

Theories of International Relations • SIS-301.001 Spring Semester 2009

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[PROCEDURE FOR HAVING A SCHEDULED OFFICE VISIT WITH PTJ]: my regular office-hours are unscheduled, and are generally some combination of first-come, first-served plus a periodic triage for time constraints and the like. This semester, office hours will generally take place on Wednesdays before class; from about 12pm-1pm you may find me eating lunch in TDR, and from about 1pm-2pm you may find me in my office. During regular office-hours, I am guaranteed to be available for a face-to-face chat. That said, some weeks I may have to move my hours around; whatever is on my online calendar (<http://ical.mac.com/onyxdr/Patrick>) is current for the week. If you cannot make it to regular office hours, and you don't want to just drop in and take your chances, *you have to make appointments with me by e-mail*. First, check my calendar online; second, request an open time-slot; third, wait for an e-mailed confirmation before writing the appointment into your own schedule.]



This course will meet Wednesdays, 2:10pm-4:40pm, in the Leonard Hall classroom on the first floor.

This is a green course. Please do not print this syllabus unless absolutely necessary – and it should not be necessary.

Course Objective and Description

World politics is full of dramatic singular events: wars, financial crises, terrorist attacks, peace talks, revolutions, popular campaigns for human rights. International Relations (IR) theory helps us explain and understand those events by equipping us with the appropriate conceptual tools to use in placing these events into context. This course will consider some of the major theoretical alternatives on offer in contemporary IR scholarship, with an eye to clarifying their similarities and differences. Since many of the perennial issues at stake in IR theoretical debates have their roots in classical questions of political philosophy, the course will begin with discussion of some of those classical authors. After this foundation has been established, we will move to a more direct discussion of IR theoretical schools like realism, liberalism, constructivism, feminism, and critical theory.

The basic aim of this course is to enhance your ability to “do” IR theory, by which I mean your ability to theorize about world politics in a manner that places you in conversation with other IR theorists both past and present. An essential prerequisite for doing so is that you are able to read theory critically, and that is the primary

competency or intellectual disposition that this course seeks to develop. An essential part of such critical reading is the ability to formulate a compelling interpretation of a text, and the bulk of our class time and our assignments will be devoted to the generation and evaluation of such interpretations.

Assignments and Grading

It should be obvious that a course like this only works if everyone does the assigned reading in advance. In addition, I will expect that everyone will bring the day's text with them to class very day; all discussions will be conducted with the text open in front of us, and if you cannot find textual support for your claim—whatever the claim might be—it is not likely to constitute a productive contribution to the conversation. Take notes when you read; mark passages that seem important or interesting or puzzling, and have those notes with you in class.

In order to help ensure that you do this, I would like everyone to keep a personal reading journal. The journal should consist of at least three paragraphs per week, with two paragraphs written before class and one written after class. The two before-class paragraphs should consist of one paragraph summarizing the main argument of the day's text to the best of your ability, and one paragraph that highlights one point in the text that you found striking or illuminating or puzzling or otherwise worthy of note. The after-class paragraph should consist of a reflection on how your understanding of the text changed, or was strengthened, by the class discussion—perhaps a point was clarified, perhaps the overall argument now appears less unambiguous than it did before class, etc.

Note that the reading journal is *not* a document for public consumption; I am not interested in stimulating a pre-class conversation based on the circulation of your journal entries for the week. Hence I do not want you to publish your journal to a blog or other online forum. On the other hand, I want to make sure that you are actually keeping this journal as we go through the semester. While it seems pretty obvious to me that doing the journal weekly will help you to contribute more intelligently to class discussion, this may not be clear to you yet—or you may need some additional incentive to do the journal weekly. Hence I am going to require you to submit the journal to me weekly, by noontime on the Friday following each class meeting. However, I will not be evaluating the content of these journals; what matters is that you submit them to me on time, and that they have the three paragraphs that I have asked for. As long as you do that throughout the semester, you will receive full credit for this portion of your grade.

