DESCRIPTION

This undergraduate course provides an overview of the field of international relations theory. We will survey various ways in which it has been organized over the past thirty years: levels of analysis (individual, societal, international); subfields (international security, international political economy, international organization, foreign policy); and the paradigm debate (realism, liberalism, neoliberal institutionalism, constructivism). We will then move to a broad discussion of the sources of international political order to examine how such factors as globalization, nuclear weapons, democracy, empire, international organizations, the distribution of military power among states, transnational activists, and terrorists shape how governments interact with each other.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be two main requirements for this course. First, you will be expected to attend class, keep up with the assigned readings, participate in our discussions, and complete regular written assignments. Second, you will write three papers (1500 to 2000 words each)—two due during the semester (October 6 and November 8) and the other due during our assigned final time (December 9 at 11 a.m.). The topic of each of these essays will be distributed a week in advance of the due date.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, participation, and quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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READING MATERIALS

The reading material for this course will be made available through two primary formats. First, our course blackboard site will contain electronic copies of our assigned article readings. Second, the following required text is available at the University Co-op bookstore.

COURSE GOALS

Our focus in this class will be on the abstract or what some people might call the view of international politics from 30,000 feet. I want to get you thinking (i.e. criticizing, applying, extending) about explanatory “models” of international politics that generate intellectual leverage, or quite simply can explain broad patterns of social behavior with just a few variables or concepts. This might be new for many of you. This is not going to be a class designed to get you to memorize a bunch of facts about international relations so that you can succeed on a multiple choice exam. It is not about giving you the answers. I instead I will raise challenging questions that have been debated (sometimes quite ineffectively) for centuries and then teach one style by which you can generate your own answers. In short, you will be graded on the effectiveness of your original written arguments, not on whether you can regurgitate what you have read or what I have said.

Build on this broad teaching approach, here is a set of more specific goals for our semester.

1. Enhance your understanding of the big questions in the study of international politics. Drawing on a variety of theoretical approaches, we will explore such questions as why do states go to war? How does globalization shape political relations between states? Did the age of imperialism ever end? How effective are international organizations, like the United Nations? Is terrorism altering the structure of international politics?

2. Enhance your ability to think in the abstract i.e. theoretically. All of our discussions and your written assignments will be oriented around this.

3. Sharpen your reading skills. The goal of your reading should not be to finish the article or the chapter. Instead it should be to prepare yourself to think critically and originally about the questions, theoretical claims, evidence, and implications of the material you have read. To this end, you will complete a series of short writing assignments designed to get you ready to participate actively in class discussions on our readings.

4. Sharpen your writing skills. You will get to practice this often—both in short assignments of (200 to 300 words) and longer essays (1500 to 2000 words). You will be asked to follow the basic format (handout will be given on this) that most political scientists now utilize to present their arguments.

COURSE POLICIES

This will be a discussion-intensive class. You will be given repeated opportunities to engage with me and your fellow classmates over the issues we cover. I strongly believe that students take more away from this class when granted such opportunities for active learning. In short, you should come to class having read and thought about the materials to be discussed for the day. And you should expect to be called upon to present your thoughts and ideas.

This format necessarily creates mutual obligations among students to come to class prepared to discuss both the readings and the lecture materials. If only a few people in a group or the class are regularly doing the reading, our discussions will stumble as the bulk of students rely on a minority to carry them. Such a situation risks penalizing those students doing the readings as they then are pushed to shoulder more responsibility in class. To avoid this situation while
fostering a stimulating and productive intellectual environment in class, I have established the following rules to ensure that all students meet these obligations to each other.

**Attendance and participation**…will be tracked daily throughout the semester with multiple mechanisms—sign-in sheets, the quality of your classroom participation, and short writing assignments. These shorting writing assignments will often be what I call a reading journal. These are 100-150 word summaries that should do the following: identify the key question that the author is trying to answer, the primary theoretical argument by the author(s), and a sample of the most important empirical evidence the author offers for his/her claims. Your summary of the theoretical argument should include the independent (or causal) variable, what the dependent (or thing to be explained is), and the causal mechanism(s) that link the independent and dependent variables. Even though they will not be collected every class, these summaries should be typed and ready to be turned in at every class. If you do not have the assignments with you to be turned in when they are collected, you will not receive credit for that portion of the attendance and participation grade. *I will hand out these short assignments (which will often mean just me saying “do a reading journal” for the next class) in the class prior to which they are due.*

You will be expected to **participate** in class discussions and demonstrate that you have done the readings by performing such tasks as summarizing the main arguments, critiquing an author’s claims, drawing out policy implications, suggesting how an author’s argument may apply to another issue area, or highlighting similarities and differences with other readings.

