International Relations Theory Graduate Seminar
IR 440: Northwestern University

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to contemporary international relations theory. All discussion of international politics rests on conceptual foundations and assumptions; these are sometimes made explicit and sometimes not. Disagreements about policy choices often have their roots in disagreements about these conceptual foundations.

A typical IR core seminar would include weeks on major IR themes: war, international cooperation, international political economy, the democratic peace etc. We only have a quarter, thus I focused on cross-cutting theoretical issues. To add concrete meat to the theoretical structure, I picked a touch-stone theme---the crisis in Ukraine---where we can see the theories in operation. In further preparation for field exams, students should plan to take graduate courses that survey major areas of international relations, including international conflict and security, international cooperation, and international political economy.

Course Assignments

Class Participation (30%): The participation grade has three components:
1. I expect you to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Assigned readings are listed first, and required for each session. You should also skim the Ukraine readings, many of which are available via hyperlink. Reading notes are not a substitute for doing the reading yourself!

2. Reading notes- Graduate school is a collaborative process. We will divide the readings by the number of students so as to generate notes on everything we read. A sample of notes and a signup sheet will be distributed the first day of class. The notes should be 1 page long, and in no case more than 2 page, and include your name, the reading, and the page numbers where key arguments are made.

3. Co-chairing a discussion: Discussants will provide questions for the students to think about when they read, and lead the first hour plus of each session. To lighten the reading load, the more classical precursor reading will be summarized by the discussant. Discussion questions should be posted to dropbox a week in advance. Notes regarding discussion points should be e-mailed to Professor Alter by 5:00 pm the day before the assigned class.

One Short Paper: A practice answer to a comprehensive exam question (7-10 pages) (30%)
I will give you a comprehensive exam question and ask you to answer it by drawing on the readings we have covered in class. Three times over the quarter I will distribute an exam question. The paper will be due one week later. Only one short paper is required.
Review Essay due December 11 (40 %)
A review essay of at least three recent IR books with implications for international relations theory. The essay should be 6,000-8,000 words double spaced and inclusive of notes. It should be modeled on review essays found in Perspectives on Politics, International Organization, and World Politics (samples on Canvas). The review should revolve around some shared theme across the books and provide a springboard for exploring a theoretical issue or empirical puzzle that interests you. A list of possible books to review is provided at the end of this syllabus and on canvas. Week ten involves book reviews and a presentation that prepares you for this review essay. The book reviews and presentation are part of this review essay assignment. I have also asked Canvas to assign each of you to peer review and comment on one essay.

Reading Materials
Readings for the first week are posted on canvas. The additional discusssant reading is also on canvas (except where noted) For the rest of the term, the seminar relies on a coursepack, rather than books. You may purchase the reading packet at: Quartet Copies, 919 Clark St. 328-0720. Please call ahead to confirm that the packet is available.

Schedule and reading assignments for seminar

Week 1: Introduction to IR as a Discipline (September 23) 113 pages

Recommended:
Brian Schmidt “On the History and Historiography of International Relations” from the Handbook of International Relations Sage Publications (2001)
Week 2: Realist Theory (Sept 30) 118 pages

Thucydides: The Melian Dialogue
Robert Keohane “Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond” from Neo-Realism and its Critics (1986) 158-199
Robert Goodin “How Amoral a Hegemon” Perspectives on Politics 1(1) 123-126
Ukraine: John Mearsheimer Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault Foreign Affairs Sept/Oct 2014


Recommended:
Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State and War. (1959)
Kenneth Waltz Theory of International Politics (1979)
E.H. Carr. The Twenty-Years Crisis (1951)
Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (1981)
Robert Keohane ed Neo-Realism and Its Critics (1986)
Andrew Morvacsik and Jeffrey Legro "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" International Security (Fall 1999).
"Correspondence: Brother, Can You Spare a Paradigm? (Or Was Anybody Ever a Realist?),"
International Security (Summer 2000). (Critiques by Peter Feaver, Gunther Hellmann, Randall Schweller, Jeffrey Taliaferro and William Wohlforth and reply by Moravcsik & Legro)
European Journal of International Relations, 8(3): 315-338.
Barry Buzan, People, States, and Fear (1994)

Week 3: Constructivism: Anarchy v. Other Understandings of Structures (Oct 7) 166 pages

Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society, Chs. 1& 3 p. 3-22, 53-76.

