

International Relations Theory

Government and Politics 708A

Fall 2022
Masters in International Relations
Jimenez 0103 Th 2-4:45pm
(Updated on September 22, 2022)

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Course Description

This course is a graduate-level seminar surveying the contemporary scholarship in the field of international relations and world politics. The course is divided into four main sections. We begin with an overview of major theoretical frameworks and approaches that are adopted by scholars in studying international relations. In the second part of the course, we turn our attention to the scholarship on interstate and intrastate war, focusing on why wars occur, how they are fought and how they end. In section three, we examine the relationship between domestic politics and international relations, focusing on how the domestic politics shape state behavior. Section four focuses on international institutions, such as international organizations and law, and how they constrain or enable state behavior in the areas of international security and political economy. Throughout the course, we will examine important scholarly debates, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the scholarship and consider directions for future research.

Course Reading

All readings in this course will be in the format of research articles from social science journals. PDFs of readings will be available on ELMS. Students should take notes on the article to enable class participation and bring either a printed copy of the article or a digital copy (on a tablet) to class. Needless to say, participation in this seminar will depend on coming to class prepared to discuss the contents of the reading. Students may be asked questions on the concepts and scholarly debates that are introduced in the readings.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete the following assignments:

- 1) Class participation (30%)
- 2) Short memo (20%)
- 3) Research proposal (20%)
- 4) Class presentation (10%)
- 5) Final take-home exam (20%)

Class participation

This is a seminar course. As such, students should come prepared to actively discuss the assigned readings and contribute to the classroom discussion. Students will ask questions and respond to questions posed by others about the significance and shortcomings of assigned articles, their policy relevance, and avenues for new research and how they would implement those suggestions. Consider the following questions as you read through the assigned articles. The first step is to understand the author(s)' arguments and the theoretical logic.

- What are the important and new concepts in this article?
- What is the author(s)' research question and do they effectively answer that question?
- What important assumptions do authors make in their theoretical argument? Do you agree or disagree?
- How does the author test their argument?
- What are the major scholarly contribution of each and all readings?

The second step is to then think more critically about the authors' claims and assess their work in a more analytical way.

- Are you convinced by the authors' argument? Why or why not?
- What are some original and novel aspects about each article?
- What is the relationship between assigned readings?
- What are the shortcomings and gaps from this week?
- How would you extend and improve the article?
- How would you relate the readings and findings to the current events?
- What are the policy implications?

To facilitate this process, two students will be assigned each week (if there is less than two, I will be the other discussion leader) to serve as discussion leaders. The discussion leaders for that week will work together to come up with discussion questions and facilitate (lead) the discussion in class. The leaders will post discussion questions by Tuesday 11:59pm on ELMS (The discussion leaders can post the same questions). Furthermore, each discussion leader will prepare to talk about how the theories of that week apply to one current event of their choosing. Other students will think about the posted questions and come to class prepared to discuss. I will be pitching in occasionally or pose questions during the class, but the discussion leaders will be the primary facilitators.

In addition to your role as a discussion leader, students will contribute to the weekly discussion thread, where they will make one comment about each reading on what they found to be interesting. Students may also respond to their peers' posts, although this is not required. The comments or questions should be thoughtful, thought-provoking, and based on a careful reading of each paper. These comments should be posted by Thursday 1pm, so that we all have a chance to read them before class.

Short memo

The short memo assignment is designed to help students develop their academic research interest and prepare them for the capstone. As we go through different substantive topics, students can think about where their interest lies. Students can have a general interest at this

stage; the objective of this exercise is to help students narrow down their interest for the final research proposal. After identifying the key concept/area/outcome of interest, students will then select 4-5 academic articles from reputable political science journals related to their chosen topic. Each student should meet with me to discuss their chosen topic and relevant literature. In the memo, students will first identify the authors' research question, their argument, independent and dependent variables from each paper. Students will then think about what their selected papers have not addressed about the topic of their interest. Essentially, through this exercise, students will be identifying a research question and a puzzle that they will address in their final research proposal. The short memo assignment should be 3-4 pages long double-spaced and the deadline to submit is October 7th.

