

POLS4720
THEORIES AND PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Department of Political Science
University of Guelph

Fall 2011

Thursday 2:30 – 5:20
Room: ROZH 108

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Overview:

This Honours-level seminar focuses on contemporary developments in IR theory. Much of the work we'll examine was written in the backdrop of the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As such the material has contemporary relevance even if the jargon may seem specialized. IR is a vast field of study, with dozens of journals and thousands of books approaching key issues from a myriad of perspectives. We will only have time to focus on a small number of topics, but I have carefully chosen them to deliver a cross section of key debates in the discipline.

This course will be based around seminar presentations and discussion, followed by group debates. The emphasis will be on examining primary sources and highlighting points of convergence and divergence in the discipline. The first half of the course is devoted to theory. We will therefore begin with a background seminar on Idealism, Classical Realism, Neorealism and Neoliberalism. We then turn to the theories of Power, then the English School, Constructivism, Post-Structuralism and Critical Security Studies, Feminism, and the resilience of Neorealism. I have tried to select interesting and timely articles which will give you a chance to see how theoretical debates are structured, but will also hopefully demonstrate how theory can be applied to contemporary events. We will conclude with a series of student-led debates on particular international issues, viewed in part through the theoretical lenses we will be studying in class.

Required Textbook:

Scott Burchill et al: *Theories of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
Materials will be available on reserve at the library.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

- Participation and Preparation: 15%
- Article presentation and handout: 10%
- Group debate presentation (10%) and 1500-word report (10%): 20%
(Report due **November 24** at 4:30pm)
- Essay: 25% (Due **October 27**)
- Take home final: 30%

Participation and Preparation

This component of the course requirements will be assessed by the instructor on the basis of your thoughtful and active contribution to class discussions and your reading of the course material. You are expected to be doing 3 readings per week, submitting weekly questions based on the articles, and taking part in class discussion. **Each of you must read three articles or book chapters per week.** This does not include the background reading which is optional. You must also prepare two questions per reading so that you are able to actively engage in class discussion. You must print out and bring to class your questions for each article and you must give me a copy of the questions before each class. This is mandatory or else the level of class participation degenerates extremely rapidly. Be prepared to speak each week. Be warned – this can go from 0 to 100%.

Article Presentation and Participation

You are each required to present an article from the course syllabus. Your presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length. Marks will be deducted if you are significantly over or under time. You should also prepare a one-page outline of the major arguments of the reading. You must also include in the handout at least three substantive questions that arose from your reading of the material. Make sure you print a copy for each student in the class. Prepare detailed speaking notes to help you. Do not highlight sections of the article and read them. The purpose of this is to give a critical overview of the author's main arguments and what evidence or analysis the author brings to make their case. I do not want a summary along the lines of "*Mearsheimer says this, then he says that...*" I want to know your impressions of the article, whether the author made a convincing case, any gaps you see in the author's logic, etc. Those presenting first receive a 10% bonus.

Group Debate and Report

Students will divide into groups of 3-4 and will work together to present a **15 to 20-minute oral presentation** in the form of a debate on a choice of topics at the back of the Reading List. Given the amount of time, there is enough time for all to speak and all to contribute to the written work. Each group will be expected to submit a **1,500-word report**. The report should be based on the oral presentation and should include proper foot/end notes and a detailed bibliography and word count. The report **due date will be the same** for all groups irrespective of when they do their oral presentation. This comprises 20% of your final mark. If someone is not pulling their weight – see me!

Essay and Exam

There will be a 3,500-word essay (25%) and a take-home exam (30%). The exam questions will be based around the seminar questions contained in this reading list. The take-home exam must be typed and must engage with the relevant readings and discussions from class. It will be based only on course reading material. I will provide six questions of which you will choose three. You will be given 3 days to complete it.

Readings

IR is for good or ill largely an anglocentric project, with some notable exceptions. However IR is not an exclusively American domain, and we will also consider works from Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. Germany, France, and Nordic countries have also produced some excellent IR material (ie constructivism, the Copenhagen school, etc). You should therefore keep in mind the political cultures and history of the countries from which the works originate. You will notice a difference between the more science-oriented rational choice approaches in the US versus the more post-positivist and critical approaches from the UK and Australasia.

