PS 8301: Theories of International Relations

Prof. Mark A. Pollack
461 Gladfelter Hall
E-mail: mark.pollack@temple.edu
Office hours: Monday, 11 a.m. – Noon, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

This aim of this course is to introduce advanced graduate students to the most important theoretical approaches to the study of international relations, providing a gateway to substantive graduate courses in the subfields of international security, international political economy, international organization, and foreign policy. Given the emphasis of the course, we will spend a good deal of time reading and evaluating contending theories of international relations, examining the underlying assumptions of each theory as well as its substantive claims and (to a lesser extent) the evidence supporting those claims. We begin with a brief discussion of the history and of the field, before turning to a survey of the most influential theories in IR. As we shall see, the intellectual history of international relations as a discipline is itself contested among its participants, but by most accounts the “grand debate” between realists (and more recently neorealists) and liberals (and their offspring, neoliberal institutionalists) occupies a central place in the discipline, and much of the first part of the course will be devoted to analyzing this old and ongoing debate. As we shall see, however, rationalist approaches like realism and liberalism have come under increasing challenge from non-rationalist theories such as constructivism, and also from more radical approaches such as Marxism, feminism, and critical theory, each of which questions the assumptions and in some cases the ontology of both realist and liberal theories. We will conclude with some searching debate about the utility of “isms” in IR, the prospects for dialogue and synthesis among different theories, and the relevance of academic IR to burning policy questions. The schedule of seminars, then, is as follows:

1. January 28  International Relations as a Field of Study
2. February 4  Classical Realism and Its Liberal Critics
3. February 11 Postwar Realism (and Neorealism)
4. February 18 Neoliberal Institutionalism I: Foundations
5. March 4    Neoliberal Institutionalism II: Recent Developments
6. March 18   Liberalism I: Foundations
7. April 1    Liberalism II: Recent Developments
8. April 8    Constructivism I: Foundations
9. April 15   Constructivism II: Recent Developments
10. April 22  Marxism, Feminism and Critical Theory
11. April 29  Realism Redux
12. May 6     Competition, Eclecticism, or Synthesis?
Please note that the course, like most graduate seminars, emphasizes theory and (to a lesser extent) method, and is not intended as an empirical introduction to the history of warfare, the workings of the world political economy or international organizations, or the making of foreign policy. At least a basic knowledge of empirics is, however, highly desirable, and you may therefore want to consult one of the various good textbooks for advanced undergraduates that mix a small dose of theory with an overview of important empirical topics. The best current textbook, in my view, is Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon Pevehouse’s *International Relations* (New York: Longman, most recent edition), which provides long substantive discussions of topics in international security and international political economy.

**Course Requirements.** There are three fundamental requirements for students taking PS 8301:

1. **Class participation.** Students are expected to participate actively in seminar discussions, having read carefully and thought about the week’s readings. (Note that waiting until the last minute to do the readings is not conducive to synthesis and reflection before class. Best to read early and let the ideas bounce around in your head a few days before seminar.) Participation should always be cordial and constructive, not gladiatorial, and chatting about the readings in cafes or the grad student lounge is encouraged. Participation will comprise 25% of the final grade.

2. **Two short (approx. 6-10 page) papers,** addressing specific topics arising out of the required readings for the course. Your paper need not tie together all of the readings for a given approach or question, which would be impossible, but should select one particular problem or puzzle that cuts across at least two of the readings, and analyze it in greater detail. Such a paper may, but need not, incorporate readings from outside the required readings for PS 8301, insofar as these are relevant to your chosen topic. Finally, make sure that your paper does not simply rip down what everyone else has written. Try to organize your critique in terms of a positive argument (which should be summarized in the first paragraph or two of the paper!), noting useful as well as poor work and suggesting ways in which future work (including possibly your own) might do better. The first paper is due no later than April 1st, and the second is due on May 6th, which is the final day of class. Each paper will be worth 25% of the total grade for the course, for a total of 50%.

3. **A final take-home essay.** At some point during their first two years in the M.A. and Ph.D. program, most students in this course will take the Political Science Department’s preliminary examination in international relations. For this reason, the final requirement for the course will be a short take-home essay in response to questions similar to those asked on the Department’s preliminary exam. Questions will be handed out in class on December 1st, and responses will be due back by 5:00 p.m. on May 13th. The take-home essay will be worth a total of 25% of the grade.
**Required Reading.** The following books, marked with an asterisk in the weekly reading assignments, constitute the core texts for the semester, and can be purchased, used or new, from a number of internet booksellers, including most obviously (but not only) Amazon.com:


All of these books are also on reserve at Paley Library, so you need not bankrupt yourself buying them all if that is a hardship. Additional *required* readings will be made available through electronic reserve. For the recommended readings, you’re on your own.

