

# DOMINIC TIERNEY

Department of Political Science  
Swarthmore College  
500 College Avenue  
Swarthmore, PA 19081  
dtierne1@swarthmore.edu  
(610) 328-8097

## Professional Appointments

- 2011 – present Associate Professor of Political Science (with tenure),  
Swarthmore College
- 2018 – 2019 Templeton Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute,  
Philadelphia, PA (previously senior fellow)
- 2017 – 2018 Adjunct Scholar with the Modern War Institute at West Point
- 2017 Visiting Fellow in Residence, Perry World House, University of  
Pennsylvania
- 2016 Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science, University of  
Pennsylvania (previously visiting assistant professor, 2007 –  
2011)
- 2015 – present Contributing editor, *The Atlantic* (previously contributing writer)
- 2013 – present Non-resident fellow, Foreign Policy Institute, School for  
Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University
- 2012 Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science, Princeton  
University, Princeton, NJ
- 2008 – 2009 Research Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International  
Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard  
University
- 2005 – 2011 Assistant Professor of Political Science, Swarthmore College,  
Swarthmore, PA

- 2004 – 2005 Post-doctoral Fellow in National Security, John M. Olin  
Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge,  
MA
- 2003 – 2004 Post-doctoral Fellow, The Merhshon Center for International  
Security and Public Policy, Ohio State University, Columbus,  
OH

## Education

- Ph.D. International Relations, Nuffield College, Oxford University,  
UK, 2003. Dissertation entitled “FDR and the Spanish Civil  
War”. Supervisor Dr. Yuen Foong Khong
- Frank Knox Memorial Fellow, Harvard University, Cambridge,  
MA, 2000–2001
- M.Phil. International Relations (with distinction), Nuffield College,  
Oxford University, UK, 2000
- B.A. Modern History (with honors), Double-First Class (highest  
possible grade), St. Anne’s College, Oxford University, UK,  
1998

## Books

*The Right Way to Lose a War: America in an Age of Unwinnable Conflicts* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2015)

*How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2010)

*F.D.R. and the Spanish Civil War: Neutrality and Commitment in the Struggle that Divided America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007)

*Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics*, with Dominic Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006)

Winner of the International Studies Association “best book of the year” award; nominated for the “best book of the decade” award.

## Articles

- “The Negativity Bias in International Politics,” with Dominic Johnson, *International Security* (Winter 2018/2019)
- “The Two Vietnam Wars: American Approval for the Use of Force,” *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 2018)
- “The Weary Titan: The United States and the Fertile Crescent in a Post-Caliphate Era,” *Orbis*, Vol. 62, Issue 3 (Summer 2018): 487-501
- “Accidental Primacy: Balancing and the Path to Power,” *International Relations*, Vol. 32, Issue 2 (June 2018): 127-148
- “The Arsenal of Insurrection: Explaining Rising Support for Rebels,” with Ryan Grauer, *Security Studies*, Vol. 27, Issue 2 (May 2018): 263-295
- “Avoiding Nation-Building: From Nixon to Trump,” *Parameters*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2018): 25-36
- “Does America Need an Enemy?” *The National Interest* (November/December 2016): 53-60
- “The Backlash Against Nation-Building,” *Prism*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September 2015): 12-27
- “The Rise of Alien Warfare,” *The National Interest*, No. 136 (March/April 2015): 19-28
- “Is the Whole World on Fire?” Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Note (December 2014)
- “Mastering the Endgame of War,” *Survival*, Vol. 56, No. 5 (October/November 2014): 69-94
- “Gulliver’s Troubles: Great Powers and Failed States,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, E-Note (June 2012)
- “The Obama Doctrine and the Lessons of Iraq,” Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Note (May 2012)

H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable on Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War*, Vol. III, No. 9 (February 2012)

“Fighting While Talking in Afghanistan,” *Orbis*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Winter 2012): 171-186

“Multilateralism: America’s Insurance Policy Against Loss,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (December 2011): 655-678

“Crossing the Rubicon: The Perils of Committing to a Decision,” with Dominic Johnson, Policy Brief, Harvard Kennedy School (September 2011)