Remember that good discussion depends on careful preparation. You are strongly encouraged to read the texts carefully and prepare answers to the questions. It is critical that you do your readings and come in ready to take an active part in class discussions. Core readings each week will consist of book chapters or articles pertinent to the topic. These will be available online through D2L. You will need Acrobat Reader to access these. I encourage you to purchase the textbook by Burchill et al: *Theories of International Relations* (MacMillan, 2009) which is a good basic introduction to the topic and can help as a navigational tool. I have ordered copies into the bookshop for you and many of these copies are used and therefore cheap! There is a new updated edition, but don't bother buying it unless you can't find the older one.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Essays and reports are **not** accepted as e-mail attachments;
- In this class, students may **only** use electronic mail for **procedural inquires**. All substantive questions regarding lectures, readings and written assignments must be asked in person;
- Plagiarism is a very serious academic offence that carries very severe penalties. **It is the student's responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism**. I urge you to take the time to review the academic rules regarding referencing and the borrowing of ideas and arguments (You can obtain information from the university's Learning Commons <http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/WritingServices/>). Students **WILL NOT** be given the benefit of the doubt when a case of plagiarism is detected and will automatically be referred to the College's Associate Dean so that the appropriate penalty is applied.

Your continued registration in the course will be taken as evidence that you have agreed to the requirements, terms and conditions of the course.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

September 8: Traditional IR in the 20th Century

Major Themes:

- Idealism versus Classical Realism (Carr, Morgenthau, etc);
- The Neo-Liberal Challenge (Keohane and Nye, Krasner, etc);
- The Neo-Realist position (Waltz, Mearsheimer, etc);
- Positivism v. Post-Positivism: Assessing the “Third Debate”

Background (Note Donnelly’s at times very critical appraisal)

- Jack Donnelly, “Realism” and Scott Burchill, “Liberalism” in *Theories of International Relations*

Key Readings:

1. [D2L] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1985) 3-15.
2. [D2L] Robert G. Gilpin, “The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism” *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2. (Spring, 1984)
3. [D2L] Michael W. Doyle, ‘Liberalism and World Politics,’ in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 80, No. 4 (1986)
4. [D2L] Robert Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics” in Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (Columbia UP, 1986)

September 15: Derivations of Realism? The “English School” and Constructivism

Background Reading

- Andrew Linklater, “The English School” and Chris Reus-Smit, “Constructivism”, in *Theories of International Relations* (2005)

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Barry Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR” *Review of International Studies*, Vol 27 (2001)
2. [D2L] Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics” *International Organization*, Vol 46, No. 2 (1992)
3. [D2L] Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 1. (Summer, 1998)
4. [D2L] Barak Mendelsohn, “Sovereignty under attack: the international society meets the Al Qaeda network”, *Review of International Studies* Vol 31 (2005)

Additional Readings

- Richard Little, “The English School’s Contribution to the Study of IR,” *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 6 (2000)
- Chris Reus-Smit, “Imagining society: constructivism and the English School”, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (October 2002).

- Dale Copeland, “A Realist critique of the English School” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 29 (2003)

Questions for Reflection:

- What is the English School? What key themes and ideas are promoted? Can we reasonably divide it into theoretical branches?
- To what extent does the ES reject the “scientism” of traditional American IR? Is this a positive or negative?
- Is there a coherent “international society”? How can it be contrasted to the more general international system?
- Is the English school elitist or patriarchal in any way? If so how?
- How can anarchy be “what states make of it”? Is it fair to say that Wendt’s constructivism is a middle ground between more “heavy” constructivists and realists?
- What similarities and differences can we see between Constructivism and English School theories?
- Can both ES and Constructivism be seen as derivations of realism? If so how? What are the commonalities?

September 22: Still Critical?” Post-Structuralism and CSS

Background Reading

- Richard Devetak, “Critical Theory” and “Post-Modernism”, in *Theories of International Relations* (2005)

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Steve Smith, “The Contested Concept of Security” in Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005)
2. [D2L] Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Rosemary E. Shinko, “Discourses of Power: Traversing the Realist-Postmodern Divide” *Millennium* (2005) 2005; 33; 637
3. [D2L] Dirk Nabers, “Filling the Void of Meaning: Identity Construction in U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2009) 5, 191–214
4. [D2L] Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer K. Lobasz, “Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq” *Security Studies* Vol 16, No. 3 (2007)

