

# Theories of International Relations

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Date: TBD

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## Course Description

In this advanced course, we will explore various theories used to explain international conflict and cooperation. The two main objectives for this course are: 1) to supply students with a broad range of concepts and theories useful for making sense of international politics and approaching problems in international relations analytically, and 2) familiarize students with international history and to use this knowledge to evaluate and inform their understanding of contemporary foreign policy and international events.

To aid these goals, this course will survey a broad range of theories and concepts used to study international war and peace. It is further organized to walk students through the history of international relations, from the ancient interstate systems, to the formation of the modern international system, to the two World Wars, and finally to contemporary problems faced in the post-Cold War era. In both lectures and writing assignments, students will take theories illustrated with historical examples and apply them to current issues in international affairs. Central questions that we will address along the way include: Why do states wage war? Is large-scale interstate war becoming obsolete? What explains longterm cooperation among states? Is it possible to use these mechanisms to promote a permanent peace among the great powers? What challenges does terrorism pose to states and the international system?

## Course Requirements

### 1. Attendance Participation (10% of grade)

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class, and this comprises the majority of your attendance and participation grade. Lectures will often cover lots of material, some of it complicated or unfamiliar, so feel free to interrupt me with questions about the material as we progress.

**2. Short Papers (25% of grade)**

Students will select four weeks to write a 2 page paper based on the readings. Since most weeks cover historical periods (weeks 2 thru 13), students will take the theories and concepts outlined in the readings for the week and apply them to a contemporary international event (within the past five years). Students are required to select a different event for each short paper and can consult with me if they are uncertain about the appropriateness of a topic. Readings and further information on how to write a good short paper will be provided online.

**3. Essay (25% of grade)**

Approximately halfway through the semester, students will be presented with two essay prompts. Each student is responsible for answering one of the two prompts. Students are expected to draw upon course material, although seeking outside sources is encouraged. I will provide further information on how to write a strong paper (e.g. style, argument, citation practices) online before the paper topics are assigned. Papers are due at the beginning of the final class.

**4. Final Exam (40% of grade)**

Students will be assigned a take home final exam, which they will have exactly one day (24 hours) to complete. The exam is open book, and better answers will bring in course material and demonstrate an ability to appropriately use the concepts and examples from the lectures and readings. The exam is a combination of short answer and essay questions, and each section will allow students to choose one of several questions to answer.

## Course Schedule and Readings

**Week 1: Introduction**

- Kenneth Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove: Waveland Press. Chapter 1.
- Steven Walt. 2005. "The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 8: 23-48.
- Dan Reiter. 2003. "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1): 27-43.

**Week 2: Realism**

- Kenneth Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove: Waveland Press. Chapters 5 and 6.
- Victoria Hui. 2004. "Toward a Dynamic Theory of International Politics: Insights from Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe." *International Organization* 58(1): 175-205.
- Robert Gilpin. 1988. "The Theory of Hegemonic War." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18(4): 591-613.

- Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*. (Selected Pages).

### Recommended

- Mark Lewis. 1999. "Warring States: Political History." *Cambridge History of Ancient China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Week 3: Domestic Politics

- Immanuel Kant. 1795. "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch."
- Bruce Russett and William Antholis. 1992. "Do Democracies Fight Each Other? Evidence from the Peloponnesian War." *Journal of Peace Research* 29(4): 415-434.
- Andrew Moravcsik. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51(4): 512-553
- David Sobek. 2005. "Machiavelli's Legacy: Domestic Politics and International Conflict."

### Recommended

- George Modelski. 1964. "Kautilya: Foreign Policy and International System in the Ancient Hindu World." *American Political Science Review* 58(3): 549-560.

### Week 4: Hierarchy and Order in World Politics

- David Lake. 1996. "Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations." *International Organization* 50(1): 1-33.
- David Kang. 2010. "Hierarchy and Legitimacy in International Systems: The Tribute System in Early Modern East Asia." *Security Studies* 19(4): 591-622.
- Daniel Deudney. 1995. "The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, Circa 1787-1861." *International Organization* 49(2): 191-228.
- William Wohlforth et al. 2007. "Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History." *European Journal of International Relations* 13(2): 155-185.

### Recommended

- Michael Smith. 2001. "The Aztec Empire and the Mesoamerican World System." *Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Week 5: Constructivism

- Alexander Wendt. 1992. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46(2): 391-425.
- Mlada Bukovansky. 1997. "American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812." *International Organization* 51(2): 209-243.

- Brent Steele. 2005. "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-Identity: British Neutrality and the American Civil War." *Review of International Studies* 31(3): 519-540.
- Colin Elman. 2004. "Extending Offensive Realism: The Louisiana Purchase and America's Rise to Regional Hegemony." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 563-576.

### Recommended

- Federalist Numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5.

### Week 6: Ideas

- Emanuel Adler. 1997. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3): 319-361.
- Daniel Philpott. 2000. "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations." *World Politics* 52(2): 206-425.
- Eric Chaney. 2013. "Revolt on the Nile: Economic Shocks, Religion, and Political Power." *Econometrica* 81(5): 2033-2053.
- Daniel Nexon. 2009. *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8.

