POLS 469/569: THEORIES OF WORLD POLITICS

Saint Louis University
Spring 2014
121 McGannon Hall
Schedule: R: 4:20-6:50

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and by appointment.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a “field” (professional) and “pro” seminar of the subfield of international relations in the discipline of political science. Such seminars are designed to fulfill two objectives. First, the course offers a comprehensive engagement with the literature of the subfield. Thus, as a field seminar, it serves as the foundation for the graduate Comprehensive or Preliminary Exam. This exam, in turn, provides the budding academic professional with the intellectual grounding for all courses taught in international relations as well as the theoretical capital for his or her thesis and/or dissertation. These seminars, then, are the premier courses in the discipline.

Second, as a “pro” seminar, the course is designed to hone the skills of the student in handling literature reviews for both teaching and research. Students will do oral reports on the readings to develop skills in class preparation and presentation, and write literature reviews to aid them in their subsequent research projects.

Despite the attempt at comprehensiveness, the field has become too vast for other than a selective coverage of what the professor considers to be the basics of the field and some of the more promising contemporary challenges/prospects to this field of study. Specifically, the course will cover realism, idealism/liberalism, deterrence theory, and small wars and counterinsurgency in terms of “classics.” We will also examine the ways IR has borrowed from other disciplines and tried to make them its own such as political economy, political psychology, and decision-making theory. We will conclude with the critiques and challenges of Marxism, critical theory and postmodernism, the English school, and constructivism and feminism.

Nevertheless, there are many research programs that will be neglected like American foreign policy, game theory, international law, peace studies, the formation of alliances, international public opinion, long cycle theories of war and peace, and economic statecraft to name just a few. There are certainly good reasons to include these subjects in a course like this, but the reasons for including the topics I have chosen are somewhat more compelling, at least to me. This is to recognize that there will be much

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1 I wish to thank my Research Assistant Amanda Klevorn for downloading course syllabi from similar courses at other institutions as well as providing some preliminary reactions to potential course readings. This help was invaluable! This syllabus has been developed by comparing my own understanding of the field with comparable syllabi at Columbia (3 syllabi), UCLA (2), and one each from Stanford, Duke, and UCSD.
in this course that resonates with these words of Professor Arthur Stein at UCLA concerning his own course:

There are different things that you may find disappointing. There are too many readings and not enough time adequately to discuss them all. We will never pay enough attention to the approaches you like; we will spend too much time on work you don’t like. Some of you will be frustrated by the fact that no one particular approach is pushed in the course—you will want to be told where the truth lies rather than be encouraged to tolerate ambiguity and accept the hyperpluralism (emphasis added) of the field.

Think of the following questions as you read. What do the authors want to explain? What explains each phenomenon in question? What are the critical concepts? How are cause and effect observed? What kind of research design is employed? From what theoretical perspective does the argument originate? With whom are the authors engaged in debate?

Regarding the background of your professor, I teach broadly in IR and Comparative, with the focus in the former on international security and the latter on Asian politics. At the graduate level, in addition to international security, I teach an interdisciplinary seminar on the Politics of the Future, a seminar on Asymmetric Warfare, and a new seminar on The Political Thought of Asia. My research is in insurgency and counterinsurgency more generally, and the lessons of Vietnam more specifically (I have five books now on this topic). Currently, the focus of my efforts is on a book-length manuscript contrasting the interventions in the Cold War versus those in the War on Terror. Theoretically, I intend this as one of the many challenges to Kenneth Waltz’ contention that “the system is all,” by laying out the analytical utility of a regional level-of-analysis. My most recent book is the publication of my memoir, The Vietnam War From the Rear Echelon, by the University Press of Kansas in 2011. My current project is a book-length manuscript on the intersection of religion and politics, “Heaven Can’t Wait: How Beliefs in Heaven Determine Political Calculations on Earth.” I will be happy to discuss these projects with you.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Saint Louis University takes the issue of academic honesty seriously. Please read the following policy statement carefully:

> Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to the instructor and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.
DISABILITIES

Students with university-certified disabilities should identify themselves to the professor so that the appropriate modifications can be arranged. These modifications are to be arranged at the Student Success Center in the Busch Student Center # 331 or at the web site: www.slu.edu/success. Students may also contact Disability Services at (314) 977-8885.

