

A Classroom Simulation of the Syrian Conflict

ONLINE APPENDIX

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Abstract: This online appendix provides additional information regarding the simulation described in the *PS* article “A Classroom Simulation of the Syrian Conflict.” This simulation extends for nine weeks allowing for simulation description and background reading in the first week and debriefing in the last week and runs parallel to regular lectures and tutorial. The simulation is focused on the current (as of 2018) Syrian conflict and culminates in a simulated multi-stakeholder peace conference in Weeks 9 and 10. The setting is initially the actors home regions in July 2018, and the main stage is a stakeholders meeting set in September 2018. The simulation is designed to enhance students’ engagement by using a real-life case for study, but it is set in the near future to allow for flexibility in teams’ decision making (Asal & Blake 2006).

The Syrian conflict began in 2011, has led to the deaths of over 450,000 people by 2018, millions of refugees, and has affected the Syrian population, the stability of neighboring states, and led to an escalation of tensions between the US and Russia (Barnard 2016).

Students will be randomly assigned an actor during the first tutorial. Each student will represent a stakeholder in this conflict or in affected states. Roles will include international organizations (e.g. United Nations, European Union), government actors (e.g. Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, US, Russia, and Australia), and non-governmental organizations (violent and non-violent).

This simulation allows students the opportunity to research an internationalized civil conflict and understand the incentives and interests of different state and non-state actors. Actors can have their own interests which might not coincide with ending the conflict. The simulation lifecycle is consistent with those outlined in the literature: pre-play research and planning; early stage; development; debriefing, assessment, & evaluation. The focus of this simulation is on documents uploaded to the course website and in-person tutorials. Students make submissions and interact cooperatively and competitively to reach goals depending on their assigned roles.

1. Learning opportunities and objectives

This simulation has three key learning objectives:

1. Actively engage students with the complexity of stakeholder interests and constraints in international relations events. Active engagement with the learning process has been shown to enhance student engagement with and comprehension of course content (Glazier 2011).
2. Enhance student ability to apply critical analysis skills to real-world international relations' events.
3. Facilitate critical reflection on students' learning process. Reflection is a crucial part of the learning process, Kolb (1984) and Gibbs (1988) have developed a conceptual *reflective cycle* that will be included into this simulation in small-group verbal debriefs, and a written debrief modelled on the reflective cycle.

2. Syria Peace Summit, overview

A Syria Peace Summit will take place in Weeks 9 and 10 to facilitate multi-party negotiations amongst key parties to the Syrian civil conflict. Notably, the Summit will be attended by Australia (representing the UNSC), the Syrian government, the European Union (EU), the Free Syria Army (FSA), Iran, ISIS, Jaysh al-Islam, Jordan, the Kurdish PYD, the Red Crescent (SARC), Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Nations (UN), and the United States (US).

The mission of the Syria Peace Summit is to work towards resolution on the following four issues:

- A lasting **ceasefire** amongst all parties in the Syrian conflict
- Lifting of **sanctions** on the Syrian regime
- Facilitating provision of **humanitarian relief** to Syrian citizens
- Devising pathways for a post-conflict **political transition**

The Summit will produce a Joint Statement detailing parties' commitment to resolutions on these issues.

3. Group size and composition

The simulation as designed takes place in groups of 15 students. Each student plays one of 15 key actors in the Syrian conflict. As discussed in the main manuscript the number of actors and the number of simultaneous iterations of the simulation are easily adaptable to teachers' needs.

4. Facilitator roles

Tutors and the course convener will be moderators. Moderators have social, teaching, and organizational roles and are crucial to student engagement and ensuring the simulation is moving forward (Mason 1991). Assessment during the simulation will be included into tutorial participation marks, and as part of a response paper in the last third of the class. These assessments are designed to enhance the learning outcomes for this class including an experiential knowledge of theoretical approaches to international relations, capacity to develop skills in negotiation, diplomacy, and organizational work, an understanding of current and historical events of international significance, and the development of strong research, writing, and analytical skills. Students will also be well prepared for future international relations course work.

5. Simulation overview

The simulation takes place in tutorial groups of 15 students each. Each student will be assigned a role as an important Syrian conflict actor. Each week part of the tutorial will be dedicated to interactive simulation activities, culminating in a Syria Peace Summit in weeks 9 and 10. The simulation covers three phases of activity: pre-summit planning, summit, and debrief.

Week	Topic	Simulation activity	Linking IR theory to activity
1	Introduction to the discipline of IR	No tutorial groups this week	
2	Theories of IR	Simulation introduction and allocation of student roles. Read brief article about recent Syrian peace talks and break up into groups to list actors and their interests, as described in article. Do different types of actors have similar types of interest? What factors allow us to see these interests in practice?	Conceptualizing various types of actors and theorizing their interests.
3	Why do wars occur?	Discussion of post-WWI system's impact on contemporary Syrian conflict focusing on Sykes Picot agreement. Students break up into pairs to play prisoners' dilemma under three sequencing rules.	Connecting core concepts - war is costly, commitment problems, issue indivisibility, misperception, interest groups, importance of territory, resolve, and relative power – to Syrian conflict.
4	Domestic politics and war	Students are divided into groups according to their actor-type (state actors, non-state actors, international actors), discussion prompts are given for each group to investigate the role of competing sub-state, sub-group, or sub-institutional interests on their actor's preferences. Is their behavior towards opponent/allied actors shaped by an understanding of the competing interest groups that drive that actor's behavior?	Differentiating general and particular interests. Understanding mechanisms (rally around the flag, diversionary incentives, regime type) through which sub-state interests impact state actor preferences, as well as non-state or international actors' strategies towards state actors.
5	International institutions and war	Students discuss their actor's alliances and consider whether they are engaged in 'balancing' against a great power and how this impacts their behavior in the conflict. Students also discuss their actor's relationship with the key international security organization (i.e., the UN). Are they furthering the UN's agenda for cessation of conflict, or thwarting it?	Applying alliances, balance-of-power, and bandwagoning, as well as collective security organizations as security mechanisms to the Syrian conflict. Why did these mechanisms fail to prevent protracted conflict in this case?
6	Violence by non-state actors	Students describe their actor's main opponents, both state and non-state. They then discuss how motivations and tactics drive their actor's strategies, as well as those of allies and opponents.	Linking inter and intra-state conflict mechanisms (commitment problems, information issues, indivisible issues, greed and grievance) to Syrian conflict. Using a theoretical understanding of asymmetric conflict strategies (counterinsurgency, terrorism,

