

International Relations 500
International Relations Theory
Spring 2012
Monday 9-12
Professor Brian Rathbun
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This course serves as an introduction to the main approaches and issues in the study of international relations. More than the other subdisciplines, IR research is guided by paradigms, particular ways of looking at international relations. This course is organized around them. For better or for worse, most debates over substantive and empirical issues are seen through these lenses. Understanding them will give us the necessary foundation for an investigation of some of the major topics of international relations research. As it is a theoretical course, our empirical coverage of the main events of international relations will be incidental. However, after successful completion of this course, you should have a strong sense about how to approach any empirical problem from multiple angles as well as a good notion of where IR has been and where it is going.

The class should also be useful to those in other subdisciplines. These paradigms can and have been fruitfully applied to questions in American and comparative politics and even political theory. And practical policy-making is also served by a strong theoretical background. Decision-makers are always guided by some theoretical ideas about the world in which they operate, even if they are largely implicit. By being aware of them and assessing their validity, we become better potential policy-makers. The focus will be on the great questions of international relations, such as war and cooperation, and as such the course will tilt towards security rather than international political economy although the latter will receive considerable attention.

Course reading:

Reading in the course is heavy and intense. This is not a class for the faint-hearted, or those with only a passing interest in theory-building. All readings except the Eichengreen book will be posted in the Course Documents section of Blackboard. I have paid special care to giving you a view of the diversity of the field with provocative pieces. Readings are listed in the order that I would suggest tackling them, but this is ultimately up to you. *Pay attention to starred articles, as this indicates that I have only assigned a portion of the text to read, not the entire piece.*

Office hours:

I will hold office hours in VKC 304 between 1-2pm on Monday and Wednesday, other times by appointment.

Course assignments:

Your grade will be made up of the following components:

25% Participation, which will be graded partly on the basis of the quality of your insights, but *effort* is more important. It is better to be wrong than quiet. And as you will see, even professionals are wrong a lot in IR theory.

30% Take-home midterm on the first seven weeks of course material, which is primarily theoretical. The exam will be handed out on February 20, *due one week later on February 27 by the start of class*. Requests for extensions should be discussed well in advance.

30% Research Paper: 30-35 page research paper. Students will choose a question, develop hypotheses, and evidence. Paper is due on week after the end of class, April 30 by 9am *via email*.

10% Class Presentation: You will present your preliminary question, hypotheses, and research design for your final paper during weeks 13 and 14. You will distribute a draft of these sections on your paper one week before class. Other students will read beforehand and bring constructive criticism to class.

5% Talk Attendance: Students will attend one academic talk, write up a summary and critique of 3-5 pages. Talks should have some theoretical component.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction (January 9)

Week 2: The Cleavages (January 16)

What do international relations scholars argue about? This session will focus on ways to organize the main approaches to international relations and the theoretical differences between them. We will focus on the level analysis, objective and subjective perception and structure vs. agency. At what level do the main forces of international relations operate? Beyond a state's borders or within? Both? To what degree is their choice in international relations? Can individuals, groups, or states change how states interact? Do individuals, groups and states see the international system similarly or is it ambiguous? Is there a material reality or is it constructed? The answers to these ontological questions (that is, what does the world look like?) have epistemological and methodological implications (that is, what can we know about the world and how should be begin to study it?). We will discuss these as well.

Gabriel A. Almond and Stephen J. Genco, "Clocks, Clouds and the Study of Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1977), pp. 489-511, 518-522*.

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), ch. 4.

David Welch, *Painful Choices: A Theory of Foreign Policy Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 11-29.

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Defending the West: Occidentalism and the Formation of NATO," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2003), pp. 228-233.*

E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (New York: Harper, 1964), pp. 11-22.

Week 3: Early Realism and Its Critics (January 23)

During this week we will read some "classic" works of modern realism, the first real paradigm of international relations, as well as some of the earliest and most trenchant critiques by liberals, idealists and the English school. As the name implies, realism claims to speak the truth about the grim realities of power politics in a dangerous world. Concerns

about power, security and national interests dominate. The other works in this list highlight themes and criticisms taken up by other paradigms, such as the prospect of cooperation under anarchy, the role of domestic politics and the importance of ideas and morality in world politics. All of these will be of continuing concern as we move through the semester.

Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), chs. 1-2.

E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis* (New York: Harper, 1964), pp. 63-95.

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979), ch. 5.

Richard Matthew and Mark Zacher, "Liberal International Relations Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands," in Charles Kegley (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), pp. 107-50.

Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 3-26, 38-50.*

David Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3-29.

Week 4: Contemporary Realism (January 30)

In recent years, realism has splintered into a number of different subgroups. Structural realists distinguish between offensive and defensive variants, while neoclassical realists jettison some of Waltz's assumptions about the power of structure and the unimportance of domestic politics and foreign policy and call for a return to realism's classical roots. This has led some critics to question whether realism has any coherence at all.

Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (1998): 144-172.

Daryl Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 8-33.*

Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), excerpts.

Matthew Kroenig, "Exporting the Bomb: Why States Provide Sensitive Nuclear Assistance," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 103, No. 1(2009), pp. 113-133.

Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 21-60.*

Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1999), pp. 5-55.

Week 5: Rationalism (February 6)

Often mistaken for formal modelling or game theory, rationalism is defined more by its ontological focus and its methodology than assumptions about the nature of the international system: utilitarian and strategic interaction under conditions of uncertainty. Drawing primarily from microeconomics, it bypasses debates about whether domestic or systemic factors are more significant, or whether cooperation and conflict or more prevalent. Instead it directs its attention to how outcomes arise when self-interested actors pursue conflicting interests under a set of institutional and informational constraints. We will examine if there is a core set of assumptions that enables us to define rationalism as a

paradigm as opposed to a methodology, and also its similarities and differences with liberalism and realism, which are sometimes considered rationalist.

David Lake and Robert Powell (eds.), *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), ch. 1.

Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 92-125.

Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), ch. 5

Robert Powell, "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (1991), pp. 1303-1320.

James D. Fearon, "Signaling versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1994), pp. 236-269 (skim model).

Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (2003), pp. 343-361.

Week 6: Constructivism (February 13)

Constructivism is a school of thought that stresses that the reality of international politics is not given, but rather is a construction of the social processes of international relations. Drawing from sociology, it argues that norms, culture, and ideas play a significant role in international relations autonomous from and often prior to power. It defines itself in opposition to the materialist and asocial approaches of neorealism and neoliberalism. Yet there is much variety within this paradigm, epistemologically and ontology. While some focus on how those engaged in foreign affairs deliberately pursue normative goals based on what is considered appropriate, others rely on alternative social forces such as habit or practice that are not self-conscious.

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of World Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1992), pp. 391-425.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1998), pp. 887-917.

Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (1999), pp. 379-408.

Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 1-38.

Vincent Pouliot, "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities," *International Organization*, Vol. 62 (2008), pp. 257-88.

Ronald Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of U.S. National Security Policy* (unpublished manuscript).

Week 7: Social and Cognitive Psychology (February 20)

Scholars incorporating psychological insights have been a persistent if somewhat neglected presence in international relations over the last several decades. Those who draw on cognitive psychology demonstrate how the complexity of international relations often proves too much for the limited processing capabilities of individuals, who subsequently rely on a number of heuristics or shortcuts to ease their decision-making burden. Social

psychologists explore how individuals relate to broader groupings and how this affects foreign policy decision-making and international relations.

Philip Tetlock, "Social Psychology and World Politics," in D. Gilbert, S. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1998), pp. 870-882.*

Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), excerpts.

Jonathan Mercer, "Anarchy and Identity," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1995), pp. 229-252.

John Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), chs. 1-2.

David Houghton, "Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Toward a Constructivist Approach," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 3, No. (2007), pp. 24-45.

