

Yale University  
Jackson Institute for Global Affairs

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

GLBL 901 | Spring 2014 | Syllabus

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Class: Tue. 1:30-3:30, Luce Hall, Rm. #203 (34 Hillhouse Ave.);  
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“The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually slaves of some defunct thinker.”

--- John Maynard Keynes

“Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future.”

--- Niels Bohr

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course aims at providing students in the M.A. program in Global Affairs with the conceptual and theoretical toolkit necessary to make informed decisions and recommendations in the realm of international politics. Decisionmakers *necessarily* use concepts and theories. Often, however, these remain implicit or unconscious, making it harder to detect inconsistencies and other problems with their rationales, and thus negatively impacting the odds of success of whatever course of action is being recommended or implemented. It is the purpose of the course to give students the tools needed to identify, label, evaluate, criticize, and fine-tune policy positions on international topics, allowing them to make better arguments throughout their professional lives.

To do so, the first part of the course is devoted to surveying IR theory, its central questions, approaches, concepts, and theories. Then, in the second half of the course, we will look at several central topics in contemporary international relations -- the causes of war, deterrence and brinkmanship, the spread of nuclear weapons, the transformation of the international system, the diffusion of international norms, and environmental politics -- through the theoretical lenses we have studied in the first half. This means you should expect to do quite a bit of pushing before you can actually jump in and enjoy the ride. Intellectual effort will be front-loaded, but the rewards should be apparent in the second half of the semester.

Please be aware that the course is not focused on a description or analysis of the events, actors, institutions, or processes which make up contemporary international relations. Nor is the purpose of this course to ex-

pose you to cutting-edge academic work in IR. The readings will instead focus on the key conceptual and theoretical tools used in the study of international relations, some of which are a few decades old.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course is intended primarily for M.A. students in global affairs. The course will consist in a series of weekly 110-minute seminar sessions with pre-assigned readings. The sessions will focus on (i) laying out the main arguments of the assigned readings, (ii) critically discussing them, and, in the second half of the course, (iii) discussing the policy recommendations students make in their assigned memos. I will open up each session with a short (20-minute) lecture on the topic(s) of the day, laying out and interconnecting the main arguments in the readings, to be followed by a general examination and discussion of the core ideas.

## **GRADING**

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

- Seminar participation: 20%;
- Theory memos (2 x 10%): 20%;
- Policy memos (3 x 10%): 30%;
- Final policy brief: 30%.

Note: In order to receive an overall passing grade, students must receive a passing grade in *all* four components of the final grade. In other words, failing one component of the course will lead to a failing grade in the overall course.

## **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Participation: Since the course will be conducted in a seminar format, students will take responsibility for leading much of the discussion. Students are thus expected to do *all* the required readings prior to each session, as well as attend and participate in all sessions. In order to encourage completion of the readings prior to each session, I reserve the right to call on students during the class and ask them to lay out the basic argument of any piece assigned for that session. I also reserve the right to ban electronic devices (other than pacemakers and ankle monitors for those on parole) from the classroom if it appears that they are impoverishing the discussions. More than one non-justified absence from the weekly sessions will lead students to fail the participation component of the grade, and therefore the course.

Theory Memos: Each student will write two theory memos, one for each of two weeks of your choice among those marked below with [TM]. Your memos should be posted on the Classes\*V2 server by 8pm on the Sunday before the class meeting in which we will discuss the relevant readings. Theory memos received after this deadline but before the relevant seminar session begins will be dropped one full letter grade. Memos will not be accepted after the relevant seminar session begins. Each of the two theory memos is worth 10% of the final course grade.

These short theory memos should include an analysis of strengths or weaknesses of arguments made by the authors for the relevant week; questions with which you were left by the readings; or points of confusion that should be clarified. (You should not summarize the readings; assume that everybody else has done the reading as well and understands the basic arguments.) You do not have to discuss all of the readings assigned for the week; you can discuss just one or two, or you can pick a broader range and compare them to each other (or to readings for earlier weeks). Likewise, within each reading you select to engage, you do not

have to discuss the whole piece. You may do so, but you may equally well focus on a section, a paragraph, or even a sentence that piqued your interest.