Additional Reading

- James der Derian, “A Reinterpretation of Realism” in Francis Beer and Robert Hariman (eds) *Post-Realism* (Michigan State University Press, 1996)
- Nicholas Rengger and Ben Thirkell-White, “Still critical after all these years? The past, present and future of Critical Theory in International Relations”, *Review of International Studies* Vol. 33 (2007) [good background reading gives an overview of the discipline]
- Richard K. Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism” *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2. (Spring, 1984)

Some Questions for Reflection:

- What are the foundations of the discipline? What does it mean to think critically about IR?
- What role does Discourse Analysis play in this theoretical discipline? Is drawing distinctions between rhetoric and reality a useful contribution?
- How do Post-Structuralists and CSS theorists approach Realism?
- Why is security a contested term? Do CS theorists see military power as central to world politics?
- To what extent are these theories innovative explorations of IR? Are they realistic and practical assessments?
- How do these theorists approach war and military power?

September 29: Power in International Relations

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Dahl, Robert A., "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science*, 2:3 (July, 1957) and Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power", *American Political Science Review*, Volume 56, Issue 4 (Dec., 1962), 947-952. (Read these two together).
2. [D2L] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Palgrave MacMillan, 1971 / 2005) pp 14-61 (this is not a hard read so don't worry!)
3. [D2L] Peter Digeser, "The Fourth Face of Power", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Nov., 1992), pp. 977-1007
4. [D2L] Stefano Guzzini, "The Concept of Power: a Constructivist Analysis" *Millennium* 2005; 33; 495

Questions for Reflection:

- What is power, and how many different types can we isolate?
- Why is power seen as a contested term? Why is it political to define it in certain ways and not others?
- Does Foucault's analysis represent a fourth face or dimension of power?

October 6: Globalization, Civil Society and Cosmopolitan

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Robert Cox, "Civil society at the turn of the millennium: prospects for an alternative world order," *Review of International Studies* (1999), 25, 3-28
2. [D2L] Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies" *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol 19, Nos 1-2 (2002)
3. [D2L] Eric Kaufmann, "The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in the 20th-century West: A Comparative-historical Perspective on the United States and European Union," *Global Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4, October, 2003
4. [D2L] Norrin M. Ripsman and T. V. Paul, "Globalization and the National Security State: A Framework for Analysis" *International Studies Review* (2005) 7

Questions for Reflection

- Is the state in any danger of disappearing? Would this be positive or negative for individual human rights and security?

- Who are the “losers” in world politics? Does globalization help or hinder their interests?
- How important are conceptions of human rights as the world globalizes?
- What is cosmopolitan society and who are its “enemies”? How can it be promoted? Should it be?
- To what extent do different peoples have different perceptions of globalization? Are these differing perceptions reconcilable?
- What are the limits of globalization?

October 13: Gender and the “Man Question” in IR

Background Reading

- Jacqui True, “Feminism” in *Theories of International Relations* (2005)

Key Readings

1. [D2L] J. Ann Tickner, “Man the State and War: Gendered Perspectives on National Security” in *Gender in IR Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
2. [D2L] V Spike Peterson, “Sexing Political Identities/Nationalism as Heterosexism” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol. 1, No 1 (1999)
3. [D2L] Christine Sylvester, “The Art of War/The War Question in (Feminist) IR” *Millennium* 2005; 33; 855
4. [D2L] Catherine Eschle, “Feminist Studies of Globalisation: Beyond Gender, Beyond Economism?”, *Global Society*, 18:2 (2004).

Additional Reading

- Jill Steans, “Engaging from the margins: feminist encounters with the ‘mainstream’ of International Relations”, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (August 2003)
- Marysia Zalewski interviews Cynthia Enloe: “Feminist Theorizing from Bananas to Maneuvers” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol. 1, No 1 (1999)
- J. Ann Tickner, “What Is Your Research Program? Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol 49 (2005)

Questions for Reflection:

- How and why does traditional IR theory ignore women?
- How have women been excluded from domestic and international politics?
- Would the world be a better place if gender equality existed at the top levels of political leadership?
- To what extent is the current international system a gendered (ie male dominated) construction? Is this also true of domestic systems?
- To what extent is the study of IR still dominated by male interests?
- How is state sovereignty a gendered construct? How is globalization?
- How much do Constructivists and Feminists share in terms of theoretical commonalities?

- How can IR after 9/11 be reread through feminist eyes?