			spoiling, outbidding, coercion, provocation) to explain actors' behavior in the Syrian conflict.
7	Politics of trade and finance	Small groups explore economic linkages between simulation actors and how this shapes their preferences.	Linking political-economic mechanisms like economic diplomacy, sanctions, and aid, to conflict strategies and the Syrian conflict.
8	Economic and political development	General discussion linked to course themes followed by devising of pre-summit positions in groups of actors with convergent interests on four issue areas.	Students consider how themes of colonialism, the divide between less-developed and more-developed countries, a resource-based economy, and alternative pathways of economic development may impact the outbreak of conflict and Syrian conflict actors' preferences.
9	International law	Multi-stakeholder negotiations on two issue areas: humanitarian relief, and a ceasefire	Link to bargaining theories learnt throughout the course including game theory, causal mechanisms that lead to bargaining failure or success. Relevant to this week, the theoretical understanding of norms and international law is considered by actors when appealing for a ceasefire and delivery of humanitarian aid.
10	The global environment	Multi-stakeholder negotiations on two issue areas: lifting of sanctions, and political transition	Link to bargaining theories as in previous week. Drawing on this week's lecture, students also consider the applicability of collective action problems when attempting to reach resolution on the two issues under discussion.
11	Human rights	Debrief—students reflect on (and analyze) the simulation experience, including suggestions for improvement	Links to laws of war, humanitarian aid, and Responsibility to Protect and Syrian conflict.
12	Conclusions, future directions	Writing of response paper linking course material to simulation experience	Students synthesize course material and experience in written response.

6. Simulation assessment tasks

ROLE PROFILE

Due Date: Week 4. The written role profile is to be uploaded to the course management system before tutorial. **Value:** 10% of tutorial participation grade.

Task: Write 300 words in response to the two questions outlined below:

1. What are the role's key strategic interests and objectives?

Points to consider: Identify a specific character to represent your role in negotiations; state previous interactions with other actors and existing or potential alliances; describe institutional constraints on action; what theoretical approach (see textbook Ch. 2) does this role most closely approximate in their strategy?

2. Actor-specific questions

For state actors only (Iran, Jordan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, US): How are your motivations and objectives influenced by domestic constraints?

For international actors only (Australia seat on UNSC, EU, Red Crescent, UN,): How are your motivations and objectives impacted by your status as an international actor?

For non-state actors and Assad Regime only (Assad Regime, Free Syria Army, ISIS, Jaysh al-Islam, Kurdish PYD): How are your tactics and strategies impacted by your engagement in conflict as a non-state actor and / or with other non-state actors?

POSITION PAPER

A position paper is a **short** outline of an actor's position in relation to a topic, dispute or negotiation, which is written before a conference and specifically reflects the position and actions of the actor represented.

Due Date: Week 8; **Value:** 10% of tutorial participation grade. This task is a strict liability task, in that failure to upload the Position Paper results in a mark of 0, whereas a completed uploaded role description receives 2.5%. The written position paper is to be uploaded to the course management system before tutorial in week 8.

Write 300 words in response to the following questions:

1. What are your actor's key objectives?
2. What are your constraints in relation to achieving the Peace Summit objectives?
3. What other actors share similar objectives? And what are the prospects of collaboration with one or more of these actors?

It may be useful to also consider the bargaining range of your actor, and where that sits with the ranges of other actors.

RESPONSE PAPER

Due Date: Thursday of Week 11 at 12pm. **Value:** 30% of course grade. **Word limit:** 1,000 words. University policy states that a 10% range of the target word count is acceptable. Therefore, for this assignment 900-1,100 words is acceptable, not counting footnotes and bibliography.

Description: The main means to evaluate several course learning outcomes is through this writing assignment. The main goal of this paper is to have you synthesize your knowledge of the theoretical topics covered in this course, your Syrian simulation experience, and the links you see between theories of international relations, current events, and their individual views of these links.

Response paper topic question: What insights do International Relations theories provide into the Syria simulation? Where do they fall short?

Response Paper Assessment Rubric

- **Cohesive formulation (40%):** The response paper poses a well-formulated response to the all parts of the question.
- **Critical engagement (40%):** The response paper critically engages with the student's experience of the simulation.
- **Structure (10%):** The essay has clear topic sentences, it is well structured, and paragraphs are clearly organized.
- **Editing (10%):** The essay has clearly been proof-read and drafted and contains no/few grammatical errors.