### Recommended

- Leo Gross. 1948. "The Peace of Westphalia, 1648–1948." *American Journal of International Law* 42(1): 20-41.
- Benno Teschke. 1998. "Geopolitical Relations in the European Middle Ages: History and Theory." *International Organization* 52(2): 325-358.

### Week 7: Cooperation and Interdependence

- Robert Axelrod. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. Cambridge: Basic Books. Chapters 3 and 4.
- Elinor Ostrom. 1997. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review* 92(1): 1-22.
- Keir Lieber. 2007. "The New History of WWI and What it Means for International Relations Theory." *International Security* 32(2): 155-191.
- Erik Gartzke and Yonatan Lupu. 2012. "Trading on Preconceptions: Why World War I Was Not a Failure of Economic Interdependence." *International Security*. 36(4): 115-150.

### Recommended

- Christopher Clark. 2012. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. New York: Harper.

**Week 8: Institutions**

- Robert Keohane. 1988. "International Institutions: Two Approaches." *International Studies Quarterly* 32(4): 379-396.
- Mark Mazower. 2004. "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950." *The Historical Journal* 47(2): 379-398.
- John Mearsheimer. 1994. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19(3): 5-49.
- Martha Finnemore. 1993. "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy." *International Organization* 47(4): 565-597.

**Recommended**

- Hans Kelsen. 1951. "Recent Trends in the Law of the United Nations." *Social Research* 18(2): 135-151.

**Week 9: Territory and War**

- John Vasquez. 2009. *The War Puzzle Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.
- Susan Sample. 2016. "Anticipating War? War Preparations and the Steps to War Thesis." *British Journal of Political Science* (forthcoming).
- Monica Toft. 2014. "Territory and War." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 185-198.
- John Vasquez and Douglas Gibler. 2001. "The Steps to War in Asia, 1931-45." *Security Studies* 10(3): 1-45.

**Recommended**

- Saburo Ienaga. 1993. "The Glorification of War in Japanese Education." *International Security* 18(3): 113-133.

**Week 10: Norms**

- Martha Finnemore Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* 52(4): 887-917.
- Scott Sagan. 1996. "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb." *International Security* 21(3): 54-86.
- Richard Price. "A Genealogy of the Chemical Weapons Taboo." *International Organization* 49(1): 73-103.
- Jacques Hymans. 2006. *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

**Recommended**

- Larry Gerber. 1982. "The Baruch Plan and the Origins of the Cold War." *Diplomatic History* 6(1): 69-96.

**Week 11: Psychology**

- Robert Jervis. 1968. "Hypotheses on Misperception." *World Politics* 20(3): 454-479.
- Charles Duelfer and Stephen Dyson. "Chronic Misperception and the Iraq War." *International Security* 36(1): 73-100.
- Jack Levy. 1992. "An Introduction to Prospect Theory." *Political Psychology* 13(2): 171-186.
- Mark Haas. 2001. "Prospect Theory and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *International Studies Quarterly* 45(2): 241-270.

**Recommended**

- G. John Ikenberry and Peter Trubowitz. 2015. *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 12.

**Week 12: Unipolarity**

- William Wolhorth. 1999. "The Stability of a Unipolar World." *International Security* 24(1): 5-41.
- Jeffrey Legro. 2007. "What Will China Want? The Future Intentions of a Rising Power." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(3): 515-534.
- Nuno Monteiro. 2012. "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity is Not Peace." *International Security* 36(3): 9-40.
- Thomas Christensen. "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and US Policy Toward East Asia." *International Security* 31(1): 81-126.

**Recommended**

- Susan Shirk. 2007. *China: Fragile Superpower*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

**Week 13: International Society**

- Barry Buzan. 2001. "The English School: An Underexploited Resource in IR." *Review of International Studies* 27(3): 471-488.
- Barak Mendelsohn. 2005. "Sovereignty Under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al-Qaeda Network." *Review of International Studies* 31(1): 45-68.
- William Brenner. 2016. *Confounding Powers: Anarchy and International Society from the Assassins to Al Qaeda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 5.

- Barry Buzan. 2006. "Will the 'Global War on Terrorism' be the New Cold War?" *International Affairs* 82(6): 1101-1118.

### **Recommended**

- Daniel Byman. 2003. "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?" *World Politics* 56(1): 139-163.

### **Week 14: Future of IR**

- Steven Pinker, Bradley Thayer, Jack Levy, and William Thompson. 2013. "The Forum: The Decline of War." *International Studies Review* 15(3): 396-419.
- Francis Fukuyama. 1989. "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16: 3-18.
- Katja Grace, John Salvatier, Allan Dafoe, Baobao Zhang, and Owain Evans. "When Will AI Exceed Human Performance? Evidence from AI Experts." *Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research* 62: 729-754.
- Nick Bostrom. 2013. "Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority." 4(1): 15-31.

### **Recommended**

- Samuel Huntington. 1992. "The Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs* 72: 22-49.

### **Week 15: Final Exam**