WWS 541 International Politics

Fall 2015
Princeton University
Woodrow Wilson School
Monday 1:30-4:30

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This course introduces theories of international politics and seeks to use them to understand patterns of conflict and cooperation, the rise of the postwar liberal international order, and broad trends in interdependence and globalization. This is a “problem-oriented” course, looking to theoretical literatures in the field to help illuminate global challenges. At the heart of these theoretical literatures is the debate between “realism” and “liberalism” – two classic schools of thought that offer competing frameworks and alternative visions of world politics. In the second half of the course, specific policy challenges will be explored, including topics such as the challenge of rising non-Western developing states, the looming crisis of climate change, the spread of transnational activist networks, the Arab Spring and democracy promotion, the rise of China, and the reform of global institutions.

All students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. Each student will write a short paper that offers a critical reflection on one of the readings or topics from the first half of the course, due at the end of the 6th week of the course. Each week, two or three students will be asked to present reactions to the readings, doing so to facilitate class discussion. In the second half of the course, each student will be part of a project team that prepares a brief report (not more than 2000 words) analyzing a major policy issue and discussing the relevance of international relations theory and history to it. The report will be circulated in advance. Well in advance of the class, the project team will research the issue they are studying and, in consultation with the professor, assign 50-75 pages on it. There will be a final examination.

Course Assignments and Grading
Short Paper: 20 percent  
Group presentation (written and oral): 20 percent  
Class participation apart from the group presentation: 20 percent  
Final examination: 40 percent 

Articles will be available on Blackboard. The following books will be used extensively and are available for purchase in the bookstore:


Part I: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND HISTORICAL CASES

Week One: Critical Problems and Theoretical Debates: Can the World Be Governed?


G. John Ikenberry, Chapter One, “The Problem of Order,” *After Victory*.

Debate: The Return of Revisionist Great Powers?


Week Two: Realism: Anarchy, Balance of Power, and Use of Force

Kenneth Waltz, “The Anarchic Structure of World Politics,” *Art and Jervis*


Robert Art, “The Four Functions of Force,” *Art and Jervis*.

Debate: The West, Russia, and the Ukraine Crisis: Who is At Fault?


Week Three: Liberalism: Democracy, Economic Interdependence, and Institutions

Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” *Art and Jervis*.


Stanley Hoffmann, “The Uses and Limits of International Law,” *Art and Jervis*. 

Supplemental:


Debate: Are Democracies Really More Peaceful?


Week Four: Constructivism and Feminism


Alexander Wendy, “Anarchy is what States Make of It,” in Art and Jervis.


Debate: The Pros and Cons of Democracy Promotion


Week Five: Power, Institutions, and Varieties of International Order

Ikenberry, After Victory, chapters 2-3, 5-7.


Charles Kupchan, Chapter 5 (“Alternatives to the Western Way”) in No One’s World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn (Oxford, 2012).


Debate: How Does the Obama Administration Think about Institutions and Order?


Week Six: Information, Misperception, and Miscalculation


Steve Van Evera, “Why States Believe Foolish Things,” manuscript.


Debate: What Went Wrong? Explaining the Intelligence Failure in Iraq


Week Seven: Foundations of International Political Economy


Supplemental:


Debate: Responses to the 2008 Financial Crisis: Did the System Work?


[suggested readings for policy teams announced]

Part II: GLOBAL CHANGE AND POLICY DEBATES

Week Eight: Rising Non-Western States and Challenges to Global Order


[plus readings from project group]

Week Nine: Transnational Networks and Actors

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Activist Networks,” Art and Jervis.

Phil Williams, “Transnational Organized Crime and the State,” Art and Jervis.


[plus readings from project group]

Week Ten: Climate Change and the Challenge of Global Cooperation


[plus readings from project group]

Week Eleven: Coping with the Rise of China


Supplemental:


[plus readings from project group]
Week Twelve: The Shape of the Future

The National Intelligence Council, “Individual Empowerment and Demographic Patterns,” Art and Jervis.


Alan Dupont, “The Strategic Implications of Climate Change,” Art and Jervis.


[plus readings from project group]