7. Simulation roles

Syrian governmental actor

1. Syrian government: Assad regime

Bashar al-Assad has been President of Syria since 2000, inheriting power from his father, Hafez al-Assad, as the head of an oppressive, authoritarian regime. Bashar and much of Syria's ruling class are from the Allawite sect, a Muslim sect associated with Shi'a Islam, although the Assad regime is secular. When protest spread across Syria in 2011, Assad responded to protesters with oppressive violence, leading Syria into civil war.

Syrian non-government violent actors

2. Free Syria Army (FSA)

The FSA emerged after the anti-Assad 2011 protests, primarily led by military personnel who defected from Assad's regime. In the early years of the civil war the FSA was a key opposition player. As civil war dragged on, the opposition fragmented into often competing groups, and non-Islamist opposition groups either dissolved or lost prominence. The FSA is one of the few remaining non-Islamist and non-Kurdish opposition groups.

3. Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and by its Arabic acronym *Daesh*, is a Salafi jihadist, non-state actor, that follows a fundamentalist, Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam. ISIS has been classified as a terrorist organization. ISIS was formed in 2013, emerging out of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In 2013, ISIS began seizing control of territory and cities in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is currently led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

4. Jaysh al-Islam

Jaysh al-Islam, meaning Army of Islam in Arabic, was created in 2013 as a merger of several groups opposing the Assad regime. Jaysh al-Islam believes in the rule of Islamic Law. It is one of the key opposition groups fighting the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war. The current leader is Mohammed Alloush.

5. Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD)

The PYD was formed in 2003; the People's Protection Units (YPG) is its militia arm. Since 2011, the PYD has been engaged in fighting against the Assad Regime and ISIS. The YPG, the PYD's militia arm, has received military training and back-up airpower from the US, who consider the PYD a moderate, forward-thinking partner in the battle against extremism. The PYD is associated with The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Kurdish group engaged in an armed separatist struggle against Turkey. The current chairman of the PYD is Sallih Muslim.

International state actors

6. Australia - seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

For the purposes of this simulation, Australia has commenced a two-year rotating term on the UNSC and is an active protagonist in discussions concerning the Syrian civil war. Julie Bishop represents Australia on the Security Council. Australia joined the United States (US) in a joint task force, Operation Okra, that commenced a bombing campaign against ISIS in Iraq in late August 2014, and in Syria in September 2015. The Australian Government rejected US requests in early 2016 to expand its military commitment to the war.

7. Iran

Iran and Syria have been close strategic allies since the Iranian revolution of 1979. Since 2011, Iran has intervened in the Syrian civil war to prevent the collapse of the Assad Regime. Iran has provided billions of dollars to the Assad Regime, as well as military training for government forces. Elite Iranian military personnel have fought in Syria alongside the Assad regime.

8. Jordan

Jordan, led by King Abdullah, shares its northern border with Syria. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, Syrian refugees have been flooding into Jordan, currently numbering close to 1.3 million. This influx of refugees has placed a significant strain on Jordan's economy and infrastructure. Jordanian military intervention in Syria constitutes participation in the US-led bombing campaign against ISIS commencing in late 2014.

9. The Russian Federation (Russia)

Russia, led by President Vladimir Putin, has long-standing diplomatic relations with the Assad Regime. Russia intervened in the Syrian Civil War in September 2015 following an official request from the Syrian Government for military help to fight rebel groups. Prior to the intervention, Russia supplied military equipment and training to the Syrian Army. Russia's involvement in Syria has been cited as a 'godsend' for Assad, placing him in a much stronger negotiating position.

10. Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a Sunni-majority religious monarchy that vies with the Shi'a theocracy of Iran for regional influence. In the Syria conflict, Saudi Arabia has provided military training and funding to opposition groups fighting the Assad Regime. Saudi Arabia also joined US-led air strikes against ISIS.

11. Turkey

Turkey, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, borders Syria and had good diplomatic relations with the Assad Regime pre-2011. Turkey intervened in the Syrian conflict in 2011, training and equipping Free Syria Army (FSA) fighters. In the following years, Turkey continued to provide support to opposition groups. Turkey commenced military intervention in Syria in 2016, launching an operation against both ISIS and Kurdish groups.

12. United States (US)

From 2011 until 2014, US involvement in the Syrian conflict constituted financial support and military training for certain opposition groups, particularly the Free Syria Army (FSA). The US tried, with increasing difficulty, to avoid US funding reaching opposition groups with an Islamist agenda. When the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) began seizing territory in 2013 and displayed an aggressive anti-Western agenda, the US began to intervene in Syria with a military bombing campaign against ISIS that commenced in late 2014 and is currently still underway.

International interstate actor

13. European Union (EU)

EU involvement in the Syrian crisis has been largely focused on attempts to find a diplomatic solution to the Syria crisis. The EU is an active participant in the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) that is focused on facilitating a political solution to the crisis. The EU suspended its cooperation with the Syrian Government in March 2011. The EU initially sent a delegation to Syria, however, since late 2012, has scaled down its activities. Delegation staff continue to operate from Brussels and Beirut, carrying out regular missions to Damascus. With Syrians fleeing the conflict, managing and responding to the humanitarian crisis has become a central issue for the EU, and for EU nation states.

International non-state actor

14. United Nations (UN)

The UN has been actively involved in Syria since 2012 providing a UN Special Envoy to Syria to facilitate discussion between the various actors. The current envoy is Staffan de Mistura who succeeds Lakhdar Brahimi and Kofi Annan who both served as Joint Special Representatives in coordination with the League of Arab States. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has also been a key area of activity and discussion with several Resolutions, Presidential Statements and Secretary General Reports' canvassing options and promoting discussion.