Week 8: International Cooperation and International Organizations (February 27)

International organizations are efforts by states to create a governance structure in their anarchic environment. But scholars disagree not only about whether institutions matter, but also how they matter. This session will be devoted to those different conceptions of international organizations, as well as their functions, design and autonomous effect on world politics. Why are they created? What do they do? Who drives them forward? Are they independent players on the world stage? Are they rational solutions to collective problems of asymmetrical information? Independent sources of moral authority or technical expertise? Vessels and cloaks of state power?

Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1978), pp. 167-214.

Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), ch. 6.

Arthur A. Stein, "Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World," pp. 311-324.*

Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 20-34.*

Brian C. Rathbun, "Before Hegemony: Generalized Trust, International Cooperation and the Design of International Organizations," *International Organization* (forthcoming).

Alistair Johnston, "Treating International Institutions as Social Environments," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2001), pp. 487-515.

Week 9: Bargaining and War (March 5)

Whereas cooperation involves efforts by states to reach mutually beneficial outcomes, bargaining and diplomacy focus on the distribution of gains. How do states go about resolving their disputes in the shadow of the use of force and coercion? Is diplomacy simply war by another means or does the process of argumentation have an independent effect on outcomes. Or does power determine everything?

Stephen D. Krasner, "Global Communications and National Power: Life on the Pareto

- Frontier," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (1991), pp. 336-342.*
- James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1995), pp. 379-414.
- Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13, No 1 (2007), pp. 35-66.
- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (1999), pp. 791-807.
- Eric Gartzke, "War is in the Error Term," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (1999), pp. 567-588.
- Ron E. Hassner, "'To Halve and to Hold': Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility," *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2003), pp. 1-33.

Week 8: Introduction to International Political Economy (March 19)

Barry Eichengreen, *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System* (Princeton University Press, 2008), entire.

Week 9: International Political Economy: Issues and Approaches (March 26)

This week will investigate some of the fundamental approaches and questions in international political economy, such as the political determinants of free trade and exchange rates. IPE is dominated by the rationalist approach, but it is not without its critics.

- Jeff Frieden and Ronald Rogowski, "The Impact of the International Economy on National Policies: An Analytical Overview," in Robert Keohane and Helen Milner (eds.), *Internationalization and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 25-47.
- Beth A. Simmons, *Who Adjusts: Domestic Sources of Foreign Economic Policy during the Interwar Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 1-13, 20-51.*
- Krzysztof Pelc, "Why do Some Countries Get Better WTO Accession Terms than Others?" *International Organization*, vol. 65, no. 4 (2011).
- Jeffrey Chwieroth, Neoliberal Economists and Capital Account Liberalization in Emerging Markets, *International Organization*, Vol. 61 (2007), pp. 443-463.
- Beth A. Simmons and Zachary Elkins, "The Globalization of Liberalization: Policy Diffusion in the International Political Economy," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (2004), pp. 171-189.
- Jens Hainsmuller and Michael Hiscox, "Learning to Love Globalization: Education and Individual Attitudes toward International Trade," *International Organization*, Vol. 60 (2006), pp. 469-498.

Week 12: Biology and Emotion (April 2)

There is a small niche in international relations of works focusing on emotion and biological elements of international relations.

Jacques Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 16-40.

David Welch, *Justice and the Genesis of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 7-30.*

Stephen Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 71-74, 90-98, 99-114, 126-34.*

Azar Gat, "So Why Do People Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of War," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2009), pp. 571-99.

Rose McDermott

Michael Colaresi and William R. Thompson, "Hot Spots or Hot Hands?: Serial Crisis Behavior, Escalating Risk and Rivalry," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 1175-1198.

Weeks 13, 14: Research project presentations (April 9, 16)

Week 15: International Order (April 23)

The ability of states to cooperate in a state of anarchy is one of the most fundamental questions in international relations. Scholars vary greatly on the prospects and the facilitating factors of collaboration among states and the nature and quality of political order at the systemic level.

David Lake, *Entangling Relations: America's Foreign Policy in its Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), ch. 3.

Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), chs. 1-2).

Jennifer Mitzen, "Reading Habermas in Anarchy: Multilateral Diplomacy and Global Public Spheres," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (2005), pp. 401-417.

G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), ch. 3.