

POSC 378

International Relations Theory

Spring 2009

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES:

The central substantive aim of the course is to develop an understanding of how different theories explain international relations and which are most persuasive. This task often has no single simple "right" answer and as a consequence there is ample room for debate. Nevertheless, each approach has its own logic and corresponding strengths and weaknesses; therefore, our goal is to identify what these are and to understand how the various theories compare to one another.

Theories are important because they determine how we view the world and therefore how we respond to it. In other words, theories drive action. Each of the approaches comes with a particular set of answers as to why states and individuals behave as they do. As citizens and future government officials, your votes and policies will be driven by the particular ideas you believe are right and appropriate. As a consequence, it is important to recognize what your beliefs are and to consider whether they accurately explain how the world operates.

While we are exploring the realm of international relations theory, this course also aims to develop your ability to think analytically and to write clearly and persuasively. You will need to concisely evaluate the merits of the various theories in relation to each other in a number of written assignments.

Finally, this is not a lecture course. I am not going to be telling you about the readings while you passively listen. Rather class will be more interactive and your participation in class discussions and group work will be absolutely essential.

REQUIRED READINGS

All of the readings for the course will be available through the library's course reserves (<http://library.case.edu/ksl//reserves/index.html>).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Your main responsibilities will be: to have completed all of the required reading prior to class, and your theory journal entries. Informed, quality participation is necessary during discussions, group work, etc. It is essential that you come to class having done

the readings, and ready to talk about them –simply being present does not earn you a high participation grade.

Class attendance, preparation, and participation are essential crucial and therefore make up a significant portion of your final grade. While I will do a fair amount of talking each class to introduce, provide context to, and summarize ideas, more often I will be posing questions, which I expect you to answer. On occasion, we will do exercises, and there will be group discussions. You are required to do the readings before the class for which they are assigned and be fully prepared to talk about them.

Theory Journals: All students are required to keep a theory journal or a record of a part of the readings in a bound notebook dedicated solely to this assignment (i.e. do not also use it for notes for this class or any other class). After you have completed the reading(s) for the day, you need to reflect upon what you have read and create an entry for each author in your theory journal. Each entry must consist of a brief (few sentence) summary of the author's main argument. In addition, for most readings (I will inform you if there are any exceptions), you must also create a causal diagram of the author's main argument, which includes the causal factor(s) (i.e. independent variables), the behavior being explained (dependent variable), and all intervening variables (factors that mediate the effect of the independent and dependent variable). In other words, you will diagram what the author is trying to explain and the causal sequence he/she uses to create that explanation. Journals will be collected *only* at the beginning of class on a random basis and graded. Your grade will depend on whether you are keeping the journal up to date, and not on whether your diagrams are accurate. Nevertheless, it will help you, and I expect you, to make corrections to your diagrams and summaries as necessary. You must complete your journal entries on your own. This is an individual exercise that is intended to help you to think critically. You CANNOT work with someone else on this assignment. If different students' journal entries are identical or suspiciously similar, their grades will suffer (and the incident will be treated as a case of cheating).

Short Papers: You will write two brief but demanding, essays on questions that will be tasked to consider. I will hand out instructions on exactly what I expect from these papers when they are assigned. Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late papers will be marked down by 1/3 a grade (e.g., A goes to A-) for every day that they are late. If a paper is not turned in at the beginning of class, it will be penalized 1/3 of a grade, and at midnight every night if it is still not turned in another 1/3 of a grade will be deducted.

Group Project: At the end of the semester, the class will be divided into groups, and every group will be assigned a few articles about terrorism or other non-traditional IR topics. Each group will be required to present on their articles and to turn in a written assignment. You will receive more information about this project as the time approaches.

CURRENT EVENTS

Each class will begin with a brief discussion of related current events. Because understanding current events is critical to the study of international relations, I require that you read the international or world section of at least one newspaper daily.

Appropriate news sources include but are not limited to the: *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Economist*, *Guardian*, *LA Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Times (London)*. However, since the focus of the class is on theory, I will ask that we only discuss current events that somehow relate to the theories we have studied. Each student will be required to present a news story to the class, at least once, and to write a paragraph summary, describing the event and why it is pertinent for the course. The news presentations will count towards the class participation grade.

GRADES: Student performance will be assessed on the following basis:

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Group Project	20%
Participation	20%
Theory Journal	20%

Monday January 12: Introduction

Stephen Walt: "International Relations: One World Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998

This is not required by highly recommended, especially if you have not taken another IR course.