Discusant Summarize: Karl Deutsch Political Community in the North Atlantic Area (1957) (Excerpt)
Recommended:
Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
Justin Rosenberg *The Empire of Civil Society* Verson, 1994

**Week 4: Liberalism (October 14) 146 pages**

A former prelim question will be distributed this week.

Andrew Moravcsik “The New Liberalism” Reus-Smit & Snidal eds *Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (2011)p. 235-251 (This is a shorter version of his “Taking Preferences Seriously” article).  


Recommended:

**Week 5: Domestic Politics and International Relations (October 21) 133 pages**


Ukraine: Boris Barkanov “How Putin’s domestic audience explains Russia’s Behavior” The Monkey Cage at the Washington Post March 13, 2014 (this is a hyperlink)


**Recommended:**

Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman “Review Article: Domestic Institutions Beyond the Nation State: Carting the New Interdependence Approach” *World Politics* 66(2) 2014: 331-63. (Note this is one of the sample Review Essay Articles in the Folder)

Gourevitch, Peter “Domestic Politics and International Relations” from the *Handbook of International Relations* Sage Publications (2001)


**Week 6: Rationalist Theories of IR (October 28) 128 pages**

A former prelim question will be distributed this week.


Ukraine: Jeffrey Checkel “Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change” *International Organization* 33(3) 2001: 553-588 (Skim the argument and focus on his explanation for Ukraine)

**Discussant Summarize:** Thomas Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, Ch. 2.

**Recommended:**


Week 7: Emotions, Biology, Values, and Cognitive Theories (November 4) 161 pages


Ukraine: The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything. Fascism returns to the continent it once destroyed, Timothy Snyder, The New Republic [This is a hyperlink]


Recommended:


Week 8: Gender and International Relations (November 11) 110 pages

A former prelim question will be distributed this week.


Ukraine: Timothy Snyder Ukraine: The Haze of Propaganda New York Review of Books Blog [this is a hyperlink]

Recommended:

**Week 9: Transnationalism and Networks (November 18)** 124 pages


**Ukraine:** An academic analysis of NGO development in Ukraine: [Susan Stewart NGO Development in the Ukraine](#).
A piece of critical propaganda: [Strategic Culture Foundation brief: US NGOs in Ukraine: Washington’s Foreign Policy Tools or Biden Visits Kiev](#).

Discussant summarize: Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders*. Cornell University Press, 1998, chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-120). *This reading is not in the coursepack. Please order the book or obtain from the library.*

**Recommended:**
Week 10: Presentations of Review Essays (December 2)

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<th>There will be no class thanksgiving week. We meet instead during reading week</th>
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During this session, students will present to the class the theme covered in your selected books, explaining what your book selections tell us about IR theory.

**Readings: prepared by you!** For this class session, I would like you to prepare summaries of the three books, using the book review format (which is different than the review essay format). These summaries should be posted to Canvas by 5pm on November 30. I found on line a good description of what a book review does.

**Potential books for book review (feel free to recommend your own as well):**

- Abbot, Kenneth, Genshel, Pillip and Snidal Duncan *International organizations as Orchestrators* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) *If you are interested, I will ask the authors for an advanced PDF.*
- Lonardo Baccina and Johannes Urpelainen *Cutting the Gordian Knot of Economic Reform: When and How International Institutions Help* (Oxford University Press 2014)
- Jeffrey Checkel *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Colombia University Press 2011)
- Monti Datta *Anti-Americanism and the Rise of World Opinion* (Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Daniel Drezner *The System Worked: How the World Stopped Another Great Depression* (Oxford University Press, 2014)


Fukiyama, Francis *The Origins of Political Order From Pre-Human Times to the French Revolution* 2011.


Leslie Johns. *Strengthening International Courts: The Hidden Costs of Legalization* (Forthcoming, University of Michigan Press). *If you are interested, I will ask the author for an advanced PDF.*

Tana Johnson *Organizational Progeny: Why Governments are Losing Control over the Proliferating Structures of Global Governance* (Oxford University Press, 2014)


Steven Pinker. *The better angels of our nature: why violence has declined* (Viking, 2011).


J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg. *Feminism and international relations: conversations about the past, present, and future*, (Routledge, 2011).


Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2014)