“The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Becomes the Point of No Return,” with Dominic Johnson, *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer 2011): 7-40

“Does Chain-Ganging Cause the Outbreak of War?” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (June 2011): 285-304

“Prisoner Dilemmas: The American Obsession with POWs and Hostages,” *Orbis*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Winter 2009/2010): 130-145

“America’s Quagmire Mentality,” *Survival*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Winter 2007/2008): 47-66

“‘Pearl Harbor in Reverse’: Moral Analogies in the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer 2007): 49-77

“Irrelevant or Malevolent? UN Arms Embargoes and Civil Wars,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31 (October 2005): 643-664

“Essence of Victory: Winning and Losing International Crises,” with Dominic Johnson, *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (October 2004): 350-381

“Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (July 2004): 299-313

## Articles Under Review

“Intelligent Failure in the U.S. Military,” under review

## Articles in Preparation

“A Democratic Embargo? Regime Type and Aid to Rebels in Civil Wars,”  
with Ryan Grauer, in preparation

“Ways of War: Why America Loses, and Russia and Iran Win,” in preparation

“Are We Entering a New Era of Geopolitics?” in preparation

“Underconfidence in International Politics,” with Dominic Johnson, in  
preparation

## Book Chapters

“The Ethics of an Unwinnable War,” in Andrew Hom, ed., *Moral Victories*  
(New York, Oxford University Press, 2017).

“Psychological Aspects of War,” with Iain Hardie and Dominic Johnson, in  
Chris Coyne and Rachel L. Mathers, eds., *The Handbook on the Political Economy  
of War* (Northampton, MA: Elgar, 2011), 72-94

“In the Eye of the Beholder: Victory and Defeat in U.S. Military Operations,”  
with Dominic Johnson, in Jan Angstrom and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, eds.,  
*Understanding Victory and Defeat in Contemporary War* (London: Routledge,  
2007), 46-76

## Book Reviews

Review of James Lebovic, *The Limits of U.S. Military Capability: Lessons from  
Vietnam and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), H-Diplo  
roundtable, Vol. II, No. 9 (June 2011)

Review of Ernest May and Phillip Zelikow, eds., *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas  
of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis* (Cambridge: MIT, 2007) in *Cold War  
History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (November 2008): 553-554

Review of Sergio Fabbrini, ed., *The United States Contested: American Unilateralism and European Discontent* (London: Routledge, 2006) in *Perspectives in Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2007): 406-407

Review of Alan P. Dobson, *US Economic Statecraft for Survival: Of Sanctions, Embargoes and Economic Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2002) in *Cold War History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (April 2004): 190-192

### **Contributing Editor at *The Atlantic***

I have written over 100 essays for *The Atlantic*, available at:  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/dominic-tierney/>

Selected recent articles:

“Russia’s Strength is its Weakness,” July 21, 2018

“America Keeps Accidentally Helping Iran,” May 9, 2018

“Human Rights are Largely Irrelevant to the Emerging Trump Doctrine,” November 14, 2017

“The Risks of Foreign Policy as Political Distraction” (June 15, 2017)

“What Does It Mean that Trump is ‘Leader of the Free World?’” (January 24, 2017)

“Trump, Putin and the Art of Appeasement” (December 15, 2016)

“The Twenty Years’ War” (August 23, 2016)

“How Not to Plan for the ‘Day After’ in Libya” (August 9, 2016)

“ISIS and the Loser Effect” (April 28, 2016)

“Who Really Lost Iraq?” (January 21, 2016)

“The Hidden Danger of Safe Zones in Syria” (November 10, 2015)

“ISIS Against Humanity” (October 12, 2015)

“Bashar al-Assad and the Devil’s Endgame” (September 28, 2015)

“Forgetting Afghanistan” (June 24, 2015)

“Why has America Stopped Winning Wars” (June 2, 2015)

“The Iran Nuclear Deal: Munich or Reykjavik?” (April 8, 2015)

### **Other Op-eds**

“The Upside of Down: How the U.S. Wins by Losing Wars,” *New York Observer*, July 8, 2015

