz, and David Carter
- M.A. Politics, Princeton University** 2013
- B.A. The College of William & Mary *summa cum laude*** 2010
Major: International Relations

Academic Positions

2016– Assistant Professor, Baylor University

Publications

- Forth. Symbolic victories and strategic risk, *Journal of Peace Research*.
This article studies the rational side of symbolic victories. It opens with the broad question, why are some battles more significant than others? Extending the literature on bargaining and war, it argues that a belligerent can deliberately increase strategic risk in order to communicate its strength. By increasing the information a battle conveys, the belligerent artificially creates the conditions for a symbolic victory. In short, strategic risk becomes a useful, costly signal. This claim is developed in a formal model in which players choose between more and less dangerous military options. Under most conditions, a symbolic equilibrium exists in which both strong- and weak-type players are able to signal their types after only one round. This equilibrium's rapid information flow is unusual in the rationalist literature: typically, strong types must wait to signal effectively. The article goes on to establish that, when the prior probability a player is strong is sufficiently small, this symbolic equilibrium uniquely satisfies the intuitive criterion. It then applies the model to two famous episodes from military history, the Doolittle Raid of WWII and the battles of Cannae and Capua of the Second Punic War. For both, it highlights how actors deliberately manipulate strategic risk to communicate with adversaries, allies, and their own publics.
- Forth. Assessing the Renaissance of Individuals in International Relations Theory, *PS: Political Science and Politics* with Marcus Holmes and Eric Parajon.
The study of microfoundations, especially individuals, is enjoying something of a renaissance in international relations (IR) scholarship. Yet, this rise is harder to find in publication data. Using the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) journal article database, we show that only 13.7% of IR articles in twelve leading journals employ the first image; this proportion remains roughly the same from 1980 through 2018. Interrogating the data, we show that this distribution does not stem from epistemological or methodological commitments, such as positivism, quantitative analysis, or formal modeling. We suggest several reasons for this apparent disjuncture between qualitative assessments of the rebirth of first image theorizing and the quantitative data which implies a slower, or perhaps more limited, return.
Early results were published in a two-part post on the blog *Duck of Minerva*.

- Forth. History, Social Science, and the ‘Literary Conscience’, *Humanitas*.
 Drawing on Irving Babbitt, this paper elaborates several reasons why the literary mind, no less than the historical or the scientific, is a vital attribute for the statesman, the professor, and the citizen. It focuses on how the study of fiction can complement both social science and history, and it seeks to explain these contributions in ways accessible to both the social scientist and the humanistic scholar. To do so, it first outlines a few persistent obstacles confronting these disciplines. It then shows how Babbitt, foreseeing many of these obstacles, explained how the study of classic fiction might overcome them. This paper is thus an effort at bridge-building. It concludes with pedagogical implications for teaching fiction to undergraduates.
- 2020 Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Character, and Grand Strategy, *Texas National Security Review* with Peter Campbell.
 In this article, we treat Shakespeare as a serious strategic thinker. In a close study of *Coriolanus*, we attempt to reconstruct his ideas on the relationship between tactics and strategy, on the place of realism in strategic discourse, and on the relationship between a strategist and his polis. Along the way, we highlight how Shakespeare’s ideas speak to modern debates in IR theory and security studies, especially debates about individual leadership and realpolitik. We conclude by suggesting that Shakespeare, like Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, locates the crux of strategic genius in the analysis of character, both of an individual and of a society. A key ingredient in strategic education, therefore, must be the close study of human character—not least through classic fiction.
- 2020 Lessons From Game Theory about Humanizing Next-Generation Weapons, *Journal of Law and International Affairs*.
 This article draws a parallel between nuclear weapons and the next generation of military technology, autonomous systems. It outlines some legal and ethical dilemmas the latter pose, and in particular aspects of the technology that make it dehumanizing. Autonomous systems share all of these attributes with nuclear weapons. This fact should be encouraging, because the dehumanizing effects of nuclear systems have been overcome. Drawing on the evolution of nuclear strategy and the nuclear taboo, I argue that, in negotiating the legal and ethical dilemmas posed by autonomous weapons systems, the role of international law and of normative entrepreneurs will be primarily one of imagination, not regulation. The first and most important task is to create focal points in popular and elite consciousness. To this end, I make three modest suggestions for normative entrepreneurs: to take political incentives seriously, including the impossibility of abolition or non-use; to first establish simple, guiding ideas accessible to a broad population before turning to finer points of law; and to focus on interstate, rather than transnational, cooperation.

Current Projects

- Working Paper Rationalist Explanations for War and Games with Many Players.
 This paper challenges the conventional wisdom about bargaining and war. If more than two players bargain, then a bargain that all actors prefer to war may not exist—even if there are no information problems, commitment problems, principal agent problems, alliance dynamics, or indivisible goods. Existing models generate a bargaining range because they artificially constrain the complexity of power. Consequently, current theories constitute only a subset of the possible rationalist explanations for conflict. This paper shows that, within a rationalist framework, the distribution of power alone can cause war.
- Working Paper Rational Origins of Revisionist War.
 Bargaining models of war usually argue that, during a power transition, it should be the declining state, not the rising one, that initiates a conflict. This prediction does not accurately describe most great power shifts: during these upheavals, it is usually the rising power that starts a war. Less formal theories, especially realist ones, do a better job predicting that rising powers will start wars, but most of these either remain unclear about the mechanism linking power transitions to war or retreat to non-rational mechanisms to spark conflict. This paper attempts to reconcile these literatures. It seeks to ground realist ideas about revisionist war on rationalist foundations.