October 20: The Empire Strikes Back: The Resurgence of Realism

It's worth looking at how (Neo)Realism has defended itself and how it has been relevantly applied during the post-9/11 era.

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War" *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000),
2. [D2L] Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment", *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006)
3. [D2L] Brian Schmidt, "Competing Realist Conceptions of Power" *Millennium*, 2005; 33; 523
4. [D2L] William Brenner, "In Search of Monsters: Realism and Progress in International Relations Theory after September 11," *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2006)

Additional Reading

- Stacie E. Goddard and Daniel H. Nexon, "Paradigm Lost? Reassessing Theory of International Politics" *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 11, No. 1 (2005)
- Stephen Krasner, "Rethinking the sovereign state model" *Review of International Studies* Vol. 27 (2001)
- Robert Jervis, "Realism in the Study of World Politics" *International Organization* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998)
- John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions" *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3. (Winter, 1994-1995)
- Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States" *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005)

Questions for Reflection

- Can international institutions really promise a higher level of security and safety than the nation-state?
- Is the nation-state receding in importance?
- Is the post-Cold War international system more or less stable than the Cold War era of bipolarity?
- Is Neorealism still a theoretical project in good shape? Can it help us better understand the nature of world politics than Constructivism, Post-Structuralism or CSS?
- Who is balancing against the US and why?

October 27: Lessons of the Past: Analogies and Foreign Policy

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Stephen Dyson and Thomas Preston, "Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making," *Political Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2006):

- [D2L] David Patrick Houghton, "The Role of Analogical Reasoning in Novel Foreign-Policy Situations", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (1996).
- [D2L] David Hoogland Noon, "Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, The War on Terror, and the Uses of Historical Memory," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004):
- [D2L] Michael Desch, "The Myth of Abandonment: The Use and Abuse of the Holocaust Analogy" *Security Studies*, Vol 15, No. 1 (2006)

Questions for Reflection

- What are analogies? How can we use the past constructively?
- What is the problem of simplification?
- Did analogies help or hinder US foreign policy making after 9/11?
- How does an individual president affect analogical reasoning?
- What roles has World War II played in foreign policy analysis? Are past wars good guides to interpreting current events?
- Was Saddam like Hitler? Are Berman's arguments convincing?

November 3: Neo-conservatism Rise and Fall

Key Readings

- [D2L] Michael Williams, "What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory" *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 11 No. 3 (2005)
- [D2L] Charles Krauthammer, "Democratic Realism" (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2004)
- [D2L] Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness" *Policy Review* (June-July, 2002)
- [D2L] Patrick J. Buchanan, *Day of Reckoning* (New York: St Martins, 2007), Chapter 3: "The Gospel of George Bush"

Additional Reading

- Francis Fukuyama, "The Neoconservative Moment" *National Interest* (Summer 2004)
- Edward Shapiro, "Judaism and the Conservative Rift," *American Jewish History* 87, Nos. 2&3 (June and September 1999).
- Claes G. Ryn, "Leo Strauss and History: The Philosopher as Conspirator" *HUMANITAS* Volume XVIII, Nos. 1 and 2 (2005).

Questions for Reflection

- Is Neoconservatism a coherent world view? If so what are its main elements?
- Does Neoconservatism reflect traditional American views of power and position? American traditional exceptionalist ideals?
- Should US policy-makers attempt to spread democracy to the Middle East? Can this project succeed in the long term?
- To what extent is Neoconservatism tied to the dominant Neorealist and Neoliberal theories of IR? To what extent does it differ?
- Neoconservatives are often accused of being paternalistic and arrogant? Is this characterization unfair?
- How do conservatives like Buchanan differ in their understandings of state interest and IR than neoconservatives? Why is he so opposed to them?

November 10: US Grand Strategy and Democracy Promotion

Key Readings

1. [D2L] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., “An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4. (Dec., 1999),
2. [D2L] Michael C. Desch, “America’s Liberal Illiberalism: The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter 2007/08),
3. [D2L] Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig, "Against All Odds? The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4 (2008)
4. [D2L] Max Abrahms, (2007) “Why Democracies Make Superior Counterterrorists,” *Security Studies*,16:2, 223 — 253

Additional Reading

- David M. Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer 2004),
- Larry Diamond, “Building Democracy After Conflict: Lessons from Iraq” *Journal of Democracy* Volume 16, Number 1 (2005)

Questions for Reflection

- Are democracies more peaceful and law abiding than other forms of government?
- Are democracies better equipped to win in war against more autocratic regimes?
- What role does the character of democratic leadership play in peaceful or warlike relations?
- Should democracy promotion be a key goal of western foreign policy?
- Do human rights abuses justify regime change? If so what level of abuse should trigger outside intervention?
- Can democracy be imposed from the outside? What role do powerful states and international institutions play in this process?
- Was the process of democracy promotion a failure in Iraq? Could success have been achieved with a different strategy?
- Why do foreign occupations succeed or fail?

