

COURSE SYLLABUS
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY
University of West Georgia
Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: M & W 11a – 12:30p & 2p – 4p; Tues. 3:30p – 4:30p

Course Description and Objectives:

This is a course on theory, specifically theories of international politics. World leaders are continually confronted with a variety of circumstances and problems that must be addressed through the practice of statecraft and the implementation of foreign policy. This course seeks to develop an understanding of where those problems come from, what forces lead to them, and what forces influence and constrain the solutions decision-makers employ to address them.

The course begins by providing a basic framework for understanding what a social scientific theory is and how theories should be evaluated. It then proceeds to use these tools to review some of the main theoretical currents in the field of international relations. The focus of the course is primarily on classic theoretical approaches seeking to explain international conflict; however, some time is allotted for a brief consideration of international cooperation. A fair amount of time is spent on the various strains of realism and liberalism. The course then proceeds to explore strategic bargaining and deterrence theory, as well as a selection of progressive theoretical research programs such as the democratic peace, power transition theory, and the geopolitical approach. The concluding weeks are devoted to the study of terrorism from a theoretical perspective. We explore the strategies of both terrorists and counter-terrorists, deal with the subjectivity of terrorism, and address the question of terrorism's effectiveness as a political strategy.

This is an upper level undergraduate course and, as such, is not designed to be easy. It *is* designed to be intellectually rewarding. In order for a student to be successful in this course they must actively engage with all of the assigned reading and attend class regularly. Lecture provides background and context for each week's topic while clarifying essential concepts from the reading.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Describe what makes social science scientific.
- Criticize scholarly theory.
- Identify and discuss the most significant theoretical debates in the field of international relations.
- Differentiate Realism from Liberalism and describe their most common variants.
- Describe how strategic bargaining theory has influenced our thinking about war.
- Identify circumstances that make international cooperation more, or less, likely.
- Discuss several explanations for the cause of international conflict.
- Discuss what distinguishes terrorism from other types of violence.

Required Readings

There is no text book for this course. All of the readings listed below will be posted on CourseDen.

Course Requirements

The final course grades will be based off of the following criteria:

1) 3 Tests (60%)

There will be 3 tests given in this course. They will cover material from both the lectures and readings. Each is non-cumulative and only evaluates the material covered since the last test. The format will be discussed in more detail as the semester progresses; however, it will most likely consist of some combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer.

Unless otherwise announced in class and on CourseDen, these will all be administered in the classroom during regular class time.

2) Talking Points (30%)

Every student is expected to submit two talking points, drawn from the readings, for each topic. These are to be uploaded to the appropriate assignments folder on CourseDen by 8 AM on the due dates (dates posted in CourseDen calendar, often start of new topic but not always). These talking points should focus on the most interesting *general* question, point, or argument identified by the student in the week's readings; the student should analyze, evaluate, or extend this question, point, or argument (not simply summarize it). Alternatively, they can also be a critique of some aspect of the reading. They should be written in the form of a short paragraph. No more or less than two distinct talking points should be submitted for each set of readings. Talking points in excess of 160 words will not be accepted. Talking points that arrive late will also not be accepted; *late submissions will receive no credit*. Unless there was only one required reading for that week, the talking points must come from different readings. *These must be analytical!* Simple summarization is not acceptable. Be creative with these!

These talking points will be used to guide the portion of the class in which we engage in focused discussion of the week's readings. *Students should come to class with a copy of their talking points* and, if asked by the instructor, be prepared to present their talking point to the class in order to foster discussion. *Students will be asked to do this* at some point, quite possibly several times. Students can avoid being put on the spot by volunteering to present one of their talking points when volunteers are solicited by the instructor.

The lowest talking point score will be dropped.

3) Participation (10%)

It is expected that each student will attend class and participate in class discussions regularly. We will cover a variety of topics in this course which will likely, and hopefully, prompt lively and thought provoking discussion. All students should feel encouraged, and are expected, to participate in such discussions on a regular basis. The instructor takes note of which students participate and how frequently.

Final Course Grades

All graded components of the course will combine in the manner outlined above and will result in a 0-100 percent score. This will be used to determine a student's final course grade as follows:

A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, F: 0-59%

CourseDen

CourseDen will be this course's official companion website. The schedule, grades, and important announcements will be posted there and it is the student's responsibility to check it regularly. Also, mandatory components of the course, such as talking point submission, will involve CourseDen.