Humanitarian organization

15. Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

SARC is the Syrian arm of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the world's largest humanitarian network with missions all over the world. The President of SARC is Khaled Hboubati. SARC has 14 branches all over Syria, and 75 sub-branches. SARC has around 11,000 trained volunteers and works with other charity organizations in Syria. SARC is committed to the Geneva Conventions and the seven basic principles of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. SARC is one of the few international humanitarian organizations still active inside Syria, providing humanitarian relief to Syrian citizens impacted by the conflict.

If additional students are enrolled in a particular tutorial, they are assigned Israel as a role.

8. Works Cited

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- Kolb, David A. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as The Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

WEEKLY SIMULATION STRUCTURE

The following is a weekly breakdown of a particular week's main goals and simulation structure.

WEEK 1

Introduction to the discipline of international relations

This week's lecture and readings provide historical background to the patterns of international politics and an overview of the rest of the semester. The lecture is also meant to try and get students excited about the topic and the course. Students would be better able to assess major concepts of international relations if they have had foundational history courses (e.g. world history, history of economic thought, or the study of one region). Nonetheless, not all students will have finished (or taken) such courses. Our role in this class is not to cover all the history but to touch on several crucial eras and events that will be salient in the rest of this class as well as later international relations classes.

Students enroll in tutorials this week, so there are no tutorial meetings in Week 1. Tutorials commence in Week 2.

WEEK 2 Theories of International Relations

The main goals for this week's tutorial are (1) to have all tutors and students introduce themselves, (2) answer any questions students may have about the course or the course guide, (3) have a brief group-breakout discussion of individuals, interests, and institutions involved in the *New York Times* reading, and (4) introduce the Syrian simulation and assign roles.

During this tutorial, please send around an attendance sheet (or print out and mark it down yourself using the CMS group function) for students to sign. Once tutorial is over, please enter in attendance into the CMS's gradebook. This is essential to allow us to centrally keep track of which students are showing up and which tutorials are being attended over the course of the semester. You will also want to write down which student is taking which role after they are assigned during tutorial.

Students are randomly assigned countries by taking numbered balls out of a hat. The numbers coincide with the numbers of the roles described above. Please use this method to assign roles.

Given the small size of first year tutorials, please arrange students' desks and chairs into a C or O shape. This will allow all students to see each other and facilitate student interaction. If you do not want to move the tables and chairs yourself, you can ask the students to move them as well. Most tutors do have multiple tutorials in the same room back to back, so this should not have to be done more than once per day.

If there are fewer than 15 students in your tutorial, please follow the following list to drop simulation roles. Actors to drop in order (i.e., drop Saudi Arabia first and Assad Regime last): (1) Saudi Arabia; (2) Australia (UNSC); (3) European Union (EU); (4) Jordan; (5) Iran; (6) Free Syria Army (FSA); (7) Turkey; (8) ISIS; (9) Kurdish PYD; (10) Jaysh Al-Islam; (11) Red Crescent (SARC); (12) United Nations (UN); (13) US (14) Russia; (15) Assad Regime. If an additional role is needed, assign Israel to this student.

Simulation activity (15 minutes at end of tutorial)

The main tasks for this week's simulation time are (1) introducing the simulation and (2) allocating roles.

1. Introduce the simulation phases and explain that the simulation culminates in a simulated Syria Peace Summit in week 9:

- Phase 1 (wks 2 & 3): introducing the simulation and the Syria conflict
- Phase 2 (wks 4-6): conflict context and linking the simulation to IR concepts
- Phase 3 (wks 7-11): pre-conference positioning, conference, and debrief.

Next, explain the simulation's assessment structure. There are three assessable items.

- *Role profile*, which needs to be about 300 words. It is worth 1% of students' overall tutorial participation grade of 10%. Students will upload their role profile by the end of Week 4. A separate forum is been created per tutorial.
- A 300-word *position paper*, which is also worth 1% of students' 10% participation grade. Students will submit the position paper by the start of Week 8.
- A *response paper*, which is to be 1,000 words and is worth 30% of their overall course grade. This is due in Week 11.

2. Allocate simulation roles to students. The tutor will write down all roles on small pieces of paper, which are then folded and placed into a hat or box. The tutor then walks around the room and students pick a piece of paper. This process helps randomize the selection of roles (and thus increases fairness) but it also helps raise student interest in the simulation as well as the stakes (Oh, no only Russia and USA are left, which one am I going to get?).

WEEK 3
Why do wars occur?

This week’s tutorial centers on reinforcing (1) students’ understanding of the main causes of interstate wars, (2) a hands-on version of the prisoners’ dilemma as an activity to reinforce the difficulties in cooperating in a self-interested world, and (3) a simulation discussion/activity where students tie the week’s lecture (interstate war, WWI) to the simulation case of Syria.

Also make sure to answer any final questions that students might have about the course guide, quizzes, assessments, simulation roles, etc.

Rewards for the game are given to tutors before Week 3.

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

1. Description

All students should break into pairs and play a simple game. If there is an odd number of students, the tutor will play with the odd person out. The game’s scoring is based on preferred outcomes, and you should keep score on the table below.