November 17 & 24: Group Debates and Class Discussion

The debates will take place over two weeks. Students will divide into teams of 3-4 people. We will have four teams per week. The point is to use IR theory and theorists to help promote your case. These are not just general case studies where you produce general arguments. The arguments should be buttressed with the work of theorists in the field of IR. You should argue through the theorists and theoretical traditions as much as possible. You will notice that the pro/con arguments are phrased slightly differently.

Each team will present for about 15-20 minutes – thus totaling about 30-40 minutes per topic. Make sure you discuss theories and theorists, and give country or region-based examples to

support your topic. We will then have a discussion of both sides with the class involved. I will ask questions of you, and your classmates will have their own views, which I shall moderate. These presentations are oral and there is no PowerPoint necessary. You should prepare a one page outline of your arguments for the class. Please print 30 copies. Each group should submit a 1,500 word report on their debating topic which should feature a detailed introduction and full academic references.

Below are six cases. We will vote on the top four and I will then circulate a sign-up sheet.

Case: Globalization

1. Globalization is eroding state sovereignty to the point where governments will soon exert only minimal control within their own borders. This will be positive for individuals around the world.
2. Globalization is not significantly eroding state sovereignty. Indeed, the larger countries are using globalization to achieve their own national goals.

Case: Nuclear Weapons

1. Offensive realists are right. States can achieve more security by developing nuclear weapons. Great Powers should develop this type of weapon to safeguard against rivals.
2. Offensive realists are wrong. The world is made more insecure by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the fear of rivals having or using nuclear weapons.

Case: Obama and American Foreign Policy

1. President Obama is primarily pursuing a realist agenda in his foreign policy.
2. President Obama is primarily pursuing a liberal idealist agenda in his foreign policy.

Case: Religion

1. Religion is often overlooked as a key factor in IR, but it is very important. Religion forms the basis of group identities, even civilizations, and influences foreign policy.
2. International relations is about power, not belief. Religious identity is manipulated by elites but does not significantly influence how elites view the world or conduct politics.

Case: Europe Versus America

1. Soft Power is Better: European emphasis on diplomacy, soft power, and international institutions is the best way to deal with international insecurity and threats.
2. Hard Power is Better: Europeans are militarily weak, so they emphasize soft power while America does the opposite. Sometimes, only a robust military can bring international stability.

Case: Religion

1. Religion is often overlooked as a key factor in IR, but it is very important. Religion forms the basis of group identities, even civilizations, and influences foreign policy.
2. International relations is about power, not belief. Religious identity is manipulated by elites but does not significantly influence how elites view the world or conduct politics.

Case: Rise of China

1. China is a dangerous superpower in the making. The US must devote resources and long range planning to combat the threat.
2. China is more opportunity than danger. It seeks only regional hegemony. More cooperation with China is in the interests of the US.

POLS 4720 Essay Topics

1. Analyze how selected English School *or* Constructivist theorists have approached American unipolarity and military intervention since 9/11. Is their focus on the social or ideational useful as a means of understanding contemporary international politics?
2. Why are Realists sometimes against the American use of force in international affairs?
3. Is Neoconservatism a coherent theoretical program? Does it have a future in the Obama era?
4. How dangerous a phenomenon is anti-Americanism in world politics? Should it be encouraged, ignored, or actively combated?
5. Are “civilizations” a useful construct in helping to interpret major events in IR like the 9/11 terrorist attacks? Discuss using the theories of Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington as a starting point.
6. To what extent is the nature of the international system determined by domestic culture and identity?
7. Can democracy be successfully imposed by force from outside?
8. Would more female political leaders reduce the likelihood of war and terrorism in the international system?
9. Steve Smith argues that IR remains an “American social science”. Do you agree?
10. Another topic in consultation with me.