

Foundations of International Relations Theory

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Course description

This seminar examines a selection of foundational works in the field of international relations, that is, books and articles that have helped set the terms of intellectual inquiry in the field during the past half-century or more.

Accordingly, we will examine how scholarship has framed the IR field in terms of a central problem, namely, the problem of war and conflict between nations on the one hand, and peace and cooperation among them on the other. We will examine how scholarship has addressed this problem through the employment of arguments at one or another of three basic levels of analysis in the study of international relations, that is, the identification and assessment by scholars of causal mechanisms producing war/conflict and peace/cooperation that emphasize the impact of individuals, domestic-structures, and the interstate-structure.

Requirements

- **Reaction Notes (three at 10% each, 30% total):** Each student will write three reaction notes (each 1 page, single-spaced) on an assigned reading. These notes should include a succinct summary of the selected reading, a point of criticism, and a suggestion as to how future research might address the criticism or otherwise advance the line of research associated with the reading. The notes will be circulated electronically to the entire class and will be due at 5:00 PM the evening prior to the relevant class day.
- **Research Paper (40% of the final grade):** Each student will write a research paper (maximum of 25 pages, double-spaced) on a topic approved by the instructor. The paper is due **by January 10**. Papers that are submitted after the deadline without the instructor's prior written authorization will receive a lower grade.
- **Class Participation (30% of the final grade):** Each student will be expected to be a prepared, active class participant. It is important by consequence to read class assignments prior to coming to class meetings. In the best discussions, students will mainly address their ideas to one another and not the instructor. Students can contribute to class discussions in a variety of ways, for example, asking for clarification of a point made by another student; replying to a point by suggesting an alternative viewpoint; and, perhaps most important, suggesting a research question that might arise from a point that has just been made.

1. Introduction: The Levels of Analysis in International Relations

Required readings:

- K. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, Revised Edition, Columbia University Press, 2001.

2. Individuals, Leaders and Leadership Groups

Required readings:

- R. Jervis, «War and Misperception», *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII, 4, 1988, pp. 675-698.
- Y. Khong, «Vietnam, the Gulf, and US Choices: A Comparison», *Security Studies*, II, 1, 1992, pp. 74-95.
- I. Janis, *Groupthink*, Houghton Mifflin, 1982, pp. 2-13; 72-96; 174-197 (or the 1972 edition, *Victims of Groupthink*, pp. 2-13; 75-100; 184-206).
- J. Gross Stein, «The Micro-Foundations of International Relations Theory: Psychology and Behavioral Economics», *International Organization*, LXXI, Supplement 1, 2017, pp. 249-263.
- J. Mercer, «Prospect Theory and Political Science», *Annual Review of Political Science*, 8, 2005, pp. 1-21.

Recommended readings:

- R. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1976.
- R. Jervis, «Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?», *Security Studies*, XXII, 2, 2013, pp. 153-179.
- G. Quester, «Six Causes of War», *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, VI, 1982, pp. 1-23.
- Y. Khong, *Analogies at War. Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, Princeton University Press, 1992.
- R. Lebow, «Miscalculation in the South Atlantic: The Origins of the Falkland War», *Journal of Strategic Studies*, VI, 1, 1983, pp. 5-35.
- S. Dyson, «Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decision», *Foreign Policy Analysis*, II, 3, 2006, pp. 289-306.
- J. Legro, «Whence American Internationalism», *International Organization*, LIV (Spring 2000), pp. 253-89.
- S. Smith, «Groupthink and the Hostage Rescue Mission», *British Journal of Political Science*, XV, 1, 1985, pp. 117-123.
- O. Holsti, «The 1914 Case», *American Political Science Review*, LIX, (June 1965), pp. 365-378.
- S. Yetiv, «Groupthink and the Gulf Crisis», *British Journal of Political Science*, XXXIII, 3, 2003, pp. 419-442.
- J. Levy, «Loss Aversion, Framing Effects, and International Conflict. Perspectives from Prospect Theory», in M. Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies II*, University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 193-221.
- D. Johnson and D. Tierney, «Bad World: The Negativity Bias in International Politics» *International Security*, XLIII (Winter 2018/2019), pp. 96-140.