Players can defect (*D*) or cooperate (*C*). The rewards are as follows (Player 1, Player 2) **and should be written on the board:**

		Player 2	
		<i>Cooperate</i>	<i>Defect</i>
Player 1	<i>Cooperate</i>	1, 1	-1, 2
	<i>Defect</i>	2, -1	0, 0

Have the students play **ten turns for each of the following scenarios:**

- 1) Each player writes the move (**C** or **D**) on a piece of paper. Both players **simultaneously** reveal their moves.
- 2) The players move in **sequence** with **Player 1 moving first** each time.
- 3) The players move in a sequence as before, but **each player now alternates turns**.

Scores are assigned based on the total number of points scored after the thirty rounds. The total available points would be 60 points (maximum 2 points per move). The overall winner in each tutorial will get a dinosaur figurine to commemorate their victory. The second-place winner will receive a frog. Score sheets and pins should be returned to the tutor for collection and analysis by Dr. Frank.

2. Post-game questions

1. In which of the three scenarios was it hardest for BOTH players to get the maximum points?
2. How did the changes in move order changed your thinking about which moves to make?
3. Can the prisoners’ dilemma model be applied to actors’ interactions in the Syrian Civil Conflict?

3. Prisoners' Dilemma scorecard

Move	Round	P1 move	P1 score	P2 move	P2 score
Both players simultaneously reveal their moves.	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
The players move in sequence with Player 1 moving first each time.	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
The players move in a sequence, but each player alternates turns .	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
	Total score				

WEEK 4

Domestic Politics and War

This week's main case study for the lecture is World War II, focusing specifically on the decision to appease Germany, go to war, or try to stay out of the conflict altogether. Please make sure to highlight in tutorial the domestic considerations at play for Germany, the UK, France, Australia, and the US.

If students have not yet uploaded their role profile, they may want to talk about them briefly. Please remind them these are due by 9am Friday! They should upload it to their tutorial's folder in the CMS. Role profiles are only 300 words, so this should not be a majorly stressful activity. Encourage your students to read each other's profiles, to get a better sense of the multiple actors involved in the simulation.

Also make sure that students are familiar with the resources we have on the CMS and remind them to complete their weekly quizzes. Since all tutorial do have computers or computer projectors (with your laptop), it might be worth showing students around the class website a bit.

Finally, remind them that the online midterm is not far off. The best way to prepare for that is by doing the assigned readings and attending lectures.

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

Divide students into four groups according to their role as a state actor, a non-state actor, or an international actor. Due to the large number of state actors, there will be two groups of state actors.

Group 1 – State actors: Jordan, Saudi Arabia, US

Group 2 – State actors: Iran, Turkey, Russia, Assad Regime

Group 3 – Non-state actors: FSA, Jaysh Al-Islam, ISIS, Kurdish PYD

Group 4 – International actors: UN, Australia (UNSC), EU, Red Crescent

Ask each group to discuss the following questions:

1. What is the key constituency / constituencies whose interests drive your actor's actions and objectives in their involvement in the Syrian conflict?
2. Are your actor's objectives in the Syrian conflict cohesive or fractured? If you are a state actor: is there a conflict between different domestic constituencies that your actor represents? If you are a non-state actor: is there dissent amongst different factions / interests that your actor represents? If you are an international actor: are there key conflicting interests under the umbrella of your international organization that you need to reconcile?

Allow students approx. 15 minutes to discuss in small groups. Then, spend ten minutes in the large group hearing each small group's response.

WEEK 5

International institutions and war

Students' top priorities for this week's tutorial are likely to be developing their positions on issues and (2) being clear what is on the midterm. Therefore, some of the substance might get short shrift, but do try to cover what you can. There is guidance below regarding the midterm in the discussion section.

Substantively, this week focuses on how states can create institutional mechanisms to either avoid violent conflict or maximize their chance of survival or success if violent conflict breaks out. Like the reading, the lecture focuses on alliance formation and collective security organizations. There is little this week about institutional design of international organizations or regimes as this topic is covered after the break.

Simulation activity (25 minutes at end of tutorial)

For this activity it is better if students are in mixed groups of states, non-state actors, and international actors. Students should be randomly assigned to groups with three students per group. You can either divide students according to seating, or if you prefer to mix students up, you can allocate each student a number from one to five, following which all the 'ones' form a group, all the 'twos' form a group, etc...

Ask each small group to discuss the following questions:

1. How is your actor placed, comparatively, in terms of the balance of power in the international system? Is your actor comparatively powerful, lacking power, or somewhere in between? How can you best use your comparative position in the international system to most effectively achieve your objectives? (This might mean pursuing certain alliances and not others, influencing certain actors, or using the threat of military power or sanctions).
2. How does the current balance of power in the international arena, in particular actors that hold power in the international system, impact your actor and the likelihood that your actor will achieve their objectives? (i.e., is your actor a world power, or backed by a world power? Is your actor allied with weak powers?).

Give small groups 15 minutes for discussion, followed by 10 minutes for feedback from each small group in the large group.

WEEK 6

Violence by non-state actors

The main simulation activity this week focuses on students developing an understanding of which other Syrian actors would be considered their opponents. This would then tie into the lecture and readings description of how civil conflicts have specific motivations, violent non-state actors, and international challenges that are similar to but distinct from the material covered in earlier weeks.

Also, please upload the simulation roles that students are playing to the appropriate CMS's gradebook column. Having these roles centrally described makes it much easier for us to see who is playing what role than myriad emailed spreadsheets.