**Disability policy:** Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 or 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Academic Conduct:** Temple University has adopted standards on academic conduct, and all students in PS 8301 are expected to comply fully with those standards, including with reference to the important issue of plagiarism. All students should, in all assignments, fully and unambiguously cite sources from which they are drawing important ideas and/or sizable quotations (for example, more than eight consecutive words or more than 50% of a given sentence or paragraph). Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious act of academic misconduct and will result in a failing grade for the course and notification of the infraction to the Dean of Students. Similarly, cheating during exams, copying written assignments from other students, or providing answers to others during exams are considered acts of academic misconduct. If you are unfamiliar with policies about plagiarism or other types of academic misconduct, you may wish to consult the on-line guide to “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources,” available at the Temple Writing Center (http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/student_resources/student_resources.htm) or if you still have remaining doubts or specific questions, raise them directly with me.
Temple University policy on the freedom to teach and learn:

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: International Relations as a Field of Inquiry (January 28)

Required Readings


Brian Schmidt, “On the History and Historiography of International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*.


Recommended Readings


Colin Wight, “Philosophy of Social Science and International Relations,” in Handbook of International Relations.
Week 2: Classical Realism and its Liberal Critics (February 4)

Required Readings


Recommended


Week 3: Postwar Realism and Neorealism (February 11)

Required Readings


Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State, and War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), introduction and conclusion (and read the rest of the book before prelims!).

* Kenneth Waltz et al., Neorealism and its Critics, chapters 1-5, 7.


Recommended Readings


Michael J. Smith, Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).


Michael Joseph Smith, Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).


Week 4: Neoliberal Institutionalism I: Foundations (February 18)

Required Readings


Andreas Hasenclaver, Peter Mayer, and Volker Rittberger, Theories of International Regimes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapters 1-4.

Recommended Readings


Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest


Week 5: Neoliberalism II: Recent Developments Institutionalist Theory (March 4)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


George Downs, David Rocke, and Peter Barsoom, “Is the Good News About Compliance Good News About Cooperation?” International Organization, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer 1996), pp. 379-


Miles Kahler, “Rationality in International Relations,” in Katzenstein et al., eds., *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics*, pp. 279-302.

Duncan Snidal, “Rational Choice and International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*.


Week 6: Liberalism I: Domestic and International Politics (March 18)

Required Readings

* Reread Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, Section II, chapter 4, on the democratic peace (and see the citations below for the subsequent debate).


Recommended Readings

**The English School**


Ole Waever, “International Society: Theoretical Promises Unfulfilled?” *Cooperation and*


Contemporary Liberalism


Geoffrey Garrett, “Global Markets and National Politics: Collision Course or Virtuous Circle?” in Katzenstein et al., eds., Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics, pp. 147-84.

Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, Debating the Democratic Peace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996). [An excellent reader, tracing the debate over the democratic peace from Doyle’s 1983 article up to the time of publication; the single best place to start in cracking this literature.]
Week 7: Liberalism II: International Cooperation and Compliance (April 1)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Week 8: Constructivism I: Foundations (April 8)

Required Readings

* Alexander Wendt, *A Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chapters 1, 3, 6, 8.


Recommended Readings


Week 9: Constructivism II: Recent Developments, Empirical Applications (April 15)

Required Readings


International Institutions and Socialization in Europe, special issue of International Organization, Vol. 59 (Fall 2005), read introduction by Checkel, concluding chapter by Zürn and Checkel.


Recommended Readings


Martha Finnemore and Stephen Toope, “Alternatives to ‘Legalization’: Richer Views of Law and Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Summer 2001), 743-58 [a constructivist response to the rationalist project on legalization in international politics; see above].

Alexander Wendt, “Driving with the Rearview Mirror,” *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Autumn 2001) [a constructivist response to the rationalist project on rational design of international institutions].


Week 10: Marxism, Critical Theory, and Feminism (April 22)

Required Readings

**Marxism**


**Critical Theory**


Richard Wyn Jones, ed., *Critical Theory and World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 2000), chapter 1 by Richard Wyn Jones; chapter 5 by Kimberly Hutchings (pp. 79-85 only!), and Chapter 13 by Alex Wendt.

**Gender, Feminism and IR Theory**


Recommended Readings

**Orthodox Marxism and Historical Materialism**


**Gramscian Approaches**


**World-Systems Approaches**


**Critical IR Theory**


Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1994), chapter 1 (pp. 1-34).

**Feminist IR Theory**


Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapters 1 and 7 (pp. 1-58 [skim empirical sections], 403-414).

Week 11: Realism Redux (April 29)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


**Week 12: Competition, Eclecticism, or Synthesis? (May 6)**


**Recommended Readings**

Richard Hermann, “Linking Theory and Evidence in International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*. 

28