As you may have gathered, the most substantial component of this course will consist of class discussion. Over the course of the semester I expect you to develop a record of vigorous participation in those discussions; this does not mean that you have to say something each and every day, but it does mean that you should be a regular

contributor to our effort to wrestle with the meaning of these theoretical texts and their implications.

To kick-start class discussion, a small group of 2-3 students will begin class each day by presenting, in 10 minutes or less, a brief summary of the day's reading and at least two questions for subsequent consideration by the class. This summary and these questions will be posted (in the form of a page on the day's texts) on the class wiki, located at <http://auirtheoryspring2009.wetpaint.com>, twenty-four hours before class begins, i.e., by 2pm on Tuesday of each class week. If you are part of the group kick-starting class discussion for a given week, you do not need to do or submit a journal for that week. After class, it will be the collective responsibility of the entire class to update the wiki to take into account what we have discussed; the goal is that by the end of the semester, the wiki will represent a snapshot of our collective conversations. Note that everyone has the opportunity to update the wiki, and there will be a collective grade for the wiki as a whole assigned to *every* member of the class at the end of the semester; hence it is in everyone's interest to make the wiki as thorough and compelling as possible.

In addition, there will be three take-home essay exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will feature two questions; for each exam, you must choose one question to answer in an essay of no more than 1200 words. Exam questions will be made available on 11 February (essays due by 11:59pm on 15 February), 25 March (essays due 11:59pm on 29 March), and 6 May (essays due 11:59pm on 9 May).

Written assignments *must* be submitted to me electronically. In order to do this, please save your assignment in either MS Word or rtf format, and e-mail them to me at the address above. Please name your document as follows: journals should be yourlastname_journal_#.doc or yourlastname_journal_#.rtf, and essays should be yourlastname_essay_#.doc or yourlastname_essay_#.rtf. In either case, # should be replaced by the assignment number and yourlastname is, of course, your last name. I will send an acknowledgment by e-mail when I receive your assignment, and will return the essays (but not the journals) with comments embedded in the text when I have graded it. If you cannot see the comments, or if the file fails to open properly, please e-mail me *immediately* so that we can resolve the problem.

Semester grades will be calculated as follows:

class discussion	50%
weekly journals	15%
wiki (collective grade for the entire class).....	10%
three essays.....	25%

At appropriate times during the semester I will be providing letter grades for the various components of the course. The university also forces me to provide a letter

grade for your overall semester performance. What do these grades mean? A letter grade for an individual assignment is my assessment of the extent to which you have met the goals and requirements of the assignment, whereas your semester grade is my assessment of the extent to which you have met the course requirements consistently throughout the semester. I do not grade on a curve; grades represent less how you perform relative to your classmates and more how you perform in absolute terms.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- A: outstanding work
- B: solid, capable work
- C: satisfactory work
- D: unsatisfactory work
- F: failure to meet minimum goals

I will also provide more detailed feedback about your performance in these and other aspects of the course periodically, or upon request. Make an appointment or drop by my office.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. The General Education Program requests that all General Education instructors reproduce this statement on academic integrity in their syllabi, and even though this is not a General Education course, I think this is a good statement of policy and principle: "Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code, which can be found in the University catalog. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course."

Let me add that Web-based plagiarism does you no good, particularly since I have access to the very same InterNet search engines that you do; you probably won't get away with it, and the penalties are *quite* severe if you are caught. And just so there's no ambiguity: the Academic Integrity Code applies to all course work, including wiki entries, and any material used during your turn kick-starting the class discussion. We will go over appropriate ways to acknowledge the use of material authored by others at various points during the semester, as the occasion warrants.

But let's hope that this is the only time that the issue of plagiarism will come up during the semester.