Wednesday January 14: What is Theory

Steven Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, pp. 7-15, 17-21

Kenneth M. Waltz, *Man the State and War*, pp. 1-15

REALISM AND THE SECURITY DILEMMA

Friday January 16: Neorealism

Kenneth M. Waltz, "The Anarchic Structure of World Politics"

Kenneth M. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 116-228 ONLY

Kenneth M. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory"

Monday January 19: MLK Jr. Day NO CLASS

Wednesday January 21: Offensive Realism

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Chapter 2

Friday January 23: NO CLASS

Monday January 26: Realists as Optimists?

Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics*, 50:1

Wednesday January 28: Neoclassical Realism

Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies*, 7:1

Friday January 30: Dynamic Differential Theory

Dale Copeland, *The Origins of Major War*, Chapter 1

Monday February 2: Reassurance in Realist Theory

Evan Braden Montgomery, "Breaking Out of the Security Dilemma: Realism, Reassurance, and the Problem of Uncertainty," *International Security* 31:2

Wednesday February 4: PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Discussion of papers

STRATEGIC INTERACTION

Friday February 6: Rational Choice Theory in IR

David A. Lake and Robert Powell, "International Relations: A Strategic-Choice Approach"

Monday February 9: Game Theory and Cooperation

Arthur Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World," *International Organization*, 36:2

Wednesday February 11:

Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Chapter 2

Friday February 13: Neoliberal Institutionalism

Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*, Chapter 6

Monday February 16: NO CLASS

Wednesday February 18 Psychological Approaches

Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception" *World Politics*, 20:3

Friday February 20: Prospect Theory

Robert Jervis, "The Political Implications of Loss Aversion," *Political Psychology*, 13:2

THE LIBERAL CHALLENGE TO REALISM

Monday February 23: Liberalism A Unified Paradigm?

Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization*, 51:4

Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Part I

Jeff Frieden, "Sectoral Conflict and Foreign Economic Policy, 1914-1940," *International Organization*, 42:1

Wednesday February 25: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Part II

Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, *The Israel Lobby*

Friday February 27: Two Level Games

Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42:3

Monday March 2: Application of Two Level Games

Robert S. Ross, "The Diplomacy of Tiananmen: Two-Level Bargaining and Great Power Cooperation," *Security Studies*, 10:2

Wednesday March 4: Ideology and Alliances

Mark L. Haas, "Ideology and Alliances: British and French External Balancing Decisions in the 1930s," *Security Studies*, 12:4

Friday March 6: Democratic Peace the Classic Version

Bruce Russett, "Why Democratic Peace,"

March 9-13 Spring Break

Monday March 16: The Democratic Peace Reinterpreted

John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces the Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19:2

Wednesday March 18: Signaling Games and the DPT

Kenneth A. Schultz, "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises," *American Political Science Review*, 92:4

Friday March 20: Credible Commitments and the DPT & a Statistical Critique

Charles Lipson, *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace*, Introduction

Henry S. Farber and Joanne Gowa, "Politics and Peace," *International Security*, 20:2

Monday March 23: Skeptics

Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Autumn 1994)

Wednesday March 25: Skeptics

Sebastian Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of the Democratic Peace Theory," *American Political Science Review*, 97:4

Friday March 27: Skeptics

Ido Oren, "The Subjectivity of the 'Democratic' Peace: Changing U.S. Perceptions of Imperial Germany," *International Security*, 20:2

Monday March 30: PAPERS DUE at the beginning of class
Discussion

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Wednesday April 1: Constructivist Critique of Waltz

Alexander Wendt, excerpts from *Anarchy is What States Make of It*

Dale Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural realism: A Review Essay," *International Security*, 25:2

Friday April 3: NO CLASS

Monday April 6: Identity

Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, Chapter 1

Wednesday April 8: Ideas Influencing Policy and Even Interests?

Audie Klotz, "Norms Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions Against South Africa," *International Organization*, 49: 3

Friday April 10: Symbolic Arab Politics

Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics*, Chapter 2

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Monday April 13

Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics," *International Organization*, 32:4

Wednesday April 15:

James R. Kurth, "The Political Consequences of the Product Cycle: Industrial History and Political Outcomes," *International Organization*, 33:1

Friday April 17:

Stephen Walt, *Revolution and War*

Monday April 20: Group Work

Wednesday April 22: Group Work

Friday April 24: Group Presentations

Monday April 27: Group Presentations