- Working Paper War Gains Its Own Momentum.
 Why do wars continue after their original causes are resolved? I offer a rationalist explanation. Wars can end in a negotiated settlement only when wartime and post-bellum distributions of power are approximately equal. If war shifts power, and if these shifts are to some degree temporary, then war can create new commitment problems that prevent peaceful settlements. In contrast to previous work, I emphasize how these commitment problems arise endogenously. This model helps account for several empirical patterns: why war aims often expand; why costlier wars are shorter and more likely to end in negotiations; and why wars are not more likely to end the longer they last, even though fighting reveals information. I develop a formal model and illustrate it using the Iran-Iraq War. The article concludes by proving that, for purely rational reasons, a peaceful settlement can become less likely the longer a war goes on.
- Working Paper Should Like Cases be Decided Alike? A Formal Analysis of Formal Equality with Benjamin Johnson (Penn State Law)
 The ancient maxim, “treat like cases alike,” shows up in philosophy, political theory, and Supreme Court decisions, and it underpins many of our beliefs about equal treatment under the law. Against this received wisdom, we develop a formal, mathematical proof that the maxim is either superfluous (in which case it cannot do the work that philosophers and the Supreme Court often attribute to it) or pernicious (in which case we should reject it as morally repugnant).
- Working Paper Fanatical Peace with Kristopher Ramsay (Princeton).
 Using a formal model, we demonstrate that the probability of war can be both increasing *and decreasing* as enemies become more ideologically dissimilar. This claim runs counter to the conventional wisdom in both the rationalist and non-rationalist literatures on conflict, both of which claim that the probability of war should be increasing the more people disagree.
- In Progress Stability, Attribution, and Third Parties in Cyberspace with Robert Trager (Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford).
 Sabotaging an enemy creates positive externalities for third parties. As such, these third parties have incentives to disrupt international cooperation, since the breakdown of relations between two countries redounds to their benefit. While this problem exists in many forms of warfare, it is most pronounced in cyber, where the attribution problem and the multiplicity of small actors make the danger severe.
- In Progress Rationalism, Constructivism, and Imagination with Bentley Allan (Johns Hopkins)
 The “fourth debate” in the study of international relations (IR) pitted rationalists against constructivists. Rationalism and constructivism are ontological stances, not just methodological bets. These ontological stances, though, are not always well-understood even by their adherents. We believe the reconciliation of rationalism and constructivism requires a renewed appreciation for the role of imagined realities and how they shape human behavior. Said again, it requires recognition that not all realities are empirical, and so a complete science of politics will necessarily be more than an empirical science. Much more than the natural sciences, the social sciences—especially the study of international politics—must study “things that don’t happen.”
- In Progress Why Order Unravels: Efficient Peace and Catastrophic War with Michael Joseph (UCSD)
 In this paper, we study how simultaneous bargaining over multiple issues by multiple players results in different kinds of settlements. We find that, when bargaining over multiple issues, the most efficient kinds of peace also entail the greatest risk of catastrophic war, should the system break down; by contrast, less-efficient kinds of peace entail lower per-round payoffs but also reduce the risk of the entire system unraveling. We find that the kind of order that emerges in such an environment depends on the nature of negotiations and the degree to which some actors can impose local risk on others, forcing those others to accept a greater risk of local conflict in order to reduce the overall risk of a systemic war.

Other Publications

- 2020 Book Review: *Democracy and Imperialism* by William S. Smith Published in *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*.
- 2019 “Moloch” and other poetry. *Society of Classical Poets*.
<https://classicalpoets.org/2019/11/13/moloch-and-other-poetry-by-richard-jordan/>
- 2019 Blog Post: “IR Theory After Trump, parts I and II” with Marcus Holmes and Eric Parajon. *Duck of Minerva*
<http://duckofminerva.com/2019/01/ir-theory-after-trump-a-first-image-renaissance-part-i.html>
- 2018 Book Review: *Intellectuals in the Global Arena* by Michael Desch. Published in *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*.
- 2015 “An Essay on Thomas Schelling’s *Arms and Influence*.” For *Politics and Strategy*.
<http://www.classicsofstrategy.com/Schelling-Arms-and-Influence-Essay.pdf>
- 2009 “One Discipline or Many? 2008 TRIP Survey of International Relations Faculty in Ten Countries” with Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney.
wm.edu/offices/itpir/_documents/trip/final_trip_report_2009.pdf

Teaching Experience

Honors Theses Supervised

- Andres Cruz (Spring 2019): “The Implications of ICT in Surviving a Coup d’État”
Olivia Perez (Spring 2019): “Theodore Roosevelt’s Legacy in Foreign Policy”
Matt Walker (Spring 2019): “The Liberal International Order: A Dual Policy Crisis”