Research proposal

Students will develop their memo assignment into a research proposal, where they will identify the puzzle or shortcoming in the area of their research interest. The proposal should have a clearly formulated research question that is based on the shortcoming of the literature that students have identified from the memo assignment. Students will then develop an argument based on their key intuition which should be backed up by clear logic and prominent scholarly works. Finally, students will discuss why this work is important and policy implications, if any. Because students will not be doing empirical analysis, close attention should be paid to developing a logically sound and convincing theory. The research proposal should be 5-6 pages double-spaced, and is due by December 19th.

Class presentation

We will spend the last two classes with class presentation by students (For December 1st, the first half of the class we will have regular seminar but the second half we will have class presentations). Students will prepare a short presentation with powerpoint slides that is no more than 5 minutes long (strictly enforced) on their research proposal. The presentation will include major sections of their proposal; motivation or puzzle, research question, argument, and finally, contribution. Through this presentation, students will learn how to deliver presentations in a professional setting, interact and communicate with an audience, and present abstract ideas succinctly and coherently. The audience will ask questions and provide any feedback (2-3 minutes). For this class, students will not be allowed to use their laptops or tablet devices. Students are expected to listen to their peers' presentation and offer constructive feedback as part of their participation grade.

Take-home Exam

Students will be given a take-home exam on December 8th, the last day of our class. There will be four questions, and students will choose two questions to answer. I will give examples of exam questions and talk about my expectations for how to respond to them as we get closer to the exam date. Each question should not be more than 3 pages double-spaced (strictly enforced), and students are expected to use in-text citations when backing up their answer with academic articles. Students should cite relevant articles from and outside of the syllabus to make a coherent argument. This is an open-book exam and will be completed at home, but students must be the sole-author of their responses. The exam will be due back to me by December 12th.

Grading

Grades will be based on the following scale and there will not be a curve.

<i>97 and above = A+</i>	<i>77 to 79 = C+</i>
<i>93 to 96 = A</i>	<i>73 to 76 = C</i>
<i>90 to 92 = A-</i>	<i>70 to 72 = C-</i>
<i>87 to 89 = B+</i>	<i>67 to 69 = D+</i>
<i>83 to 86 = B</i>	<i>63 to 66 = D</i>
<i>80 to 82 = B-</i>	<i>60 to 62 = D-</i>
	<i>59 and below = F</i>

If students have questions about the grade they receive, please schedule an office hour appointment to discuss their grade breakdown and what they can do in the future to improve their grade.

Campus polices

Copyright

Course materials that exist in a tangible medium, such as written or recorded lectures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and tests, are copyright protected. This means that class lectures are copyrighted. You may not copy and distribute such materials except for personal use, and with my express permission. This means you may not audio-record or video-record class sessions without my permission, and you may not sell course materials or post them on a website. Be aware that copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Absence Policy

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner, preferably prior to the excused absence, and provide appropriate documentation. For an excused absence, students are responsible for information and material missed on the day of excused absence, and within reason are entitled to receive materials provided to the class during the excused absence. The Undergraduate Catalog defines an excused absence as follows:

“Events that justify an excused absence include religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.”

In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period (the first 10 days of class).

Medically Necessary Absences

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made to notify your instructor in advance of the class. For one such absence—except in the case of a Major Scheduled Grading Event as identified on the syllabus—students may bring a self-signed note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate. For all other medically necessary absences, or if the absence occurs on the date of a Major Scheduled Grading Event such as a midterm, exam, or paper deadline, documentation by a health care professional is required. Students must provide documentation from a physician or the University

Health Center for the absence to be recorded as an excused one and to receive accommodation. In cases where students are asked to provide verification, the course instructor may request the dates of treatment or the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities, but may not request diagnostic information.

Policy for Late Papers

Due dates for assigned papers are listed on the syllabus. Papers that are submitted late, without arranging with the instructor for an extension based on a university-approved excuse, will be penalized a third of a grade per day.