This week's lecture and reading focus on the case study of the DRC conflict. This is the last week of the causes of war before we move to political economy. Hopefully by now students have a firm foundation for understanding the causes of war, the difficulties in resolving them, and their impact on domestic and international politics. These foundations will help students understand the topics in the rest of the semester as they represent a relaxation of the assumption that national security is the fundamental (indeed only) interest of nation-states.

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

Give students two minutes to individually write down an answer to the following task:

Of the fourteen actors in the Syrian simulation (besides your actor) name at least two key opponents from your actors' perspective.

The tutor then draws up a 'conflict matrix' by drawing on the whiteboard a list of the 15 actors and each actor's key opponents. The tutor organizes actors according to those actors that have similar key opponents. This is likely to differentiate broadly into actors whose key opponent is the Assad regime, and actors whose key opponent is rebel groups (FSA, Kurdish PYD, Jaysh al-Islam). ISIS is likely to be a shared opponent of numerous actors.

This list could look similar to the table below:

ACTOR	KEY OPPONENTS	KEY OPPONENTS WITHOUT ISIS	1=Anti Assad 2=Anti rebels
1. Saudi Arabia	Iran / Assad	Iran / Assad	1
2. Jordan	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
3. Russia	ISIS / Rebels	Rebels	2
4. Iran	ISIS / Rebels	Rebels	2
5. US	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
6. Turkey	ISIS / Kurds	Kurds	2
7. FSA (rebels)	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
8. Jaysh Al-Islam (rebels)	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
9. ISIS*	US / Russia	US / Russia	
10. Kurdish PYD	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
11. Australia (UNSC)	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
12. UN	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
13. EU	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
14. Red Crescent	ISIS / Assad	Assad	1
15. Assad Regime	ISIS / Rebels	Rebels	2

Now - divide the students into groups according to whether their actor views the Assad Regime as a key opponent or whether they view rebel groups (FSA, Kurdish PYD, Jaysh al-Islam) as a key opponent. This should emerge as a key division amongst actors.

*ISIS could join either one of the groups as they should view both Assad and the rebels as their opponents.

Ask each group to discuss:

1. Does your group consider that your key opponent/s are using 'terrorist' tactics? Are you yourself using 'terrorist' tactics to secure your goals?
2. If your key opponent is using terrorist tactics – do you view them as 'rational' or 'irrational'? Do different group members differ in their view of this? If you are using terrorist tactics do you view yourself as 'rational' or 'irrational' in striving to achieve your objectives? What is your reasoning for your response?
3. How might incomplete information, commitment problems, or indivisible issues impact your ability to resolve conflict with your key opponents? Which of these three is likely to be most obstructive to conflict resolution?

WEEK 7

The politics of trade and finance

The main goals for this week's tutorial are (1) mention position paper due on next Monday; (2) discuss key concepts from this week; (3) Syrian simulation activity on the intersection of economic and political concerns for actors in the Syrian conflict.

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

Topic: Economic diplomacy in the Syrian conflict

Stimulus: In February 2014, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations ("UN") wrote to the UN Secretariat of the Department of Sustainable Development stressing the 'necessity of urgent and immediate lifting of all kinds of unilateral economic, financial or trade coercive measures, which imposed, illegally, by certain Member States and Entities against other sovereign Members States... [Because] they impede the full achievement of economic and social development particularly in developing countries'.

Instructions: Students should be broken up into groups of five and asked the four questions below. If there are less than fifteen students in your tutorial, break students up into smaller groups. Tutors should move between groups and facilitate discussions where necessary. If time allows, bring the discussion back into the entire tutorial for a quick large group recap for the final 5-10 minutes and ask each group to summarize some of the points they discussed. However, if discussion is free-flowing, the large group recap can be skipped. Summarize points on the white board for students' reference.

Questions:

1. Has your actor pursued sanctions against the Syrian regime? If not, think about your position on sanctions toward Syria.
2. What economic or political leverage does your actor possess to pressure the international community to either retain or lift the sanctions on the Syrian regime?
3. Are there other actors that would share your objective to either lift or retain sanctions on the Syrian regime? Who are they?
4. Why might you or other parties have decided to pursue sanctions against Syria?
5. What effect might sanctions have on Syria's economic development?

Guidance: At the minimum, the students representing the USA and the EU should be able to identify they are the main actors pursuing sanctions against the Syrian regime. Russia is generally opposed to sanctions and has vetoed sanctioning resolutions in the Security Council. Students may identify the challenge of enforcing sanctions against non-state actors, such as ISIS.

Primarily, the sanctions targeted Bashar al-Assad to encourage his removal from power. Students may also mention that the sanctions were aimed at preventing arms and equipment that may be used for internal repression, oil embargos – to reduce financial capacity of the Syrian Government, and the freezing assets and travel capabilities of key internal actors both persons and entities. Human rights concerns may also be raised.

Syria now heavily depends on aid; and its economic autonomy has been severely restricted. Sanctions have created hurdles in delivering humanitarian aid and wider stabilization programs, impediments in the financial sector as foreign funds are unable to be processed (via the formal financial sector into Syria).

Hopefully, students will attempt to link this discussion back to the material for this and next week regarding the wealth and poverty of nations. “Interests, interactions, and institutions at the international level can be responsible for some of the current problems regarding the development of poorer countries” (p. 434). Also see “Is foreign aid the answer?” (p. 447). This may require some prompting from the tutor.

Alternate substantive activity

Stimulus: Print out the al-Jazeera article below and distribute to students - or ask students to read on their laptops). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/russia-china-veto-resolution-syria-sanctions-170228170547908.html>

Instructions: Students should be broken up into groups of three or four and asked to read through the article and then discuss the questions below. If time allows, reconvene as a large group and discuss each group’s response.

