1. How may public opinion shape the decisions of leaders about war and peace? Discuss the role of the media in this relationship?

The students are here asked to reflect on how public opinion shapes the decisions of leaders to go to war. They have read an article by Tomz, Weeks and Mihlo (2020) arguing that there are two general mechanisms whereby leaders are influenced by public opinion (in their conflict behavior):

   a) *Selection: The types of leaders, and their preferences, are influenced by public opinion. Public opinion (particularly in democracies), affects WHO gets into office and what they do.*
   b) *Responsiveness: Leaders are responsive to public opinions about war. If the students refer to "audience costs" this is also fine.*

In the article, the authors also test these two mechanisms in survey experiments in Israel and the US finding some evidence.

Many students will probably discuss audience costs a lot for this question. That is very relevant. Good responses will discuss audience costs. If they mention "constraints" as a term instead of audience costs, that is fine. "Audience costs" refers to the fact that leaders incur costs from some "audience" (typically voters) when they make decisions about war and peace. If they start losing wars, or don't follow up on threats they make, or in general, pursue bad policies, they risk being removed by voters. This, according to the theory, makes leaders with high audience costs more credible in their dealings with other states (since they walk "tighter ropes"). Leaders vary in the degree to which they suffer audience costs. Some leader face few consequences from failed foreign policies, while others risk heavy penalties.

The media plays a crucial role in this relationship, since free and critical media is a precondition for leaders facing audience costs. In the article by Baum and Potter (2019), the authors argue that the decline of "traditional" media (Big tv stations, mainstream newspapers etc.) and the rise of media fragmentation and, in particular, social media, reduces audience costs. For example, social media and media fragmentation creates "partisan" media, where the leader is rarely held accountable to his/her core voters when making foreign policy mistakes (Trump may be an example). This raises the prospect that the rise of new media weakens the audience cost mechanism.

Excellent answers will raise all of these points in a clear and analytical way. Very good responses will mention many. Good responses will mention some of this and be on to the core of these arguments. Mediocre responses will touch on some of this in very superficial ways.

2. Present the bargaining theory of war. Discuss different aspects of war that this model can explain?

Good answers should here provide a brief outline of bargaining theory. The key curriculum for this question is Fearon's 1995 article. A good answer will mention the three factors that contribute to bargaining problems/war in Fearon's article: Indivisible issues, commitment problems, and uncertainty/private information. A very good answer explains the bargaining theory in a very clear way, showing strong insight into its logic. A very good answer might also point to some examples.

Very good answers will point to some empirical facts that bargaining theory help explain, such as that many wars are unexpected, that countries that are equal in power are more likely to fight, that decisive victories lead to more stable peace, etc.

3. What is the democratic peace? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different explanations for the dyadic democratic peace?

The democratic peace is the empirical regularity that pairs of democracies fight each other less often, even when accounting for many important background factors. That the democratic peace is "dyadic" simply refers to the fact that it obtains for pairs of countries rather than individual countries (democracies fight no less than dictatorships, but democracy pairs are more peaceful).

There are numerous explanations for the democratic peace, and many different ones have been highlighted in the lectures. Explanations that have been focused on in particular in the lectures are:

- *Cultural explanations: A culture of non-violent conflict resolution characterizes democracies and their behavior towards each other*
- *Audience cost explanations: Democratic executives face higher audience costs than autocratic executives, and they will thus be less capable of e.g., bluffing. This makes it easier for democracies to send credible signals about resolve, capabilities etc., that should reduce war prospects.*
- *Constraint explanations: Democratic leaders are more constrained by legislatures and voters, and face higher costs if they enter into "stupid wars". This incentivizes democratic leaders to be very sure about their chances of winning. When two democracies face each other, there will be an incentive (on the side of one of the parties) to back down from war.*

The course has explained each of these explanations, and argued that there is most empirical support for the constraint explanation. The students are invited to discuss how the constraint explanation also explains war between dictatorships: Weeks (2012) argues that personalist regimes have much less constrained leaders, while party regimes and military regimes are more constrained by their selectorates. This should lead personalist regimes to be particularly belligerent. She finds evidence consistent with this explanation.

A very good answer will discuss one or more of these explanations, and apply them to the question of the war behavior of dictatorships (beyond the democratic peace). The most obvious answer here is to explain the constraints explanation, and discuss Weeks' argument, but there are other ways to solve this assignment too.

4. Will the rise of China lead to war with the United States? Discuss how power transition theory may shed light on this question.

The key here is to use power transition theory to analyze the China-US transition theory. Power transition theory has been presented in the lecture, and the curriculum, and there is a discussion of the China-US transition on the curriculum, and it has also been discussed in the lecture on great power war. Power transition theory, simply stated, asserts that:

- Great power wars occur at regular intervals

- When a rising state that is dissatisfied with the status quo passes, or is about to pass, the mightiest state ("the hegemon") in power. The key here are the two variables "power transition" and

“satisfaction with the status quo”, where the Status Quo is defined as those formal and informal institutions that regulate international relations and often benefit the biggest power in the system. The students should reflect on how this general framework can be applied to the US-China relationship.