“Mission Impossible in Afghanistan,” *Los Angeles Times*, 17 December 2010

“Jefferson’s Army of Nation-Builders,” *New York Times*, 10 November 2010

“The Wars of Perception,” with Dominic Johnson, *New York Times*, 28 November 2006

### **Conference Papers**

“A Democratic Embargo? Regime Type and Aid to Rebels in Civil Wars,” with Ryan Grauer, presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, August 2018

“The Ethics of an Unwinnable War,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Baltimore, February 2017

“Embracing Failure in the U.S. Military,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Baltimore, February 2017

“Multilateral Institutions and Credible Commitments,” with Ayse Kaya, presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Atlanta, February 2015

“The Arsenal of Insurrection: Explaining the Rising Tide of External Support for Rebels,” with Ryan Grauer, presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, September 2015

“The Two Vietnam Wars: Elite and Public Support for the Use of Force,” presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., August 2014

“The Negativity Bias in International Relations,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, March 2012

“Offensive and Defensive Chain-Ganging,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, March 2008

“Underconfidence in International Politics,” with Dominic Johnson, presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, August 2007

“Marching Across the Rubicon: Overconfidence and Preventive War,” with Dominic Johnson, presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, March 2007

“Multilateralism: America’s Insurance Policy Against Loss,” presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, August 2006

“Quagmire: American Defeatism in Civil War Interventions,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, CA, March 2006

“Perceptions of Victory in International Politics,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, March 2005

“Winning and Losing the War on Terror,” presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, March 2005

### **Invited Talks**

“America in an Age of Unwinnable Wars,” Mid-Coast Forum on Foreign Relations, March 2018

“World of Illusions,” Thayer Academy, February 2018

“The Future of Think Tanks,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 2018



- “The Trump Doctrine,” Philadelphia Committee on Foreign Relations, January 2018
- “Does America Need an Enemy?” Foreign Policy Research Institute, October 2017
- “The Trump Doctrine,” presentation to a delegation of NATO parliamentarians, Philadelphia, September 2017
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” World Affairs Council of Rhode Island, April 2017
- “The Trump Doctrine,” University of Pennsylvania, April 2017
- “The Bitter Peace,” University of Pennsylvania, April 2017
- “The Trump Doctrine,” Temple University, March 2017
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” Oxford University, February 2017
- “The Negativity Bias in International Relations,” Oxford University, February 2017
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” University of Michigan, December 2016
- “The Ethics of an Unwinnable War,” Villanova University, April 2016
- “The Syrian Civil War,” Temple University, April 2016
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” Roosevelt House, Hunter College, New York, February 2016
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” World Affairs Council of Rochester, November 2015
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” World Affairs Council of Denver, October 2015
- “The Future of NATO,” Senior NATO Leader meeting, Munich, September 2015
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” Bard College, July 2015
- “The Right Way to Lose a War,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, June 2015

“The Right Way to Lose a War,” World Affairs Council of Dallas, May 2015

“The Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan,” RAND Corporation, Washington DC, March 2015

“Is the Whole World on Fire?” Swarthmore College, December 2014

“The Right Way to Lose a War,” Bard College, New York, July 2014

“Mastering the Endgame of War,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, March 2014

“The Negativity Bias in International Relations,” Dartmouth College, May 2013

“The Negativity Bias in International Relations,” Columbia University, March 2013

“The Next Decade of American Foreign Policy,” National Liberty Museum, Philadelphia, March 2013

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, Princeton, February 2013

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Bard College, New York, December 5, 2012

“FDR and the Spanish Civil War,” New York Historical Society, November 2012

“The Obama Doctrine,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, March 2012

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Air War College, Montgomery, Alabama, January 2012

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Denver Eclectics, October 2011

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Denver City Club, October 2011

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” The Army Heritage Center, Carlisle, PA, September 2011

“The Obama Doctrine,” Manhattan Salon Series, Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 2011

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” World Affairs Council, Denver, February 2011

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, November 2010

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, November 2010

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” Meadowood Retirement Community, Worcester, PA, April 2010

“The Tradition of Nation-Building,” History Institute for Teachers, Wheaton, Illinois, April 2010