Questions:

1. Has your actor pursued sanctions against the Syrian regime? If not, think about your position on sanctions toward Syria.
2. What economic or political leverage does your actor possess to pressure the international community to either retain or lift the sanctions on the Syrian regime?
3. Are there other actors that would share your objective to either lift or retain sanctions on the Syrian regime? Who are they?

WEEK 8

Economic and political development

This week's lecture focuses on the answers to one main question—Why are some countries richer while others are poorer? The lecture and reading are brief summaries of the development literature. The specific case study this week is of the Sustainable Development Goals.

During the second half of tutorial students are focused on pre-conference simulation positioning and trying to find alliances.

Students recently finished uploading their position papers to Wattle's forums. Please mark students with a 0/1 for whether they completed this assignment in our gradebook as soon after the deadline as possible. The same late penalties apply as for the role profile—5% per business day late up to 10 business days late.

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

The focus of this week's simulation activity is pre-summit positioning. This activity builds on students position papers, which were due before this week's tutorials.

Actors should be divided into the following 4 groups:

- *Group #1*—Turkey, Free Syria Army, Kurdish PYD
- *Group #2*—Russia, Iran, Assad Regime, ISIS
- *Group #3*—EU, SARC, UN, Australia (UNSC)
- *Group #4*—Jaysh al-Islam, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, US

Groups should discuss the following questions for the available 15-20 minutes:

- What are your actor's key objectives and key constraints in relation to the four Peace Summit objectives? (if students need reminding, the four objectives are written on the Peace Summit Communiqué in the students' Simulation Handbook)
- Are there points of agreement in the key objectives of actors in your group?
- Can you devise a joint strategy for achieving these objectives?
- What concessions are you willing to offer to other actors at the conference to achieve those objectives?

The aim of this exercise is for actors to (hopefully) join into coalitions, or blocs to increase their bargaining power. This may require some prompting from tutors. It will be important for each group to take notes and/or collect a list of their respective demands/ concessions and any individual positions in preparation for the Peace Summit starting the following week. See next week's tutors' notes for more information.

WEEK 9 International Law

The only activity for this week's tutorial is holding the simulated conference! Please read the simulation description extra closely this week and leave adequate time for preparation before and after tutorial. All our efforts at designing and implementing this simulation will (hopefully) pay off this week.

It is important to note that the lecture and reading material for this week will still be on the final exam. The reading summary and discussion questions are geared towards helping students understand the material in the hopes of having it contribute to their response paper and final exam preparations.

Simulation activity (entire tutorial)

Week 1 of the Syria Peace Summit

Please set the room up to facilitate the activity. Student desks should be arranged in a U-shape. Table cards with role names will be distributed to tutors to make the situation a bit more realistic. Please re-use the cards in your other tutorials.

Following on from the pre-conference negotiations last week¹, students should have already devised alliances and 'voting blocs' going into the Syria Peace Summit in weeks 9 and 10. The Syria Peace Summit will attempt to draft resolutions on the Summit's four key objectives as outlined in the Peace Summit Communiqué:

Week 9:

- Humanitarian relief
- Ceasefire

Week 10:

- Lifting of sanctions
- Post-conflict political transition

The Syria Peace Summit will be facilitated by the tutor and will be staged as follows:

Time	Activity
5 mins	Welcome to Summit The tutor runs through conference agenda, and notes attendees and absences
10 mins	Working Groups In the four small groups from Week 8, each group reconvenes to revise their position and devise specific demands and concessions regarding the four summit objectives.
15 mins	Plenary Session I: Writing up demands and concessions The tutor facilitates the writing up of each group's demands and concessions. See more detailed instructions below.
15 mins	Plenary Session II: Discussion of demands and concessions Using the demands and concessions, the tutor calls on specific actors to propose resolutions or undertakings, to stimulate discussion, the tutor can then ask whether any actors object, or can allow free flowing discussion if this emerges organically.
5 mins	Drafting of Resolutions and Joint Statement

¹ Or the previous week, for Wednesday tutorials.

The tutor fills in a hardcopy of the Joint Statement with the key resolutions reached regarding each of the four objectives. And for which objectives a resolution was not reached. The joint statement is signed by all actors.

Detailed guidelines

1. Welcome to Summit

Welcome to the international Peace Summit regarding the ongoing conflict in Syria. We are here today (and next week) to work towards resolutions and undertakings on the following four objectives: humanitarian relief; ceasefire; a lifting of sanctions; and the post-conflict political transition. Our aim today will be to devise a joint statement outlining our undertakings and resolutions related to a ceasefire and humanitarian relief.

Each week the conference will be divided into three sessions.

- The first session is the working group session.
- The second session is the plenary session (full group session).
- The third session will be the drafting of resolutions.

The tutor notes (one of the following) all of the actors are present today OR all of the actors are present with the exception of (absent actors). Absent actors cannot be parties to the agreement. If anyone is absent, please move forward with the conference without that actor being represented. (This would not be the first time a key actor has not been present in real-life Syrian negotiations!). The discussions will need to take account of the reality that an actor is absent, thinking about how that actor might respond to any deals struck at the Summit.

This summit will now commence. The tutor calls upon the actors to move into their pre-conference work groups to devise collective and individual demands and concessions to bring to the plenary session.

2. Working Groups

Students given 5-10 minutes to refresh the demands and concessions devised the previous week.

