

International Relations 402: Theories of War

Spring 2010 Syllabus (version of 1/6/10)

Course time: Tues-Thurs 3:30-4:50

Place: VKC 259

Professor: Jacques E. C. Hymans (hymans@usc.edu)

Office: VKC 324. Office Tel: 213-740-8837.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 5-6 PM, and by appointment.

Course description: This is an advanced undergraduate seminar in international relations, focusing especially on theories of the causes of war. From the outset of the discipline of international relations around a century ago, the question of what causes war has always been our central question. Therefore, some of the best minds in our field have devoted their careers to studying it. The answers they have developed are quite diverse, and in this course we will explore some of that diversity.

This seminar is heavily theoretical in orientation. If you know you like IR theory, this is the seminar for you. If you don't know if you like it or not, hopefully this seminar will convince you that thinking theoretically about international conflict can be very valuable and even fun. If you know you don't like it, run for the hills.

Assignments and grading:

(a) 1-page "puzzle" memo for seminar paper (10%)

(b) 7-minute powerpoint presentation of seminar paper (10%)

(c) 12-15 page seminar paper (35%)

(d) 8 1-page response memos on reading assignments (each worth 3%: 24%)

(e) Chapter outline and discussion leadership (10%)

(f) In-class participation (11%)

Notes on the assignments:

- This seminar assumes basic familiarity with the IR discipline. You should therefore come to the seminar with some course background in IR, and notably IR 210.
- The 1-page "puzzle" memo explains what will be the empirical or theoretical problem driving your seminar paper research. The memos must be *no longer than a single page, no smaller than 12 point font, 1-inch margins*. The idea of a good social science "puzzle" will be discussed extensively in class.
- The powerpoint presentation should present not only the puzzle but also your provisional answer to the puzzle, including a taste of the empirical evidence with which you can back up your claims. After your presentation you will receive 3-5 minutes of feedback from students and professor. Techniques for effective powerpoint presentations will be discussed in class.
- The seminar paper should be an original research paper, 12-15 pages in length, double spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins. It is due via email to me no later than 11:59 PM on May 4. On or before that date you may request an "automatic

extension” (i.e. no need to offer any excuses) until 11:59 PM on May 6. No further extensions will be granted.

- Your 1-page response memos answer the question “What are two shortcomings of the logic or evidence presented by the author?” You should discuss each shortcoming for about half a page. You choose which days to turn in a memo, but start doing the memos early as the feedback will be important for your development and studying throughout the semester. The memos must be *no longer than a single page, no smaller than 12 point font, 1-inch margins*. These will be **due via email by 5 PM the day before** the reading is to be discussed.
- Chapter outlines should contain page references to key definitions of concepts, key theoretical hypotheses, and key empirical claims in the chapters being read for the upcoming session. Keep the outlines to one page per chapter maximum. They should be sent via email to me no later than 11:59 PM **two days** before the reading is to be discussed (e.g., if the reading is to be discussed on Tuesday, you need to get the outline to me by Sunday night). I will send you feedback the following day so that you can adjust your outline if necessary and make handouts for everyone to read in class.
- As discussion leader your job is to relate the day’s reading to some current event happening in the world. Send me your idea along with a link to a news article from a major mainstream US newspaper (*New York Times, LA Times...*) via email no later than 11:59 PM **two days** before the reading is to be discussed. I will send you feedback the following day so that you can adjust the question if necessary and make handouts of the article for everyone to read in class. In class, first express your own point of view on how the theoretical work and the current event relate to each other, and ask others for their thoughts. This student-led discussion will take up approximately the final 20 minutes of each class session.
- Key to your in-class participation grade is to **speak up**. Openly expressing your questions and confusions counts as much as providing answers or clever critiques.

Basic required texts (purchase at the campus bookstore):

Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 7th ed. (Longman, 2008, ISBN-13: 978-0205658879), entire (196 pp.).

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton, 2003, ISBN-13: 978-0393323962), chs. 1-5, 10 (209 pp.)

Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 2001, ISBN-13: 978-0801482953), entire (262 pp.).

John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (W. W. Norton, 2001, ISBN-13: 978-0393976847), chs. 1-6, 8 (285 pp.)

Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Random House, 2005) (ISBN-13: 978-0812973389)

Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1996, ISBN-13: 978-0231104692), chs. 1-3, 10-13 (294 pp.)

Class Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments:

Note: actual page counts may vary slightly.

Class meeting 1 (1/12). Introduction to the course.

Readings: no readings.

Class meeting 2 (1/14): IR 101 refresher.

Required reading: Nye, chs. 1-2 (50 pp)

Class meeting 3 (1/19): IR 101 refresher.

Required reading: Nye, chs. 3-5 (85 pp.)

Class meeting 4 (1/21): IR 101 refresher.

Required reading: Nye, chs. 6-8 (64 pp.)

Class meeting 5 (1/26). Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 1-2 (54 pp.)

Class meeting 6 (1/28). Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 3-4 (83 pp.)

Class meeting 7 (2/2): Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 5-6 (96 pp.)

2/3 (WED.): SPECIAL ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY: LECTURE BY PROFESSOR TIEJUN YU OF PEKING UNIVERSITY ON “THE EVOLUTION OF SECURITY STUDIES IN CHINA.” You can write a memo on Professor Yu’s talk which will count as one of your 1-page response memos. This one doesn’t have to be as critical as the normal memos.

Class meeting 8 (2/4): Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 7-8 (100 pp.)

Class meeting 9 (2/9): Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 9-10 (69 pp.)

Class meeting 10 (2/11): Technology and organization theory.

Required reading: Van Evera, chs. 1-3 (72 pp.)

Class meeting 11 (2/16): Technology and organization theory.
Required reading: Van Evera, chs. 4-5 (44 pp.)

2/18: *CLASS CANCELED.*

Class meeting 12 (2/23): Technology and organization theory.
Required reading: Van Evera, chs. 6-9 (146 pp.)

Class meeting 13 (2/25): Liberalism.
Required reading: Oneal and Russett, Preface + chs. 1-2 (67 pp.)

Class meeting 14 (3/2): Liberalism.
Required reading: Oneal and Russett, ch. 3-4 (73 pp.)

Class meeting 15 (3/4): Liberalism.
Required reading: Oneal and Russett, chs. 5-6 (71 pp.)

Class meeting 16 (3/9): Liberalism.
1-page “puzzle memos” due
Required reading: Oneal and Russett, chs. 7-8 (72 pp.)

EXTENDED SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS ON 3/11!

Class meeting 17 (3/23): Strategic rationality of non-state actors.
Required reading: Pape, chs. 1-5 (79 pp.)

Class meeting 18 (3/25): Strategic rationality of non-state actors.
Required reading: Pape, chs. 6-8 (93 pp.)

Class meeting 19 (3/30): Strategic rationality of non-state actors.
Required reading: Pape, chs. 9-12 (78 pp.)

Class meeting 20 (4/1): Constructivism.
Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 1-2 (78 pp.)

Class meeting 21 (4/6): Constructivism.
Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 3-5 (95 pp.)

Class meeting 23 (4/8): Constructivism.
Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 6-7 (85 pp.)

Class meeting 22 (4/13): Constructivism.
Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 8-9 (85 pp.).

Class meeting 24 (4/15). Constructivism.

Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 10-11 (94 pp.)

Class meeting 25 (4/20): Constructivism.

Required reading: Katzenstein, chs. 12-13 (88 pp.)

Class meeting 26 (4/22):

Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers.

Class meeting 27 (4/27):

Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers.

Class meeting 28 (4/29):

Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers and course wrap-up.

May 4: Seminar papers due.