PSC 76000: Basic Concepts and Theories of International Relations

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Class Room: 6493
Class Time: M 6:30pm–8:30pm
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the different theories and concepts that scholars use to understand and explain world politics. The course examines the major theories in the field of International Relations (IR) and some of the central theoretical debates. Throughout the course, the relevance of specific theories and theory in general for how we make sense of world politics will be critically assessed. The focus of this course will be theoretical rather than empirical. Thus, each class will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of a different theoretical perspective in IR, focusing on its key concepts, foundational assumptions, and central arguments. The reading is extensive as it is designed to help PhD candidate students prepare in part for the comprehensive exams.

Requirements:

Students are expected to complete all of the assigned required readings prior to the class for which they are assigned and come ready to discuss them. That includes the readings for the first class. Students must be able to analyze the readings critically and draw connections and contrasts between readings not only with the other readings assigned for that week but also with readings from earlier in the course.

The recommended readings should be seen as a reading list to use in studying for the comprehensive field exam in international relations and also as a list of potential starting points for future research projects in a given area. Also, if you have already read some of the required readings for a given week, you should substitute some of the recommended readings to replace them. Obviously, even including the recommended readings the syllabus is only a limited listing of the important readings in the field. Searching for other IR field survey syllabuses on the internet will give you a sense of what a wide range of scholars believe is central to the field or a particular topic of inquiry.

Participation in class discussions will be part of students’ grades, thus attendance is mandatory. There are also two written assignments: a take home midterm and take home final. The grade will be broken down as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Midterm: 25%
- Final: 55%

Late work will be penalized at least a full letter grade, more in instances of extreme lateness. There is no extra credit.
Academic Integrity:

The definition of plagiarism in the Graduate Center Policy on Academic Honesty is as follows. Each member of the academic community is expected to give full, fair, and formal credit to any and all sources that have contributed to the formulation of ideas, methods, interpretations, and findings. The absence of such formal credit is an affirmation representing that the work is fully the writer's. The term “sources” includes, but is not limited to, published or unpublished materials, lectures and lecture notes, computer programs, mathematical and other symbolic formulations, course papers, examinations, theses, dissertations, and comments offered in class or informal discussions, and includes electronic media. The representation that such work of another person is the writer's own is plagiarism.

Care must be taken to document the source of any ideas or arguments. If the actual words of a source are used, they must appear within quotation marks. In cases that are unclear, it is the responsibility of the writer to take due care to avoid plagiarism.

The source should be cited whenever:
(a) a text is quoted verbatim
(b) data gathered by another are presented in diagrams or tables
(c) the results of a study done by another are used
(d) the work or intellectual effort of another is paraphrased by the writer

Because the intent to deceive is not a necessary element in plagiarism, careful note taking and record keeping are essential in order to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

Student found engaging in plagiarism risk not only failing the assignment in question, but also the entire course, as well as potentially facing further academic sanctions from the Graduate Center included expulsion. Please see the Graduate Center’s guide on Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism for more information:

https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf?ext=.pdf

Students with Disabilities:

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Graduate Center offers assistance and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities consult the Vice President for Student Affairs who is the 504/ADA Coordinator (Room 7301; 212-817-7400). For more information (with confidentiality) contact Sharon Lerner or Elise Perram at the above number or via email at disabilityservices@gc.cuny.edu and consult the Graduate Center Student Handbook.

Course Materials:

Most of the assigned readings are available online through JSTOR or other journal databases which can be accessed through the Graduate Center Library website. They are also
available on Blackboard. There are also four books which are available for purchase on the internet and on reserve at the Graduate Center library. They are:


Course Schedule:

**September 8: Causation, Theories, Evidence, and Inference**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
- Bashkar, Roy. *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*.
- Brady, Henry E. and Collier, David. (eds.). *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.
- Mohr, Lawrence B. *The Causes of Human Behavior*.
September 15: Levels of Analysis

**Required**

**Recommended**

September 22: Power

**Required**

**Recommended**
- Baldwin, David. Paradoxes of Power

September 29: The Assumption of Anarchy and the State System

Required:

Recommended:
- Bull, Hedley. The Anarchical Society.
- Watson, Adam. The Evolution of International Society.
- Important discussions of the state system can be found in Waltz: Theory of International Politics in the required readings in the neorealism section and Wagner: War and the State in the recommended readings in the rationalist approaches section.

October 6: Neo-Realism

Required:

**Recommended:**

- Carr, E. H. *The Twenty Years Crisis*.
- Claude, Inis L., Jr. *Power and International Relations*.
- Wolfers, Arnold. *Discord and Collaboration*.

**October 20: Neo-Realism Versus Neo-Liberalism: Possibilities for Cooperation**

**Required:**

Recommended:
- Keohane, Robert. *Neorealism and its Critics*.
- Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*.
- Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons*.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order*.

October 27: Neo-Liberalism: The Role of Institutions and Regimes

Required:

Recommended:
- Krasner, Stephen (ed.) *International Regimes*.


November 3: Constructivism and Feminism  Midterm Handed Out

Required:

Recommended:
- Finnemore, Martha. The Purpose of Intervention.
- Goldstein, Joshua. War and Gender.
- Keck, Margaret E. and Katherine Sikkink. Activists Beyond Borders.
- Tickner, J. Ann. Gender in International Relations.
- Walzer, Michael. Just and Unjust Wars.
November 10: Psychology and Perception  Midterm Due

Required:

Recommended:
- Larson, Deborah W. The Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation.
- Kier, Elizabeth. Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars.
- Jervis, Robert. Perception and Misperception
- Johnson, Dominic D. P. Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions.
- Posen, Barry. Sources of Military Doctrine

November 17: Rationalist Approaches

Required:

**Recommended:**
- Reiter, Dan. *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances, and World Wars*
- Schelling, Thomas. *Arms and Influence*
- Schelling, Thomas. *Strategy of Conflict*
- Weisger, Alex. *Logics of War.*

**November 24: Theories of War**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
- Clausewitz, Karl von. *On War.*
December 1: State Building and Civil War

Required:

Recommended:
December 8: Democratic & Capitalist Peace (See Recommended list for other domestic factors)
Final Handed Out: Due by email on December 19—May be turned in earlier

Required:

Recommended:

**Audience Costs and Leader Accountability:**
- Goemans, Hein E. *War and Punishment*.

**Democratic Peace:**
- Russett, Bruce and Oneal, John. *Triangulating Peace*.

**December 15: International Political Economy**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**Classics:**
- Hirschman, Albert O. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*.
- Keohane, Robert O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*.

**Recent work:**