Attendance and participation points cannot be made up under any circumstances, including excused absences. However, each student in the class will receive a one time bonus at the end of the semester of two times the average daily points for this component of your grade. For example, if there are 150 attendance and participation points for the semester and these points were checked on 25 class days, then the average daily point total is six. All students would receive a bonus of 12 points to account for excused and unexcused absences.

“**Scholastic dishonesty**…includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act” (Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*).

If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and the following website ([http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/academicintegrity.html](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/academicintegrity.html)). Any student that violates this policy will fail this course and have the details of the violation reported to Student Judicial Services.

**Grade appeals**…This process must be initiated by your written explanation of why the decisions behind the assignment of your grade should be revisited. You will have one week after an assignment has been handed back to submit this written explanation. After that period, all grades will be considered final and any discussion that we might have will be restricted to how you can do better on the next assignment. Once you have submitted your written request, I will decide whether to regrade your entire assignment.

Please keep in mind that your past performance in other classes taken here at the University is not germane to any grading decisions made in my class. Consequently, if receiving a D in my class
places you on academic probation, this does not constitute a viable justification for requesting the regrading of any assignment.

**Grade appeals also cannot be made on the basis of being “close” to a letter grade. Cutoffs between letter grades will be strictly observed according to guidelines listed below. Note:**

*these already include appropriate rounding:*

92.5-100 A; 89.5-92.5 A-; 86.5-89.5 B+; 82.5-86.5 B; 79.5-82.5 B-; 76.5-79.5 C+; 72.5-76.5 C;
69.5-72.5 C-; 66.5-69.5 D+; 62.5-66.5 D; 59.5-62.5 D-; 0-59.5 F

*Changes to the syllabus*…I may make minor changes to the syllabus. These will be announced at least a week in advance.

*Late papers*…will be penalized up to a full letter grade for every day they are late.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/).

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Wednesday, 8/25**
Introduction to International Relations Theory

**Friday, 8/27**
No class


**I. Thinking Theoretically**

**Monday, 8/30**
Thinking theoretically in IR

Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, ch. 1

**II. Anarchy: separating IR from the rest of political science**

**Wednesday, 9/1**
Anarchy 1

Friday, 9/3
No class

Read the following to be discussed on Monday 9/13


Monday, 9/6
Labor Day—no class

Wednesday, 9/8
Anarchy 2


Friday, 9/10
Anarchy 3


III. Organizing the Field of International Relations

IIIa. By subfield

Monday, 9/13
Big questions in International Security, International Political Economy, International Organization, and Foreign Policy

Review readings assigned for 9/3 and

IIIb. Levels of Analysis

Wednesday, 9/15
The third level of analysis


Friday, 9/17
The second level of analysis


Monday, 9/20
The first level of analysis


IIIc. The paradigms

Wednesday, 9/22
Realism


Friday, 9/24
Liberalism


Monday, 9/27
Constructivism

**Wednesday, 9/29**  
Neoliberal Institutionalism


**Friday, 10/1**  
Critiquing realism


**Monday, 10/4**  
Critiquing the paradigm debate

Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 1

**Wednesday, 10/6**  
**Paper 1 due**

IV. An alternative way to organize study of international relations: sources of international political order

IVa. International political order as a self-enforcing bargain

**Friday, 10/8**  
Domestic political orders


Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 2

**Monday, 10/11**  
Violence and the emergence of political order

Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 3

**Wednesday, 10/13**  
Bargaining and war

Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 4
Friday, 10/15
Commitment problems as an impediment to peaceful bargains

Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 5

Monday, 10/18
Sustaining international settlements I: three interlocking bargains

Wagner, *War and the State*, ch. 6

Wednesday, 10/20
Sustaining international settlements II: three interlocking bargains (ctd)


Friday, 10/22
Sustaining international settlements III: three interlocking bargains (ctd)


IVb. Sources of variation in international bargains (international political order)

Monday, 10/25
Globalization I


Wednesday, 10/27
Globalization II


Friday, 10/29
Technology I

Monday, 11/1
Technology II


Wednesday, 11/3
Democracy


Friday, 11/5
Distribution of power I


Monday, 11/8
**Paper 2 due**

Wednesday, 11/10
Distribution of power II


Friday, 11/12
Distribution of power III


Monday, 11/15
Empire I


Wednesday, 11/17
Empire 2

Friday, 11/19
International Organizations 1


Monday, 11/22
International Organizations 2


Wednesday, 11/24
International Organizations 3


Friday, 11/26
No class—Thanksgiving break

Monday, 11/29
New actors I: transnational activists


Wednesday, 12/1
New actors II: Terrorism


Friday, 12/3
New actors (collectives) III: networks