- D. Johnson and D. Tierney, «The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return», *International Security*, XXXVI (Summer 2011), pp. 7-40.
- E. Saunders, «No Substitute for Experience», *International Organization*, LXXI, Supplement 2017, pp. S219-S247.

3. Rational Actors vs. Organizations and Bureaucracies

Required readings:

- B. Bueno de Mesquita, «The Contribution of Expected Utility Theory to the Study of International Conflict», *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII, 4, 1988, pp. 629-652.
- G. Allison and P. Zelikov, *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. Longman, 1999, pp. 197-242 and 325-366.
- S. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents and Nuclear Weapons*, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 156-203.
- A. Zegart, *Spying Blind: The CIA, the FBI and the Origins of 9/11*, Princeton University Press, 2007, pp. 101-119.

Recommended readings:

- B. Bernstein, «Understanding Decision-making, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Review Essay», *International Security*, XXV, 1, 2000, pp. 134-164.
- G. Allison, «Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis», *American Political Science Review*, LXIII, 3, 1969, pp. 689-718.
- J. Monten and A. Bennett, «Models of Crisis Decision Making and the 1990-91 Gulf War», *Security Studies*, XIX, 3, 2010, pp. 486-520.
- J. Valenta, «The Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia», *Political Science Quarterly*, XCIV, 1, 1979, pp. 55-76.
- J. P. Taylor, «War by Time-Table», in *From the Boer War to the Cold War*, Penguin Books, 1996, pp. 116-181.
- J. Levy, «Organizational Routines and the Causes of War», *International Studies Quarterly*, XXX, 2, 1986, pp. 193-222.
- E. Rhodes, «Do Bureaucratic Politics Matter? Some Disconfirming Findings from the Case of the U.S. Navy», *World Politics*, XLVII, 1, 1994, pp. 1-41.
- L. Holland, «The US Decision to Launch operation *Desert Storm*: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis», *Armed Forces and Society*, XXV, 2, 1999, pp. 219-242.
- J. Legro, «Accidents Waiting to Happen. Military Culture and Inadvertent Escalation in World War II», *International Security*, XVIII, 4, 1994, pp. 108-142.
- P. Feaver, «The Right to Be Right: Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Decision», *International Security*, XXXV, 4, 2011, pp. 87-125.

4. Domestic Political Institutions and Interest Groups

Required readings:

- J. Owen, «How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace», *International Security*, XIX, 2, 1994, pp. 87-125.
- S. Rosato, «The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory», *American Political Science Review*, XCVII, 4, 2003, pp. 585-602.
- J. Weeks, «Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict», *American Political Science Review*, CVI, 2, 2012, pp. 326-347
- A. Gat, «The Democratic Peace Theory Reframed: The Impact of Modernity», *World Politics*, LVIII, 1, 2005, pp. 73-100.
- J. Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 1-65, 305-322.

Recommended readings:

- M. Gordon, «Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and French Cases», *Journal of Modern History*, XLVI, (June 1974), pp. 191-226.
- M. Doyle, «Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 1», *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, XII, (Summer 1983), pp. 205-235.
- M. Doyle, «Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 2», *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, XII, (Autumn 1983), pp. 323-353.
- M. Fendius Elman (ed.), *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?*, The MIT Press, 1997, pp. 1-57.
- K. Rasler and W. Thompson, «Malign Autocracies and Major Power Warfare», *Security Studies*, X, 3, 2001, pp. 46-79.
- M. Tomz and J. Weeks, «Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace», *American Political Science Review*, CVII, 4, 2013, pp. 849-865.
- D. Drezner, «The Realist Tradition in American Public Opinion», *Perspectives on Politics*, VI, 1, 2008, pp. 51-70.
- R. Stein, «War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies», *American Political Science Review*, CIX, (August 2005), pp. 556-73.
- B. Russett and J. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace. Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, Norton, 2001, pp. 15-79.
- J. Levy, «Preventive War and Democratic Politics», *International Studies Quarterly*, LII, 1, 2008, pp. 1-24.
- A. Dafoe, J. Oneal and B. Russett, «The Democratic Peace: Weighing the Evidence and Cautious Inference», *International Studies Quarterly*, LVII, 1, 2013. pp. 201-214.
- D. Auerswald, «Inward Bound: Domestic Institutions and Military Conflicts», *International Organization*, LIII, 3, 1999, pp. 469-504.
- J. Levy and L. Vakili, «Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas Case», in M. Midlarsky (ed.), *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*, Routledge, 1992, pp. 118-146.
- M. Fravel, «The Limits of Diversion: Rethinking Internal and External Conflict», *Security Studies*, XIX, 2, 2010, pp. 307-341.
- R. Hendrickson, «Clinton's Military Strikes in 1998: Diversionary Uses of Force?», *Armed Forces and Society*, XXVIII, 2, 2002, pp. 309-332.
- T. Morgan and C. Anderson, «Domestic Support and Diversionary External Conflict in Great Britain, 1950- 1992», *Journal of Politics*, LXI, 3, 1999, pp. 799-814.

- Oakes, «Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands», *Security Studies*, XV, 3, 2006, pp. 431-463.
- J. Levy, «The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique», in Midlarsky, M.I. (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies*, Unwin Hyman, vol. I, 1989, pp. 259-288.
- J. Meernik and P. Waterman, «The Myth of the Diversionary Use of Force by American Presidents», *Political Research Quarterly*, IL, 3, 1996, pp. 573-590.
- J. Keller and D. Foster, «Presidential Leadership Style and the Political Use of Force», *Political Psychology*, XXXIII, 5, 2012, pp. 581-598.
- J. Snyder, «Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984», *International Security*, IX (Summer 1984), pp. 108-46.
- S. Sagan, «1914 Revisited: Allies, Offense, and Instability», *International Security*, XI, (Fall 1986), pp. 151-175.
- B. Bueno de Mesquita, J. Morrow, R. Siverson, and A. Smith, «An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace», *American Political Science Review*, XCIII (December 1999), pp. 791-807.
- P. Gourevitch, «International Trade, Domestic Coalitions, and Liberty: Comparative Responses to the Crisis of 1873-1896», *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VIII (Autumn 1977), pp. 281-313.
- J. Goldstein, «The Impact of Ideas on Trade Policy: The Origins of U.S. Agricultural and Manufacturing Policies», *International Organization*, XLIII (Winter 1989), pp. 31-71.
- H. Milner, «Resisting the Protectionist Temptation», *International Organization*, CLI (Autumn 1987), pp. 639-666.
- M. Bailey, J. Goldstein, and B. Weingast, «The Institutional Roots of American Trade Policy: Politics, Coalitions, and International Trade», *World Politics*, IL (April 1997), pp. 309-38.
- D. Kono, «Optimal Obfuscation: Democracy and Trade Policy Transparency», *American Political Science Review*, C (2006), pp. 369-384.
- B. Goldsmith, D. Semenovich, A. Sowmya, and G. Grgic, «Political Competition and the Initiation of International Conflict: A New Perspective on the Institutional Foundations of Democratic Peace», *World Politics*, LXIX (July 2017), pp. 493-531.

5. Anarchy and Polarity

Required readings:

- K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Addison-Wesley, 1979, pp. 79-128 and 161-193.
- J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Norton, 2001, pp. 29-54.
- R. Wagner, *War and the State*, University of Michigan Press, 2007, pp. 1-39.
- W. Wohlforth, «The Stability of a Unipolar World», *International Security*, XXIV, 1, 1999, pp. 5-41.
- N. Monteiro, «Unrest Assured. Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful», *International Security*, XXXVI, 3, 2011/2012, pp. 9-40.