The direct url is: <https://westga.view.usg.edu/d2l/home>

Technology note: it is the student's responsibility to maintain access to a reliable computer and internet connection. This is particularly important for talking point submission. Students must reasonably ensure that their internet connection and computer are functional and reliable. In the event that a technology problem prevents an assignment from being completed it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence to substantiate this. To avoid potential problems, it is expected that the student will plan properly and take advantage of all of the resources, especially campus resources, available to the student.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken for every class, in the form of a sign-in sheet or a piece of graded work such as an exam. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he or she signs the sign-in sheet for every class they attend. It is likewise their responsibility to ensure that all graded work is turned in before the conclusion of that class and their name is on it. A student may miss *four* classes, except for classes in which an exam is being administered, before their grade begins to decrease. Every absence thereafter will result in a one percentage point deduction from the final course grade. Absences will not be *directly* used to reduce a student's course grade beyond *five percent of the total*. However, students should be aware that missing material that is presented in class will indirectly lower their grade below this five percent floor.

In the event of *any* absence, it is the student's responsibility to seek out the material they missed in class from the text and their student colleagues, not the instructor. The instructor will not inform students what they missed in class. That is what classmates, the text, the CourseDen website, and the syllabus are for.

Make-up Policy

Make-up exams or quizzes are available only to students with a documented medical or personal emergency (i.e. death in the family). In order for a make-up to be offered, the student must provide the instructor with documentation of the emergency that prevented them from being able to take the exam/quiz when it was originally scheduled. The student has two complete business days, beginning at the end of the scheduled exam/quiz period, to provide this documentation to the instructor.

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the denial of a make-up exam or quiz and an automatic zero for that exam or quiz.

Email Policy

Email is a valuable communication tool. Students are expected to check their University of West Georgia email address on a regular basis. Important course announcements will be distributed via email. The instructor will make every effort to respond to substantive questions via email as quickly and completely as reasonably possible. Some matters are better addressed during office hours. The instructor will not tolerate, and will not respond to, emails concerning matters *that are clearly addressed in this syllabus or on the course's companion website*.

The instructor will not provide grades over email. Scores for all graded material will be posted on CourseDen. The student can use this information, and the breakdown used for the final grades above, to determine their progress. Grades will only be discussed during office hours.

For the sake of efficiency and professionalism, the following guidelines must be followed for all email communications:

- DO NOT use the email utility in CourseDen!!! The instructor will not receive your message.
- Emails to the instructor must be sent from the student's official University of West Georgia email address (i.e. super.student@my.westga.edu). Emails from any other address will be ignored.
- Every single email sent to the instructor must have "IR Theory" (exactly like what is between the quotation marks) in the subject line. Emails that do not include this exact subject line will not be read by the instructor.
 - To be clear, cut and paste what is between the quotation marks above into every email you send the instructor.
 - You may include more information in the subject line but you must include this.
 - For example, a subject line may look like this: IR Theory zombies?

Office Phone Policy

Students should only expect that the instructor will be available via phone during the scheduled office hours. It should be expected that emails will prompt a faster response than a voicemail. The instructor can often be found on Google Hangouts, use dmclean@westga.edu to locate him.

Extra Credit Policy

There will be no extra credit in this course that is not made available to all students. There will be no individually offered extra credit – don't ask!

Common Language for Course Syllabi

For important policy information, i.e., the UWG Honor Code, Email, and Credit Hour policies, as well as information on Academic Support and Online Courses, please review the information found in the **Common Language for Course Syllabi** documentation at <https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>. Additions and updates are made as institution, state, and federal standards change, so please review it each semester.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student found in violation of university policy will automatically receive a grade of "F" for the course. The university's honor code can be found at the following link:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Classroom Etiquette

The classroom is a professional environment and must be treated as such. Please arrive to class on time and with your cell phone off or on vibrate. Students who are distracting their classmates, or the instructor, by inappropriately using technology will be asked to leave that class and will not be permitted to rejoin the class with that technology. The use of laptops or tablets for the purposes of note taking or to take part in legitimate classwork is permitted providing that such use does not cause a distraction to others. Feel free to bring beverages to class but please refrain from eating as a courtesy to your classmates.

Participation in class discussion is essential. However, it is probable that some of the topics discussed in this class will stir strong emotions among some students. *Class discussions must be kept civil and respectful at all times.* Any behavior to the contrary will absolutely not be tolerated and the offending student or students will be asked to leave. The classroom is not a cable news show and must not resemble one!