3. Plenary Session I: Writing up demands and concessions

Each group of students should record their demands and concessions on *Handout 1* below. These documents (in Word format) should subsequently be uploaded to the tutorial forum.

These handouts are very important for us to be able to comparatively assess the simulation process in each tutorial and for students to have a record of their discussions.

4. Plenary Session II: Discussion of demands and concessions

Handout 2 below should be an ongoing record completed by the tutor in Word format during tutorial and uploaded to Wattle in the tutorial forum and emailed to Dr. Frank after tutorial.

These handouts are very important for us to be able to comparatively assess the evolution of simulation outcome in each tutorial.

5. Drafting of Resolutions and Joint Statement

Handout 3, the Joint Statement of Resolutions (below), is the only record of the outcomes of week 9's summit. It should be completed by the tutor, uploaded to the tutorial forum, and emailed to Dr. Frank after tutorial.

Handout 1 (completed by students):

Plenary Session I: Demands and concessions

Actors in this group:
Demands
1.
2.
3.
Concessions
1.
2.
3.
Individual positions of actors that fall outside of the group positions above
1.
2.
3.

Handout 2 (completed by tutor):

Plenary Session II: Discussion of demands and concessions

Tutorial Group: #		
#	Proposed Resolution regarding today's two key objectives	Actors' names and objections / agreement
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Handout 3 (completed by tutor):

Joint Statement of Resolutions

We, the participants in multi-party negotiations at the Syria Peace Summit of May 2018, Australia (representing UNSC), Assad Regime, European Union (EU), Free Syria Army (FSA), Iran, ISIS, Jaysh al-Islam, Jordan, Kurdish PYD, Red Crescent (SARC), Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Nations (UN), United States (US), (and Israel if present) agree to undertake the resolutions stated below in relation to the Syrian civil conflict.

We acknowledge the diverse and conflicting positions of parties at the Peace Summit and are committed to mutual respect and negotiation as the basis for future relationships between parties.

Regarding a universal ceasefire

Outcome (*choose one*): total agreement, partial agreement, no agreement

In case of partial agreement:

- (1) Which actors reached this agreement?

- (2) Which actors abstained or objected?

Detailed outcome description:

Regarding the facilitation of humanitarian relief

Outcome (*choose one*): total agreement, partial agreement, no agreement

In case of partial agreement:

(1) Which actors reached this agreement?

(2) Which actors abstained or objected?

Detailed outcome description:

Week 10
The global environment

This is the second week of the simulation, which takes the entire class. This week's topics are the lifting of economic sanctions from the Syrian regime and a possible post-conflict political transition. Please use the Handout 1 and Handout 2 from last week. A new Handout 3 is below.

This week's lecture case study focuses on the Arctic—an (arguably) under-covered aspect of both collective action problems globally as well as an area of innovative (and strategic) responses by both state and non-state actors. It is a shame that we don't have the time to deal with this topic in tutorial, but if there is time to touch on this topic in Week 12, I would encourage you to take it.

Simulation activity (entire tutorial) – Week 2 of the Syria Peace Summit

Handout 3:

Joint Statement of Resolutions

We, the participants in multi-party negotiations at the Syria Peace Summit of May 2018, Australia (representing UNSC), Assad Regime, European Union (EU), Free Syria Army (FSA), Iran, ISIS, Jaysh al-Islam, Jordan, Kurdish PYD, Red Crescent (SARC), Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Nations (UN), United States (US), (and Israel if present) agree to undertake the resolutions stated below in relation to the Syrian civil conflict.

We acknowledge the diverse and conflicting positions of parties at the Peace Summit and are committed to mutual respect and negotiation as the basis for future relationships between parties.

I Regarding the lifting of sanctions

I.I. Outcome (*choose one*): total agreement, partial agreement, no agreement

I.II. In case of partial agreement:

(3) Which actors reached this agreement?

(4) Which actors abstained or objected?

I.III. Detailed outcome description:

II Regarding a post-conflict transition

II.I. Outcome (*choose one*): total agreement, partial agreement, no agreement

II.II. In case of partial agreement:

(3) Which actors reached this agreement?

(4) Which actors abstained or objected?

II.III. Detailed outcome description:

WEEK 11

Human rights

The three main goals of this tutorial are to (1) discuss the evolution of the human rights regime and make connections with this week's material and Week 9's material on international law (which has yet to be discussed because of the simulated conference; (2) a student debrief of the simulation; and (3) relatedly, a discussion of expectations for the response paper (it would be good to re-re-clarify any remaining questions about theories, etc.).

Simulation activity (20 minutes at end of tutorial)

Large group discussion with each student given an opportunity to discuss their experience of the simulation and of the Syria Peace Summit.

Guiding questions for debrief discussion:

- Did you actor achieve their key objective in the conference? Why? Why not?
- What was the hardest point for your actor to concede?
- In retrospect, would you have done anything differently, as your role?
- What was most enjoyable and/or most challenging for you in the simulation?

WEEK 12

Conclusion, future directions

The main goals for this final tutorial are to (1) discuss areas of future IR challenges and opportunities, (2) review the semester's topics and material to help them see how the topics fit together, and (3) help students prepare for the final exam. This is also your last opportunity to encourage students to complete their student survey forms. There is no simulation activity this week.

We have already a final exam guide for students, which should hopefully pre-empt many questions that might arise during the tutorial. We will not be having separate exam preparation meetings, but the last hour of lecture is an open question and answer session so that students can ask questions they might have and have them answered directly.