Recommended readings:

- J. Herz, «Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma», *World Politics*, II (January 1950), pp. 157-170.
- K. Deutsch and J. D. Singer, «Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability», *World Politics*, XVI (April 1964), pp. 390-406.
- E. Labs, «Beyond Victory: Offensive Realism and the Expansion of War Aims», *Security Studies*, VI, 4, 1997, pp. 1-49.

- K. Waltz, «The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory», *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII, 4, 1988, pp. 615-628.
- C. Glaser, «The Security Dilemma Revisited», *World Politics*, L, 1, 1997, pp. 171-201.
- D. Fiammenghi, «The Security Curve and the Structure of International Politics: A Neorealist Synthesis», *International Security*, XXXV, 4, 2011, pp. 126-154.
- L. Dehio, *The Precarious Balance* (1948), Knopf, 1962.
- E. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*, Cornell University Press, 1955.
- C. Glaser, «When Are Arms Races Dangerous? Rational versus Suboptimal Arming», *International Security*, XXVIII, 4, 2004, pp. 44-84.
- D. Reiter, «Exploding the Powder Keg Myth: Pre-emptive Wars Almost Never Happen», *International Security*, XX, 2, 1995, pp. 5-34.
- D. Nexon, «The Balance of Power in the Balance», *World Politics*, LXI, 2, 2009, pp. 330-359.
- J. Gaddis, «The Long Peace. Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System», *International Security*, X, 4, 1986, pp. 99-142.
- K. Deutsch and J. Singer, «Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability», *World Politics*, XVI, 4, 1964, pp. 390-406.
- R. Schweller, «Tripolarity and the Second World War», *International Studies Quarterly*, XXXVII, 1, 1993, pp. 73-103.
- T. Christensen and J. Snyder, «Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity», *International Organization*, XLIV, 2, 1990, pp. 137-168.
- W. Wohlforth, «Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War», *World Politics*, LXI, 1, 2009, pp. 28-57.
- T. Volgy, R. Corbetta, K. Grant and R. Baird (eds.), *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- T. Volgy and S. Mayhall, «Status Inconsistency and International War: Exploring the Effects of Systemic Change», *International Studies Quarterly*, XXXIX, 1, 1995, pp. 67-84.
- D. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War*, Cornell University Press, 2000, pp. 1-55, 209-246.
- Y. Deng, «Better Than Power: 'International Status' in Chinese Foreign Policy», in Y. Deng and F. Wang (eds.), *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Roman & Littlefield, 2005, pp. 51-72.
- J. Vasquez, «The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs», *American Political Science Review*, XCI (December 1997), pp. 899-912.
- K. Waltz, «Evaluating Theories», *American Political Science Review*, XCI (December 1997), pp. 913-917.
- J. Levy and W. Thompson, «Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?», *International Security*, XXXV (Summer 2010), pp. 7-43.
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6. Power Transitions and Hegemonic War

Required readings:

- A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics*, Knopf, 1958, pp. 299-338.
- R. Gilpin, «The Theory of Hegemonic War», *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII, 4, 1988, pp. 591-613.
- J. Mearsheimer, «Can China Rise Peacefully?», *The National Interest*, April 2014.
- J. Levy, «Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War», *World Politics*, XL (October 1987), pp. 82-107.

- M. Beckley, «The Peril of Peaking Powers: Economic Slowdowns and Implications for China's Next Decade», *International Security*, XLVIII, 1, 2023, pp. 7–46.

