

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of Political Science

Political Science 28320
Realism
Winter 2006

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Course Description: The aim of this course is to introduce students to the body of international relations theory known as realism. There is a tendency to think that there is a simple realist template which all realists accept, mainly because all realists think alike. In fact, realists have all sorts of disagreements about how international politics works. Those differences, as well as the similarities among realist thinkers, will be paid much attention in this course. In particular, much attention will be paid to examining the divide between human nature realists (aka classical realists) and structural realists (aka neo-realists). Much attention will also be focused on examining the divide within structural realism between defensive realism and offensive realism. Some of the key questions that will inform the readings and lectures include: 1) what is power? 2) why do states pursue power? 3) how much power do states want? 4) what causes war? 5) what strategies do states pursue to gain power and to preserve it? 6) is realism ethically bankrupt? 7) what is the security dilemma? And 8) how do Hobbes and Machiavelli fit into the realist canon?

Course Requirements: This course is oriented around the readings and the lectures. Every student is expected to do all the reading and attend every lecture. Moreover, each student is expected to attend a discussion section that meets once a week. The grade will be based on a comprehensive final examination (75%) and classroom participation in the discussion section (25%).

Readings and Books: The following books (all paperbacks) are available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore:

Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Chicago)
John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton)
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago)
Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw Hill)
Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (Basic Books)
Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge)

All articles or book chapters with ** next to them are on E-reserve at Regenstein Library.
All articles or book chapters with **** next to them are available on Chalk.

Course Outline

1. January 4, 2006 (Wednesday): Overview

-- Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism," in John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 162-183.**

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chapter 1.

STRUCTURAL REALISM

2. January 9 (Monday): The International System

-- Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapters. 4-6.

3. January 11 (Wednesday): Balance of Power Politics

-- Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapters. 7-8.

4. January 16 (Monday): No Class (Martin Luther King Day)

5. January 18 (Wednesday): The Security Dilemma

-- Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1978), pp. 167-214. ***

6. January 23 (Monday): The Offense – Defense Balance

-- Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Summer 1995), pp. 660-691. ** Read carefully.

-- Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, "What is the Offense – Defense Balance and Can We Measure It?" *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 44-92. *** Skim.

-- Keir Lieber, "Grasping the Technological Peace: The Offense- Defense Balance and International Security," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp. 71-104. *** Skim.

-- Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998), pp. 5-43. Skim. ***

7. January 25 (Wednesday): Intentions

-- Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Fall 1997), pp.114-155. **

-- Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, chapter. 2. **

8. January 30 (Monday): Offensive Realism – I

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chapters. 2, 3, 5, 8 (skim 4)

9. February 1 (Wednesday): Offensive Realism – II

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chapters. 6, 7, 9.

HUMAN NATURE REALISM

10. February 6 (Monday): Machiavelli

-- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, read entire book.

11. February 8 (Wednesday): The Cold War Realists

-- Robin W. Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 4. **

-- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (Knopf, 1973), chapters 1 and 3. **

12. February 13 (Monday): Evolutionary Theory and Realism

-- Bradley A. Thayer, "Bringing in Darwin: Evolutionary Theory, Realism, and International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2000), pp. 124-151. ***

13. February 15 (Wednesday): The Friend – Enemy Distinction

-- Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, read entire book.

Is Realism Evil?

14. February 20 (Monday): Benign Realism

-- Michael C. Desch, "It is Kind to be Cruel: The Humanity of American Realism," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 29 (2003), pp. 415-426. ***

-- Marc Trachtenberg, "The Question of Realism: A Historian's View," *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn 2003), pp. 156-194. ***

15. February 22 (Wednesday): Hobbes the Anti-Realist

-- Williams, *Realist Tradition*, Introduction and chapter. 1.

16. February 27 (Monday): A Social Constructivist Take on Realism

-- Williams, *Realist Tradition*, read chapters 4-5, skim chapters. 2-3.

17. March 1 (Wednesday): Just War Theory – I

-- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, parts 1-2.

18. March 6 (Monday): Just War Theory – II

-- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, parts 3-5.

19. March 8 (Wednesday): Realism and Just War Theory

-- Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 1, chapter 1; and Book 8, chapter 6.**

-- Alexander Downes, forthcoming article in *International Security*. It will be provided to students on Chalk when available.