OTHER MATTERS

Because of the lateness of the hour, there is the inevitable temptation to combine this course with one’s dinner. Resist this temptation. While non-potent liquids are fine, confine your consumption of solid foods to the breaks. Also, e-mails are for quick queries or notifications. Anything more complicated requiring more than a few sentences of response should be handled by an office visit. Finally, all written work should be submitted in hard copy at the appointed times, and not by e-mail!

TEXTS

The following books will serve as core texts for the course. They should be purchased at the bookstore, or some other place at your discretion. They are listed in alphabetical order.

Scott Burchill, et al., Theories of International Relations, 5th ed. (’13)
E. H. Carr, The Twenty Years Crisis (1939)
Robert Keohane, After Hegemony (1984)
Thomas Schelling, Arms and Influence (1964)
Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (1979)
Phil Williams, et al., Classical Readings and Contemporary Debates In International Relations, 3rd ed. (2006)

Other readings will be on Hard Reserve or E-Reserve in Pius Library. The e-password is “theories of IR.” Some of the report readings will be from the professor’s library. They will be so-noted in the syllabus.

COURSE GRADE, SCALE, AND COMPONENTS

The course grade will be derived from weekly page summaries of the readings, participation and reports, papers, and a take-home final in these proportions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 weekly page summaries</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and reports</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper I, as specified</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper II, as specified</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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My grading scale for each component is as follows: A= 92%-95%. Over a long career, I find that I rarely go above a 95% just as a matter of grading practice, though there are occasional exceptions. A- is 90% and 91%. For the other grades, I follow the decile practice of 7-9 as a +, 3-6 as the solid letter grade, and 0-2 as the minus grade. For the B+ grade, the average must be a solid 87%. There will be no rounding up from 86.5 to 86.99.

**Weekly reading summaries**—students must turn in a single page, single-spaced summary of the class readings at the beginning of each class—for ten classes of their choosing. These summaries must include the central question addressed by the class readings, what are the basic arguments concerning this question, and a brief commentary on their relative effectiveness. For full points, all assigned readings must be covered in some way. All ten summaries must be submitted, or else the student will receive an Incomplete. I will not accept late papers for these summaries. For students submitting more than ten summaries, I will count the best ten.

**Participation and reports**—for each class, there are three possible participation points: one for attendance, two for some participation, and three for both insightful and full engagement with the readings. Excused absences can only gain one point; unexcused are zero. In addition, all graduate students are expected to give three oral reports on supplementary readings, and undergraduates should give one. They will also be graded on a three-point scale (one is minimal, two is good/satisfactory, and three is excellent/lucid). Hence, the scaling of the overall participation grade will be different for graduates and undergraduates. As a seminar, it is critical to become fully engaged in the class, since this portion counts a heavy 25%.

**Papers I and II**—are worth 20% each for the course grade. For undergraduates, both papers will consist of five-page fuller analyses of the readings for a particular class. The first paper is due March 6th and should be chosen from Class Numbers 2—7. The second is due April 24th and should be chosen from Class Numbers 8—13.

For graduate students, their first paper should be a 7-10 page analysis of the literature on one of the class topics (that is on both the assigned readings and others pertinent to the question). The second paper, also 7—10 pages, should be a literature review of a student’s particular research interest or on the generation of their own research hypothesis on some question drawn from IR. The due dates are the same for the undergraduate papers, namely, March 6th and April 24th.

More detailed guidelines on these papers are contained in a separate hand-out.

**Take Home Final**—This 10 page take home final essay will be common for the whole class. It will be distributed on the last class, May 1st, and due May 8th, the day of the scheduled Final Exam for the class.
ATTENDANCE

As an intensive seminar that only meets once a week for two and a half hours, attendance at each class is critical for success in this course. There are, of course, inevitable conflicts that arise in the course of any semester, including illness. I will assume that two such absences falls under the normal vicissitudes of life. Since there are ten required reading summaries, and the first class doesn’t count, four absences are the maximum allowable in this course. For anyone who misses more than four classes, for whatever reason, he or she will be dropped from the class.

SCHEDULE

I. BACKGROUND

Jan 16th (R) #1 Course Introduction and Empirical Background
Detailed course overview and expectations. Class will also provide and discuss the empirical grounding to the theories of International Relations covered in the course.