Academic Integrity

The University has an active Student Honor Council. The Honor Council sets high standards for academic integrity, and I support its efforts. It has a nationally recognized Honor Code, involving the Honor Pledge. The Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures.

Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a community of trust on the College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty should be reported directly to the Honor Council by any member of the campus community. For additional information, consult the Office of Student Conduct.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who will need accommodations must contact the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) to discuss accommodations and obtain documentation applicable to the current semester. (For updated policies, see <https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/>.) Students are responsible for presenting this documentation to the instructor in a timely fashion to discuss and obtain signed approval for accommodations, so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

Course Schedule

Section 1: Building Blocks in the Field of International Relations

September 1st: Introduction

Jack Snyder. 2009. "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy*

Students will be assigned to weeks they will serve as a discussion leader. The first possible choice is the week on power and realism.

September 8th: Power and Realism (Alex & Cindy)

Baldwin, David A. "Power and International Relations" *Handbook of International Relations*.

Robert Jervis. 1978. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30(2):167-214.

Jeffrey W. Taliaferro. 2001. "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited." *International Security* 25(3): 128-161.

John J. Mearsheimer. 2019. "The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order." *International Security* 43(4): 7-50.

Andrew Kydd. 1997. "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other." *Security Studies* 7(1): 114-155.

September 15th: Institutionalism (Eden, Hemansi & Hersona)

Kenneth A. Oye. 1985. "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy." *World Politics* 38 (1): 1-24

Robert Keohane. 1988. "International institutions: two approaches" *International Studies Quarterly* 32(4): 379-396

Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin. 1995. "The Promise of Institutional Theory." *International Security* 20 (1): 39-51.

Andrew Moravcsik. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization*, 51(4): 513-553.

Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal. 2001. "The Rational Design of International Institutions." *International Organization* 55 (4): 1051-1082

September 22nd: Beyond the Paradigm: Leaders, Domestic Politics, and Psychology (Tina & Shavanah)

Joshua Kertzer and Dustin Tingley. 2018. "Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigm". *Annual Review of Political Science* 21:319-339

Michael C. Horowitz and Matthew Fuhrmann. 2018. "Studying Leaders and Military Conflict: Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62(10): 2072-2086.

John Harden. "Looking Like a Winner: Leader Narcissism and War Duration". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Forthcoming.

Bruce Bueno De Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. "Policy Failure and Political Survival." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43(2): 147-161.

Robert Putnam. 1988. "Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of 'Two-level games'". *International Organization* 42(3): 427-460

September 29th: Rationalist Explanations of War (Cameron & Cole)

James Fearon. 1995. "Rationalist explanations for war". *International Organization* 49: 379-379.

David A. Lake. 2011. "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security* 35(3): 7-52.

Robert Powell. 2006. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60(1): 169-203

Monica Toft. 2006. "Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons as Rationalist Explanations for War" *Security Studies* 15(1): 34-69.

Mark Fey and Kristopher Ramsay. 2007. "Mutual Optimism and War". *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 738-754

October 6th: Show of Strength through Reputation, Deterrence, and Alliance (Ethan & Zeke)

Paul Huth. 1999. "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 25-48.

Erik Gartzke and Dong-Joon Jo. 2009. "Bargaining, Nuclear Proliferation and Interstate Disputes". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(2): 209

Brett Ashley Leeds. 2003. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression: The Influence of Military alliances in the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes" *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 427-439

Jesse Johnson, Brett Ashley Leeds, and Ahra Wu. 2015. "Capability, Credibility, and Extended General Deterrence". *International Interactions*. 41(2): 309-336

Jonathan Renshon, Allen Dafoe and Paul Huth. 2018. "Leader influence and reputation formation in world politics". *American Journal of Political Science* 62(2): 325-339.

October 13th: Coercive Strategies (Anh & Justin)

Daniel Drezner. 2003. "The Hidden Hand of Economic Coercion". *International Organization* 57(3): 643-659.

Todd Sechser and Matthew Furchmann. 2013. "Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail". *International organization* 67(1): 173-195

Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism" *International Security* 31(1): 49-80.

