THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Political Science 857
Fall 2018
Tuesday 1:20-3:15 PM
422 North Hall

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Office hours: Monday 1:00-3:00pm

Course overview

This course is a graduate-level review of the subfield of international relations within political science. It is intended primarily for first-year doctoral students in Political Science, although more advanced graduate students are also welcome. The primary purpose is to understand the development of the field, and to understand and be able to evaluate the main theoretical approaches in the sub-discipline. The course covers many of what have come to be known as classic works in the field, as well as some more recent theoretical and empirical applications. While it is not designed as a research course, it is useful preparation for more specialized courses of study emphasizing IR research. Another important purpose is to prepare PhD students in Political Science for the preliminary examination in international relations.

Throughout the course, we will focus primarily on alternative theoretical approaches and perspectives, although we will also explore some empirical work. Our goal will be to engage, discuss, and wrestle with the following questions: What do the authors want to explain? What are the critical concepts? How are cause and effect observed? What kind of research design is employed? From what theoretical perspective does the argument originate? With whom are the authors engaged in debate?

If you are planning to take International Relations as one of your prelim fields in the political science department, you should create a file or drive where you store the materials from your IR classes, including syllabi and papers that you write. This will make it easier to pull together the required materials for prelims at the end of your second year.

Course requirements

1. Participation (1/3 of total grade): All students should come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them in depth each week.

2. Reading response papers (1/3 of total grade): Each student will be required to write seven short response papers (no more than 2 pages) based on the weekly readings or some subset thereof. A copy of the essay should be emailed to me by noon the day before class (Monday). The papers should not just re-present the readings, but rather
must analyze, compare, and/or critique the quality of the theory and/or evidence, as appropriate.

3. Literature Review Essay (1/3 of total grade): This should take a topic and survey the literature on it. You can start with the readings for one of the weeks, but should go well beyond them to cover newer, especially empirical, material. You can use this as an opportunity to review the literature related to a potential dissertation topic, if you are considering specializing in international relations, or simply as a chance to see what the state of the art is on a particular topic. The essays in the Annual Review of Political Science can be taken as models. Length should be around 5-7 thousand words.

All written work must have a title page including the title of the document, your name, the date, the name of the class, the professor’s name, and the type of assignment it is, (weekly essay, final paper). The pages must be numbered. References are to be done with American Political Science Association (APSA) system. The last page in the document must be the reference list. For information on writing and formatting references, see the UW Writing Center website, particularly, their writer’s handbook, where you can find information about proper citing and the APSA system.


The name of the document must be your last name, followed by numbers 1 through 7 for the weekly papers, and “Final” for the final paper, followed by the relevant document suffix. For instance, Smith’s third discussion paper would be named Smith3.docx and Smith’s final paper would be named SmithFinal.docx.

Readings

Nearly all of the articles are available online, either through public sources or UW’s library. Other materials will be handled on an ad hoc basis.

For each reading, we will summarize the argument, discuss its contribution to IR, and probe the argument and evidence for strengths and weaknesses. The following questions are examples of the sorts of questions that can guide your reading of each piece and will shape our discussion:

- What is the question or puzzle?
- What is the argument?
- What are the explicit or implicit assumptions?
- Who are the relevant actors?
- What are their preferences and interests and where do they come from?
- At what level of analysis is the argument?
- Where does the argument fit into the theoretical landscape of IR and who would disagree?
- What is the relative importance of agency versus structure?
- What evidence is provided in support of the argument and is it convincing?
## Course Schedule: Fall 2018

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Module 1: Some Classics

Week 1 – Before 1800

- Old Testament: Joshua 6
- Pope Urban II. Speech at the Council of Clermont, 1095.
- Immanuel Kant. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*.

Week 2 – After 1800

Module 2: Realism

Week 3 – Balance of Power and Changing Power


Week 4 – The Security Dilemma, Technology and Beliefs


Module 3: Liberalism

Week 5 – Domestic Institutions


Week 6 – Regime Type and Conflict


Module 4: Rational Choice

Week 7 – Bargaining


Week 8 – Cooperation

Module 5: Constructivism and Psychology

Week 9: Constructivism


Week 10: Psychology


Module 6: International Political Economy

Week 11 – Trade


Week 12 – Finance and Immigration

Module 7: International Institutions

Week 13: Origins


Week 14 - Effects