Assumption of Adulthood

This is a college course. All students are assumed to be adults and will be held to adult standards of accountability and decorum. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the requirements of the course. You are expected to meet the requirements of the course without having to be reminded of such clearly posted things as exam dates. It is expected that you will do the required reading for the course. It is expected that you will complete all required assignments. If you have questions, you are expected to ask the professor to seek clarification.

Students with Disabilities and Accessibility Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. *Please notify the instructor immediately* if you have a disability that requires accommodation.

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services: <https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php>

Course Schedule and Readings

- * This is listed in the order that we will proceed. The CourseDen calendar will be updated to indicate when we will be starting each topic and when talking points are due.
- * All readings listed below are required. They should be completed *prior* to the first meeting of the week they are listed under.
- * Pay attention to page numbers! You are only required to read the page ranges listed.

1. Introduction & Course Overview

No readings required (first day of class)

2. What are IR Theories, Paradigms, and Research Programs? Intro to Realism v. Liberalism

- Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce. 1981. *The War Trap*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (pp. 1-10)
- Holsti, Ole R. 2001. "Models of International Relations: Realist and Neoliberal Perspectives." In *The Global Agenda*, 6th ed., eds. C. Kegley and E. Wittkopf. New York: McGraw-Hill. (pp. 119-133)
- Baldwin, David A. 1993. "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics." In *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin. New York: Columbia University Press. (pp. 3-25)

3. Realism I

- Morgenthau, Hans Joachim. 1960 [1948]. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. Read Chp1, (pp. 3-15); Skim Chp. 11-12 (pp.167-197)
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1988. "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 18 .4: 615-628.

4. Realism II

- Walt, Stephen M. 2002. "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner. New York: W. W. Norton. (P. 197-211)
- Drezner, Daniel W. 2011. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 33-46)
- Schweller, Randall L. 2004. "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing." *International Security* 29.2: 159-201. (pp. 159 – middle of 170 required, remainder suggested)

5. Liberalism – Neoliberalism

- Zacher, Mark W., and Richard A. Matthew. 1995. "Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands." In *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge*, ed. Charles W. Kegley Jr. New York: St. Martin's Press, 107-150.

TEST 1

Continued ↓

6. Power Shift Theories

- Organski, A. F. K., and Jacek Kugler. 1980. *The War Ledger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 (pp. 13-63).
- Blainey, Geoffrey. 1988. "The Abacus of Power." In Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*. New York: Free Press, Ch. 8 (pp. 108-124).

7. Strategic Bargaining & Deterrence

- Schelling, Thomas C. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 2 (pp. 35-91).
- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization*. 49.3: 379-414.
- Fearon, James D. 1997. "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 41.1: 68-90. *Read pp. 68-72 and 82-87, skim rest

8. Geopolitics

- Diehl, Paul F. 1999. "Introduction: Territory and International Conflict: An Overview." In *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict*. Ed. Paul F. Diehl. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Vasquez, John A. 1995. "Why Do Neighbors Fight?: Proximity, Interaction, and Territoriality." *Journal of Peace Research*. 32 (3): 277-293. SKIM
- Hensel, Paul R. 2001. "Contentious Issues and World Politics: The Management of Territorial Claims in the Americas, 1816-1992." *International Studies Quarterly*. 45 (1): 81-109. SKIM

TEST 2

Continued ↓

9. Democratic Peace

- Russett, Bruce M. and Harvey Starr. 2000. "From Democratic Peace to Kantian Peace: Democracy and Conflict in the International System." In *Handbook of War Studies II*, ed. Manus Midlarsky. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 93-129.
- Maoz, Zeev, and Bruce Russett. 1993. "Normative and Structural Causes of the Democratic Peace, 1946-1986." *American Political Science Review*. 87.3: 624-638. *READ 624-627 and the conclusion starting on p. 636 only*
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. "An Institutional Explanation for the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review*. 93.4: 791-808.

10. International Cooperation

- Axelrod, Robert, and Robert O. Keohane. 1985. "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions." *World Politics*. 38.1: 226-254.
- Fearon, James D. 1998. "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation." *International Organization*. 52.2: 269-305.

11. Film TBA

no talking points or reading – take a deep breath

12. Terrorism I

- Kydd, Andrew H. and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security*. 31.1: 49-80.
- Trager, Robert F. and Dessislava P. Zagorcheva. 2005. "Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done." *International Security*. 30.3: 87-123.

13. Terrorism II

- Pape, Robert A. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review*. 97.3: 1-19.
- Abrahms, Max. 2006. "Why Terrorism Does Not Work." *International Security*. 31.2: 42-78.

TEST 3

DONE!!! Hopefully you learned something!