Abigail Post, 2019. "Flying to Fail: Costly Signals and Air power in Crisis-bargaining" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(4): 869-805.

October 20th: Civil War onset, duration, and termination (Natalie & Ellis)

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievances" *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4): 563-595

James Fearon and David Laitin, 2003 "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War". *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.

Jason Lyall. 2009. "Does indiscriminate violence incite insurgent attacks? Evidence from Chechnya". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331-362

David Cunningham. 2010. "Blocking resolutions: How external states can prolong civil wars". *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 115-127

Barbara Walter. 2009. "Bargaining Failures and Civil War" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12:243-61

Section 3: Domestic Politics in International Relations

October 27th: Domestic sources of international conflict (Nhaya & Ryan)

Sarah Croco. 2011. "The decider's dilemma: Leader culpability, war outcomes, and domestic punishment" *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 457-477

Xiaojun Li and Dingding Chen. 2021. "Public opinion, international reputation, and audience costs in an authoritarian regime" *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 38(5) 543-560

Roseanne McManus and Karen Yarhi-Milo. 2017. "The Logic of "Offstage" Signaling: Domestic Politics, Regime Type, and Major Power- Protégé Relations" *International Organization* 71(4): 701 - 733

Goldmish et al. 2017. "Political competition and the initiation of international conflict a new Perspective on the institutional foundations of democratic Peace" *World Politics* 69(3): 493-531

Joshua Schwartz and Christopher Blair. 2020. "Do Women Make More Credible Threats? Gender Stereotypes, Audience Costs, and Crisis Bargaining" *International Organization* 74(4): 872 - 895

November 3rd: Domestic Preferences and Political Economy (Jackson & Mason)

Stephanie Rickard and Teri Caraway, "International Negotiations in the Shadow of National Election" *International Organization* 68(3): 701-720.

David Carter and Paul Poast. 2017. "Why Do States Build Walls? Political Economy, Security, and Border Stability" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(2):

Helen Milner and Bumba Mukherjee. 2009 "Democratization and Economic Globalization" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 163-181

Edward Mansfield and Diana Mutz. 2009. "Support for Free Trade: Self-Interest, Sociotropic Politics, and Out-Group Anxiety" *International Organization* 63(3): 425 - 457

Section 4: International Institutions

November 10th: International Law and Organizations in Security (Taylor & Sabrina)

Paul Huth, Sarah Croco, and Benjamin Appel. 2013. "Bringing law to the table: Legal claims, focal points, and the settlement of territorial disputes since 1945" *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 90-103

James Morrow. 2007. "When Do States Follow the Laws of War?" *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 559-572

Hyeran Jo. 2015. "Compliant Rebels" Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 3.

Alyssa Prorok. 2017. "The (In)Compatibility of Peace and Justice? The International Criminal Court and Civil Conflict Termination." *International Organization* 71(2): 213-43.

November 17th: International Law and Organizations in Political Economy (Hakim & Natasha)

Todd Allee and Jamie Scalera. 2012. "The Divergent Effects of Joining International Organizations: Trade Gains and the Rigors of WTO Accession" *International Organization* 66(2)

Dreher, Sturm and Vreeland. 2009. "Global horse trading: IMF loans for votes in the United Nations Security Council" *European Economic Review* 53(7): 742-757

Michael Bechtel and Thomas Sattler. 2015. "What is the litigation in the World Trade Organization Worth?" *International Organization* 69(2)

Stephen Chaudoin. 2014. "Audience Features and the Strategic Timing of Trade Disputes" *International Organization* 68(4)

November 24th: No Class-- Thanksgiving Break

December 1st: The United Nations in International Security (George Emily & Waqar)

Terrence Chapman and Dan Reiter. 2004. "The United Nations Security Council and the Rally 'Round the Flag Effect". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 48(6): 886-909

Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2013. "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War". *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 875-891

Mitchell Radke and Hyeran Jo. 2018. "Fighting the Hydra: United Nations Sanctions and Rebel Groups" *Journal of Peace Research* 55(6):

Student Presentations of Research Proposals

December 8th: Student Presentations of Research Proposals