Reading: None

Jan 23rd (R) #2 Methods in International Relations I
Examination of how theoretical concerns are approached in IR. Limitations of the Paradigm approach for IR; the efficacy of the Lakatos “Research Program;” focus on Kenneth Waltz’s pivotal theory of system and structure as well as his scientific standards for IR research. Reports on Lakatos and Robert Gilpin.

Reading: Burchill, Ch. 1.
Genest, Ch. 1.
Waltz, Chs. 1-5.

Robert Gilpin, in Genest, pp. 88-98, and War and Change, Chs. 2-5.

II. CLASSICAL BASICS

Jan 30th (R) #3 Classical and Structural Realism
Realism is the foundational approach to the study of international relations—heavily criticized, yet it continues to

**Reading:** Genest, Ch. 2.
Burchill, Ch. 2.
Waltz, Ch. 6.

**Supplementary/Reports:** Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations.*

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**Feb 6**

**#4 Idealism, Neo-Liberalism, and the “Democratic Peace”**

Idealism is the major competitor to realism in IR. Strangely, it is not a complete departure (it shares in many fundamentals), but it has offered trenchant criticisms that have also endured. Like realism, it comes in different iterations. We will look at some of the core tenets of idealism, consider the variant of complex interdependence, and conclude with the “new” thesis (arguably a “law”) of the “Democratic Peace.” Reports on complex interdependence and the Democratic Peace.

**Reading:** Genest, Ch. 3.
Burchill, Ch. 3.
Williams, pp. 5-39, 285-301

**Supplementary/Reports:** Keohane and Nye, *Complex Interdependence* (1977).
Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Leagues and Foreign Affairs” (1983).
C. Lane, “Kant or Cant,” *IS* (Fall ’94).

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**Feb 13**

**#5 Deterrence in the Nuclear Age: MAD, NUTS, and Beyond**

A basic feature of the nuclear era was the transformation of international politics in response to the “Absolute Weapon” whereby conventional defense turned into unconventional deterrence. We will look at what this means, and does not mean, and assess the two main strategies of deterrence: MAD and NUTS. Reports on Brodie, Kahn, and the IS article.
**Reading:** Williams, Ch. 4, #’s 24, 26, 27
Ch. 5, pp. 413-436.
Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, all, but focus on Chs. 1, 4, 5.

**Supplementary/Reports:** Bernard Brodie, ed. *Absolute Weapon* (1946) or
Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*
Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*

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**Feb 20**(R) **#6** **Small Wars, Counterinsurgency, and Asymmetric Warfare**
Professors of this course typically devote at least one class to their “thing.” This is mine. What is of larger interest is that this subject represents an insertion from Comparative Politics into IR. It also amounts to a central critique of the theoretical definition of the field advanced by Kenneth Waltz. Reports on Small Wars Manual and thesis of Steve Metz.

**Reading:** Lomperis, *From People’s War to People’s Rule*, Chs. 1-3.

**Supplementary/Reports:** U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (1940).
Steve Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*
David Petraeus, *et al.*, *Counter-Insurgency Field Manaul* (’06).

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**III. BORROWINGS AND/OR INSERTIONS FROM OTHER FIELDS**

**Feb 27**(R) **#7** **International Political Economy**
IPE is an outgrowth of Idealism, or at least of Complex Interdependence, but it also represents an attempt to return to the roots of political science. It is a borrowing from economics for political purposes. Guest presentation on field by Dr. Lorenzini. Reports on regimes and critiques of same.

**Reading:** Keohane, *After Hegemony*, entire.
Waltz, Ch. 7.

**Supplementary/Reports:** Steve Krazner, *International Regimes.*
Mar 6th (R) #8 Foreign Policy Decision-Making and Bureaucratic Politics
The proliferating expansion in the creation of a massive U.S. foreign policy decision-making establishment after WW II practically required the opening up of a new theoretical level-of-analysis between the nation-state and individual levels. There was much borrowing from communications theory, organizational behavior, and political psychology in setting this up. We will look at the contributions and defects of this new level. Reports on Cybernetics and Richard Neustadt.

Reading: Genest, Ch. 7.
Williams, Ch. 3, pp. 127-208.