Readings

I have ordered all of the books that we will be using in this class at the university bookstore, and have asked that the library place them on reserve. Unfortunately, the library does not have all of the editions that I would greatly prefer that we use. So the best option, I think, is to purchase the books. That said, I have made sure that a) we are reading all, or a substantial portion, of the books that I have ordered, and b) the editions of many of the books I have ordered are produced by Hackett Press, which produces affordable and high-quality editions of important philosophical texts. It will make our class discussions considerably easier if everyone has the same pagination and translation, so *please* obtain the correct editions of each of these books:

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (trans. Rex Warner; Penguin)
Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings* (trans. David Wootton; Hackett)
Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed. Richard Flathman and David Johnston; W. W. Norton)
Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (ed. Peter Laslett; Cambridge)
Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings* (trans. Donald A. Cress; Hackett)
Kant, *Perpetual Peace and other essays* (trans. Ted Humphrey; Hackett)
Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (trans. ???; Hackett)
Making Sense of International Relations Theory (MSIRT), ed. Jennifer Sterling-Folker;
Lynne Rienner
Inayatullah and Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference* (Routledge)

There are also a few articles that I have assigned for the later part of the semester; these are available through one of the university's online journal archives. (If you haven't become familiar with the library's online journals, well, you're missing out on some of what your tuition dollars pay for, and you should learn how to access those online resources as soon as possible. The library even offers classes on how to do this; check their website at <http://www.library.american.edu> for details.

Daily Schedule

On or before the Monday preceding each class session, I will podcast a short lecturelet of reading notes and things to think about in and surrounding the week's text. Podcast lecturelets will be available for download from my syndication site www.kittenboo.com; files will be in enhanced AAC format, which means chaptered audio with slides, playable in iTunes or QuickTime Player (both of which are free downloads from www.apple.com). I am not requiring that you download and listen to these lecturelets, but I make them available as a resource to you as you work your way through the texts.

- 14 January Introduction
- 21 January Thucydides. Read Book I, all (pp. 35-123); Book II through “The Policy of Pericles” (pp. 124-164), Book III through “Civil War in Corcyra” (pp. 194-245); and Book V, “The Melian Dialogue” (pp. 400-408).
- 28 January Machiavelli. Read the whole of *The Prince*, and all selections from Book One and Book Two of *The Discourses*, plus Book Three chapters 1, 9, 31, and 41.
- 4 February Hobbes. Read The First Part (pp. 5-91); The Second Part, #17-21 (pp. 93-122) and #29-31 (pp. 162-188); The Third Part #32-33 (pp. 189-200); and the “Review and Conclusion” (pp. 253-260).
- 11 February Locke. Read the entire “Second Treatise.” Book One Chapters VI and IX are helpful too, and Book One Chapter XI is a riot. Seriously.
- 18 February NO CLASS—PTJ at a conference
- 25 February Rousseau. Read *The Social Contract*.
- 4 March Kant. Read the essay “To Perpetual Peace” (pp. 107-143); also “What is Enlightenment?” (pp. 41-48) if you have time.
- 11 March NO CLASS—Spring Break
- 18 March Hegel. Read the entire book, including the brief appendix of excerpts from the *Philosophy of Right*.
- 25 March IR Realism. Read MSIRT, Chapters 1 and 2; and John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19:3 (1994).
- 1 April IR Liberalism. Read MSIRT, Chapters 3 and 4; and Andrew Moravcsik, “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,” *International Organization* 51:4 (Autumn 1997).
- 8 April IR Liberal Constructivism. Read MSIRT, Chapters 5.1, 5.2, and 6.3; Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46:2 (Spring 1992); and Thomas Risse, “‘Let’s Argue!’: Communicative Action in World Politics,” *International Organization* 54:1 (2000).

- 15 April IR Realist Constructivism. Read MSIRT, Chapters 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, and 10; Samuel Barkin, "Realist Constructivism," *International Studies Review* 5 (2003); and "THE FORUM: Bridging the Gap: Towards a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue," *International Studies Review* 6 (2004).
- 22 April IR Feminism. Read MSIRT, Chapter 8; J. Ann Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists," *International Studies Quarterly* 41:4 (1997); Robert Keohane, "Beyond Dichotomy: Conversations Between International Relations and Feminist Theory," *International Studies Quarterly* 42:1 (1998); and J. Ann Tickner, "Continuing the Conversation," *International Studies Quarterly* 42:1 (1998).
- 6 May (rescheduled make-up class to be held during our final exam period, which is the same as our class time: 2:10pm-4:40pm.) Post-colonial IR. Read Inayatullah and Blaney, all. Recommended: MSIRT, Chapter 7.