Theories of International Relations

This course offers a graduate-level introduction to the field of international relations, with an emphasis on contending theoretical perspectives and some of the key empirical findings. The material includes classics in the field as well as more recent research that illustrates ongoing areas of inquiry. Its purpose is to introduce and evaluate the theories and methods used in the study of international relations, to identify interesting and important questions in the field, and to think about the ways in which research can be designed to get at those questions.

This course is part of a two-quarter sequence (together with PS221) that is designed for doctoral students specializing in international relations.

Requirements

The first and most important requirement is your regular attendance and participation in the seminar. Please come to class every week prepared to discuss all of the assigned readings.

In addition, there are two writing assignments:

1) Two short papers, 4-5 pages in length, which critically examine a given week’s readings. Students will sign up for weeks to do these papers at the first meeting, and each week’s papers will be due by 5:00pm on the Tuesday before class meets. Papers can be put in my box or emailed. The papers should address some aspect of the week’s readings, such as by critically examining a set of arguments, appraising a controversy in the literature, and/or discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the research designs employed.

2) A 15-page paper, due by the end of the exam week, which does one of the following:

(a) A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature on a discrete question in the study of international relations. The idea is to trace the development of work on the chosen problem over the last several decades with an eye to understanding what we have learned (if anything), what theoretical innovations and/or research strategies have been productive, and what puzzles remain unresolved. Some examples of discrete questions in the field will be provided.
(b) A research proposal that draws some hypotheses from the theoretical literature and lays out an empirical strategy for testing them. The idea is to pick an interesting question or puzzle from the course material and to propose a research design for answering it.

Grades will be a function of course participation (50 percent), the short papers (20 percent), and the long paper (30 percent).

Readings

The following books will be available at the bookstore:


The rest of the readings will be made available either on the course web page or in the Political Science graduate student lounge.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1. Theory and International Relations

Waltz, ch. 1.


I. Major Theoretical Traditions

2. Realism: Anarchy, Power, and the State
3. Liberalism I: International Institutions

Keohane, chs. 1-6.


4. Liberalism II: Domestic Society and Institutions


5. Constructivism: Culture, Norms, and Identity

Katzenstein, chs. 1 (Katzenstein), 2 (Jepperson, Wendt, Katzenstein), 5 (Finnemore), 7 (Johnston), 9 (Berger).


II. Explaining Conflict

6. Power, War, and Peace


Katzenstein, ch. 8 (Hermann).

7. Crisis Bargaining, Credibility, and Reputation


8. Domestic Politics and International Conflict


Katzenstein, ch. 10 (Risse-Kappen).


### III. Explaining Cooperation

9. International Institutions


10. Domestic Politics and International Cooperation