Supplementary/Reports: Neustadt, Presidential Power
Steinbrunner, Cybernetic Theory of Decision-making
Charles Herman, Definition of a Crisis
Ole Holsti, Crisis, Escalation, and War
Graham Allison, Essence of Decision
Morton Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy

*****PAPER I DUE MARCH 6TH*****

+++++SPRING BREAK, MARCH 10-14+++++

Mar 20th (R) #9 Political Psychology and Psychological Explanations
Political Psychology represents an earlier wholesale borrowing than IPE from a sister social science. It has been most influential in the subfields of American and IR, particularly to account for decisions of key leaders and advisors. We will examine its rise and relative decline. Reports on Robert Jervis and Prospect Theory.

Reading: Genest, Chs. 8, 9.
Williams, pp. 465-505.
Irving Janus, Groupthink, Chs. 1, 6, 8, 10, 11. On E-reserve.

Supplementary/Reports: Jervis, Perception and Mis-Perception in International Relations, Chs. 3, 8, 9.
McDermott, Risk Taking in International Politics.
IV. CRITIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Mar 27th (R) #10 Marxism and Revisionism
Though perhaps on its last legs politically, Marxism has offered a powerful critique of Western international relations theory that is still worth investigating—partly to see what went wrong with this critique, but also to see what remains. Revisionism, a largely American outgrowth of Marxism remains alive and moderately well. Reports on Richard Barnet’s National Security Managers and Joseph Schumpeter’s Warrior Caste.

Reading: Burchill, Ch. 5.
Williams, pp. 73-90.
Genest, Ch. 4.

Supplementary/Reports: Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy
Richard Barnet, Roots of War
For further works of Marxism on imperialism, see
The writings of V.I. Lenin, John Hobson, and Karl Kautsky. On revisionism and neoeimperialism, see
William A. Williams, John Gardner, Harry Magdoff, Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, and Noam Chomsky.

Apr 3rd (R) #11 Critical Theory and Postmodernism
Now we get to two European critiques of IR theory (which is Largely American). The first is the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. Dr. Ruth Groff will speak to us about Habermas and Adorno. We will briefly consider the Postmodernism of Foucault and Derrida. Reports on Cox and Ashley.

Reading: Burchill, Chs. 7, 8.
Williams, pp. 391-401

Supplementary/Reports: Robert Cox, Production, Power, And World Order (1987)
#12 The English School

This second European critique is not well-known as a critique in the U.S., though, strange to say, the authors are widely read. Although this school of thought is akin to realism, its emphasis is on a society of states, rather than states as separate actors. It serves as a nuanced corrective/critique of both realism and idealism. Two reports on Hedley Bull.

**Reading:** Burchill, Ch. 4.

**Supplementary/Reports:** Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*

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#13 Constructivism and Feminism

Constructivism is a new attack on realism as well as on Rationalism/rational choice. Though its literature originates in Postmodernism, most of its premises are drawn from some “old cloth” (political culture) in comparative politics. Feminism lately has also turned to international relations, and we need to see what it has to say. Reports on Wendt and Enloe.

**Reading:** Burchill, Ch. 9, 10.
Genest, Ch. 5.
Williams, pp. 374-379.

**Supplementary/Reports:** Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” *IS* 20, no. 1 (1995)
Fuller work is *Social Theory and International Politics* (1999)
An anti-feminist critique is Jean Elshtain, *Women and War*
On IR theory more generally, see the feminist Writings of Tinker and Gowa.
V. WRAP-UP AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Apr 24th (R)  #14 Methods in International Relations II
At different levels and from various perspectives, all these new theories and approaches have called into question, either directly or indirectly, Waltz’s set of standards for evaluating IR theory. Here we examine some potential new standards from Robert Jervis and others. We will also have reports and discussion on rational choice and chaos theory.

Reading: Williams, pp. 402-412.
Jervis, System Effects, Chs. 1, 2, 3.

James Glieck, Chaos (’87) [basic]
Bernice Cohen, The Edge of Chaos (’94) [applied to social sciences]

+++++++++++PAPER II DUE APRIL 24th ++++++++++++  

May 1st (R)  #15 SLU Faculty Research and Wrap-Up
Q and A with Dr. Ellen Carnaghan on her recent book, Out of Order (2007). Final discussion on what we have and have not learned. Distribution of Final Take-Home Essay. Course evaluations. No reports!

Reading: Carnaghan, Out of Order

**********TAKE-HOME FINAL ESSAY IS DUE MAY 8TH**********