“How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War,” faculty lecture, Swarthmore College, March 2010

“Why Do We Have No Stomach for the Fight in Afghanistan?” University of Pennsylvania International Affairs Association, February 2010

“Prisoner Dilemmas: The American Obsession with POWs and Hostages,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, April 2009

“Warrior Nation: America’s Experience of War,” Belfer Center, Harvard University, March 2009

Invited participant, book workshop on Sebastian Rosato’s *Unite or Die*, Notre Dame, March 2009

“Multilateralism: America’s Insurance Policy Against Loss,” Department of Government, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, November 2007

“America’s Quagmire Mentality,” Reves Center for International Studies, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, November 2007

“Roosevelt, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Spanish Civil War,” Department of History, Boston College, Boston, MA, October 2006

“F.D.R. and the Spanish Civil War,” 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference on the Spanish Civil War, University of Salford, Manchester, UK, July 2006

### **Selected Academic Distinctions, Honors and Awards**

Templeton Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2018

Lang Fellowship for second semester funding, 2012-2013

Member, Consortium on Grand Strategy, organized by the Temple University’s Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy, and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2009-2011

James Michener Award for second semester funding, 2008-2009

Post-doctoral Fellowship, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2004-2005

Post-doctoral Fellowship, The Mershon Center for International Security and Public Policy, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, 2003-2004

Economic and Social Research Council Scholarship for Ph.D., London, UK, 2001-2003

Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt Research Grant, F.D.R. Library, Hyde Park, NY, 2001

Frank Knox Memorial Fellowship, Harvard University, 2000-2001

Economic and Social Research Council Scholarship for M. Phil., London, UK, 1998-2000

### **Teaching Experience**

Introduction to International Politics, instructor, Swarthmore College

American Foreign Policy, instructor, Swarthmore College

International Politics: War, Peace and Security (honors seminar), instructor,  
Swarthmore College

The Causes of War, instructor, Swarthmore College

American Foreign Policy, instructor, Princeton University

American Foreign Policy, lecturer (with multiple teaching assistants),  
University of Pennsylvania

Introduction to International Politics (honors), instructor, The Ohio State  
University, Columbus, OH, Spring 2004

The United States and the Vietnam War, teaching fellow for Ernest May,  
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, Spring 2001

Tutorials in international politics and international history (to 40-50 students  
from Oxford University, Stanford University, Williams College and Columbia  
University), Oxford University, UK, 1999-2003

### **Selected Media Appearances**

Interviewed by the *Toronto Star* about Syria, September 2015

Interviewed on MSNBC, “Radio Times,” and “The Brian Lehrer Show” about  
*The Right Way to Lose a War*, June 2015

Interviewed on “Radio Times” about Obama and the Middle East, February  
2015

Interviewed on CNN about Ukraine, February 2014

Interviewed on MSNBC and CNN about Syria, August 2013

Interviewed on MSNBC about war with Iran, March 11, 2012

Radio interviews about *How We Fight* on NPR’s “All Things Considered,”  
“Radio Times,” and “The Ron Owens Show”

Interviewed by *Time* magazine about *How We Fight*  
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2038003,00.html>

Interviewed by the *Washington Post*, March 2010

Interviewed by *The New Republic* fall 2008.

Interviewed about *Failing to Win*, WYPR (NPR Station in Baltimore),  
December 2006

Interviewed about events in contemporary American foreign policy by the  
*Buffalo Times*, *Delaware County Times*

### **Membership in Professional Associations**

American Political Science Association  
International Studies Association

### **Referee Activity**

*American Political Science Review*  
*International Security*  
*American Journal of Political Science*  
*International Studies Quarterly*  
*European Journal of International Relations*  
*Journal of Cold War Studies*  
*Journal of Contemporary History*  
*Security Studies*  
*Political Science Quarterly*

### **College Service**

Self-Study Committee  
Aydelotte Foundation Committee  
Committee on Academic Requirements  
Fellowships and Prizes Committee  
Institutional Review Board  
Cooper Committee for the Arts  
Peace and Conflict Studies Committee  
Foreign Study Review Committee  
Observer, Board of Governors