Courses Taught (Instructor of Record)

- Fundamentals of International Politics (Intro IR) - Fall 2016, '17, '19, '20; Spring 2017, '18
Grand Strategy - Fall 2017, 2018; Spring 2019
Independent Reading: Leadership and Foreign Policy - Spring 2020
Independent Reading: Grand Strategy in the 21st Century - Spring 2018
Independent Reading: Nuclear Strategy - Fall 2017
Graduate Research Methods - Spring 2019
Teaching Political Science - Fall 2018

Honors Colloquia and Short Courses

- Coriolanus* and Grand Strategy (3-hour seminar) - every semester since Fall 2017

Assistant Instructor

- Leaders and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy
Grand Strategy (in the Woodrow Wilson School)
Western Way of War (in the Sociology Department)
Introduction to International Relations
Causes of War

Invited Presentations and Workshops

- Nov 2019 “Rationalist Explanations for War in Multipolar Worlds.” University of Texas
- Apr 2019 “Game Theory and Autonomous Systems.” Symposium on Autonomous Systems and International Governance, Penn State
- May 2018 “Rationalist Explanations for War in Multipolar Worlds.” Revisiting the Paradigms Workshop, University of Chicago
- Apr 2018 “Rationalist Explanations for War in Multipolar Worlds.” Faculty Colloquium, UCLA
- Feb 2018 “Rationalist Explanations for War in Multipolar Worlds.” Formal Models of International Relations Conference, University of Southern California
- June 2017 Participant, Philip Merrill Center Teachers’ Workshop, Johns Hopkins
- July 2016 Participant, Summer Seminar on History and Statecraft, Clements Center
- Feb 2016 “War has its own Momentum.” Formal Models of International Relations Conference, University of Southern California
- May 2015 “War has its own Momentum.” Empirical Implications of Bargaining Theory (EIBT).
- July 2013 Participant, Summer Workshop on Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy (SWAMOS), Columbia University

Conferences (select, since 2016)

- Jan 2020 “Rational Origins of Revisionist War.” Southern Political Science Association, San Juan, PR
- Sep 2019 Roundtable on Contingency and International Relations. American Political Science Association, Washington, DC
- Apr 2019 “The Rational Origins of Revisionist War” and “Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*.” New England Political Science Association, Portland, ME
- Sep 2018 “Can Increasing Inequality be Avoided?” American Political Science Association, Boston, MA
- Sep 2017 “Transparency and Wartime Leadership.” American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA
- Apr 2017 “Can Increasing Inequality be Avoided?” with Benjamin Johnson. Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL
- Feb 2017 “A Bargain Might Not Exist.” International Studies Association, Baltimore, MD
- Sep 2016 “Signaling Revolutionary Resolve” with Austin Wright. American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA

Teaching Seminars and Workshops

Character Across the Curriculum

Institute for Faith & Learning, Baylor University (Fall and Spring 2019-2020)

Summer Faculty Institute

Academy for Teaching & Learning, Baylor University (June 2018)

Basin Harbor Teaching Workshop

Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies, Johns Hopkins SAIS (June 2017)

Teaching Seminars (select)

Teaching Empathy (Baylor, Spring 2020)

Teaching as Performance: A Stanislavskian Acting Approach (Baylor, Fall 2019)

The Pedagogical Importance of Getting to Know Each Other (Baylor, Fall 2019)

The Habit of Attention (Baylor, Spring 2019)

Open But Not Empty: What Makes Hospitality Possible (Baylor, Fall 2018)

The Intellectual Virtues (Baylor, Fall 2018)

Playing Games in the Classroom (Baylor, Fall 2018)

The Power of Story in Transformative Teaching (Baylor, Fall 2017)

Using Formative Assessment in the Classroom (Baylor, Fall 2017)

Nurturing Good Habits of Mind (Baylor, Spring 2017)

What We Know about How Students Learn (Baylor, Spring 2017)

Remaining Unbiased in the Classroom (Baylor, Fall 2016)

Designing a Course (Princeton, Fall 2015)

Master Class on Lecturing (Princeton, Spring 2014)

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2020	Geopolitics of Emerging Technologies Paper Award, Burkle Center (UCLA)
2019	Character Across the Curriculum, Baylor University
2018	Summer Faculty Institute, Baylor University
2017	Summer Sabbatical and Research Leave, Baylor University
2015-16	Research Fellow, Center for International Security Studies (Princeton)
2015	Graduate Student Travel Grant, Peace Science Society
2015	Institute for Humane Studies Scholarship
2015	Research Grant, Center for International Security Studies
2014-15	A.B. Krongard Fellowship, Princeton University
2014-15	Research Fellow, Center for International Security Studies (Princeton)
2011-14	Princeton University Fellowship
2010-11	William S. Carpenter Fellowship, Princeton University

Service

Reviewer for *AJPS*, *International Organization*, *ISQ*, *World Politics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Public Choice*, *Chinese Political Science*, *International Security*, and *Security Studies*.

References

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