International Politics: Concepts and Theories  
New York University  
Department of Politics  
POL-GA 1700  
Spring 2014

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Thursday: 16:20-18:10  
Seminar Room: 217, 19 West 4th St.  
Recitations: Thursday 8:30-9:45  
Friday 10:00-11:15  
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Course Description and Objectives:

This course offers a graduate-level introduction to theories of international politics and to some of the important aspects of international politics. The class explores a variety of debates and findings in the subfield of international relations. Coverage does not include every issue and approach, but it addresses the core problems and perspectives animating mainstream IR in the United States today. Students can expect to develop a sufficient understanding of the subfield to prepare for further study and specialization, while advancing their knowledge of the substantive issues under consideration.

The course is divided into two parts, though a sustained focus on theories, concepts, and central debates extends throughout the semester. After an introduction to the broader debates and basic epistemological questions, we begin with a critical examination of the leading theoretical paradigms in IR. The remainder of the course is devoted to contemporary applications in various areas of international security and political economy, weighted heavily toward the former. While no explicit policymaking component is offered, students are encouraged to draw connections between the course material and ongoing policy debates in world affairs.

Recitation is an important part of the course. Participation is required. Students will get the opportunity to discuss readings for a particular week and they would develop skills to criticize theories and approaches from the Selectorate Theory perspective and other approaches.

Requirements and Grading:

You are expected to carefully read all the assigned material. Beyond that, you are required to attend classes regularly, both the class and the recitation and to participate actively in discussions. More than three absences will gravely affect your grade. Participation in the class
discussions and the recitations is mandatory. It also counts for 20% of your grade. You also are required to write four short papers, 1500 words each (each counts for 20% of your grade). Three short take-home assignments ask you to explain a historical or current IR event or problem with reference to the theories presented in class and in the course readings. The fourth assignment is a policy paper on a topic of your choice. In this paper you present your views on a given policy.

Readings:

There are a few books and many articles required for this course. The following books are required. Aside from the books listed below, which could be bought at the NYU Bookstore, most of articles are accessible through the Bobst Library Electronic Journals.

BOOKS:


Course Schedule:

Week 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS AND TO THE IR THEORIES:

In addition:

**Guest Lecture:** Huan Wang, “A New Type of Great Power Relations.” Dr. Huan Wang is an Associate Researcher with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

## 1. APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

### Week 2: COMPETING ASSUMPTIONS AND THE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS PROBLEM IN IR THEORY


Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points" Address to Congress, January 8, 1918 in http://www.lib.byu.edu/rdh/wwi/


**Recommended:**


http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/people/knicolaidis/Smith.pdf

**Week 3: CLASSICAL REALISM**


**Week 4: NEOREALISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**


**Week 5: LIBERALISM, NEO-LIBERALISM, NEOLIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM: INTERDEPENDENCE, REGIMES, & INSTITUTIONS**

Week 6: CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE ENGLISH SCHOOL


IMPORTANT: THE FIRST MIDTERM IS ASSIGNED

II. STRUCTURES, ISSUES AND PROCESSES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

WEEK 7: SOVEREIGNTY AND THE STATE


Week 8: ALLIANCES AND THE BALANCE OF POWER

**Week 9: CAUSES OF WAR AND PEACE AND ORDER IN THE SYSTEM**


**IMPORTANT: THE SECOND MIDTERM IS ASSIGNED**

**Week 10: THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS**


**Week 11: GROUPS, IDEOLOGY, and NATIONALISM DECISION-MAKING AND FOREIGN POLICY**


**Week 12: NUCLEAR WEAPONS, STRATEGY, DETERRENCE, AND PROLIFERATION**


**IMPORTANT: YOUR POLICY PAPER IS DUE TODAY**

**Week 13: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY**


**Week 14: OTHER ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS**


**IMPORTANT: THE THIRD MIDTERM IS ASSIGNED**