Recommended readings:

- M. Beeson, «Hegemonic Transition in East Asia? The Dynamics of Chinese and American Power», *Review of International Studies*, XXXV, 1, 2009, pp. 95-112.
- A. F. K. Organski and J. Kugler, *The War Ledger*, University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- W. Kim, «Power Transitions and Great Power War from Westphalia to Waterloo», *World Politics*, XLV, 1, 1992, pp. 153-172.
- C. Doran, *Systems in Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 44-90, 104-107, 125-132, 166-190.
- G. Modelski, «The Long Cycle in Global Politics and the Nation State», *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XX, 2, 1978, pp. 214-235.
- J. Levy, «Theories of General War», *World Politics*, XXXVII, 3, 1985, pp. 344-374.
- S. Chan, «Exploring Puzzles in Power-Transition Theory: Implications for Sino-American Relations», *Security Studies*, XIII, 3, 2004, pp. 103-141.
- R. Lebow and B. Valentino, «Lost in Transition: A Critical Analysis of Power Transition Theory», *International Relations*, XXIII, 3, 2009, pp. 389-410.
- Y. Khong, «Primacy or World Order? The United States and China's Rise», *International Security*, XXXVIII, 3, 2013-2014, pp. 153-175.
- J. Levy, «Power Transition Theory and the Rise of China», in R. Ross, and Z. Feng (eds.), *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, Cornell University Press, 2008, pp. 11-33.
- T. Onea, «Between Dominance and Decline: Status Anxiety and Great Power Rivalry», *Review of International Studies*, XL, 1, 2014, pp. 125-152.

7. Structural Modifiers: International Institutions and Military Technology

Required readings:

- G. Snyder, «Process Variables in Neorealist Theory», *Security Studies*, V, 3, 1996, pp. 167-192.
- R. Jervis, «Cooperation under the Security Dilemma», *World Politics*, XXX, 2, 1978, pp. 167-214.
- S. Van Evera, «Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War», *International Security*, XXII, 4, 1998, pp. 5-43.
- R. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 65-84.
- G. J. Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan. The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, Princeton University Press, 2011, pp. 33-117 and 333-360.

Recommended readings:

- R. Russell, «Persian Gulf Proving Grounds: Testing Offence-Defence Theory», *Contemporary Security Policy*, XXIII, 3, 2002, pp. 192-213.
- P. Pakur, «India's and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not like Cold War Europe», *International Security*, XXX, 2, 2005, pp. 127-152.
- S. Sagan and K. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*, Norton, 2013 (3rd ed.), pp. 3-40; 135-214.
- J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Cornell University Press, 1983.

- J. Levy, «The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis», *International Studies Quarterly*, XXVIII, 2, 1984, pp. 219-238.
- K. Lieber, «Grasping the Technological Peace: The Offense-Defense Balance and International Security», *International Security*, XXV, 1, 2000, pp. 71-104.
- J. Shimshoni, «Technology, Military Advantage, and World War I», *International Security*, XV, 3, 1990-91, pp. 187-215.
- R. Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 72-80.
- J. Ruggie, «International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order», *International Organization*, XXVI (Spring 1982), pp. 379-415.
- A. Hasenclever, P. Mayer and V. Rittberger, «Interests, Power, Knowledge: The Study of International Regimes», *Mershon International Studies Review*, IL, suppl. 2, 1996, pp. 177-205.
- G. J. Ikenberry, *After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 50-79 and 257-273.
- R. Keohane, «Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism», *International Relations*, XXVI, 2, 2012, pp. 125-138.
- R. Gilpin, «The Politics of Transnational Economic Relations», *International Organization*, XXV (Summer 1971), pp. 398-419.
- K. Barbieri, «Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict?», *Journal of Peace Research*, XXXIII (February 1996), pp. 29-49.
- J. Oneal and B. Russett, «The Classical Liberals Were Right: Democracy, Interdependence, and Conflict, 1950-1985», *International Studies Quarterly*, XLI (June 1997), pp. 267-94.
- K. Waltz, «The Myth of National Interdependence», in *The International Corporation*, ed. C. P. Kindleberger, M.I.T. Press, 1970, pp. 205-223.
- J. Mearsheimer, «Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order», *International Security*, XLIII, 4, 2019, pp. 7-50.