Policy Memos: Each student will write three policy memos, one for each of three weeks of your choice among those marked below with [PM]. Your memos should be posted on the Classes\*V2 server by 8pm on the Sunday before the class meeting in which we will discuss the relevant readings. Policy memos received after this deadline but before the relevant seminar session begins will be dropped one full letter grade. Memos will not be accepted after the relevant seminar session begins. Each of the three policy memos is worth 10% of the final course grade.

A shortlist of memo topics for each [PM] week will be posted on the Classes\*V2 server one week before the relevant session. The purpose of a memo is to lay out your position on what the United States should do on the topic. Imagine you are the National Security Advisor writing directly to the President, so do not waste any space stating what you can assume s/he already knows. The memo should include a telegraphic description of the policy problem, a statement of the policy recommendation, the argument for that particular option, and an evaluation of the pros and cons of your recommendation -- all in two pages. (I am being generous here; many decisionmakers will decline anything longer than one page.)

Both theory and policy memos should be two pages long, printed in letter-sized paper, with 1-inch margins all around, using a size-12 standard font such as Arial, Courier, or Times New Roman, single-spaced. You must write the memo topic and your name on separate lines at the top of the page, then use the remaining space to write your memo.

Policy Brief: At the end of the semester, students will write a longer (8 pages, same format as above) policy brief. A list of topics will be distributed one month in advance of the last class session. The paper should open with a short statement of the problem, then make a policy recommendation on the first page. The remaining seven pages should be spent elaborating on the rationale behind the policy, stating its pros and cons, as well as the most obvious available alternatives and their own pros and cons.

Policy briefs should use the same format as the policy memos. You may use whichever citation style you want as long as you use only one style consistently throughout the paper. They should be emailed to me by Sunday, May 04, at 8:00pm. This deadline is strict. Papers received within the first 24 hours past this deadline will be dropped one full letter grade, to which one further full letter grade will be subtracted for each additional 24-hour period of delay.

Note: While these requirements and the deadlines described above will be strictly enforced, I know that emergencies and illnesses might arise during the term. If that happens to be the case, please let me know as early as possible so that we can work out alternative arrangements for you to complete your work within a reasonable period of time.

All assignments are non-collaborative and should be entirely your own work. Plagiarism is unacceptable and will result in penalties up to and including a failing grade for the assignment (and therefore the course) and referral to the university for disciplinary action.

Academic integrity is a core institutional value at Yale. It means, among other things, truth in presentation, diligence and precision in citing works and ideas we have used, and acknowledging our collaborations with others. In view of our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity, the Graduate

School Code of Conduct specifically prohibits the following forms of behavior: cheating on examinations, problem sets and all other forms of assessment; falsification and/or fabrication of data; plagiarism, that is, the failure in a dissertation, essay or other written exercise to acknowledge ideas, research, or language taken from others; and multiple submission of the same work without obtaining explicit written permission from both instructors before the material is submitted. Students found guilty of violations of academic integrity are subject to one or more of the following penalties: written reprimand, probation, suspension (noted on a student's transcript) or dismissal (noted on a student's transcript).

## READINGS

In order best to achieve the goals of the course, keep in mind the following questions when doing the readings: What is the question the author is trying to answer? Why does it matter? What is the argument the author is trying to make? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What is the evidence the author presents in support of the argument? How convincing is it? What are possible counter-arguments? What are the policy problems to which the argument applies?

All readings will be available in PDF format on the Classes\*V2 server at least one week before the session in which we will discuss them. The one exception, which you have to purchase, is the following book:

- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

Note: The readings for each session below are listed in the order you should do them.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### PART I: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### Week 01 (Jan. 14) -- The Role of Theory in International Politics

- No assigned readings.

#### Week 02 (Jan. 21) -- The International System [TM]

- Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), chapters 5-6;
- J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1961): 77-92;
- Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: the International Sources of Domestic Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (1978): 881-912.
- Hendrick Spruyt, "The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 5 (2002): 127-149;
- David A. Lake, "Hierarchy, Anarchy, and the Variety of International Relations," *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1996): 1-33.

### Week 03 (Jan. 28) -- Strategic Interaction [TM]

- Duncan Snidal, "Rational Choice and International Relations," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, editors, *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 73-94;
- David A. Lake and Robert Powell, "International Relations: A Strategic-Choice Approach," in Lake and Powell, editors, *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), chapter 1;
- Jeffrey A. Frieden, "Actors and Preferences in International Relations," in David A. Lake and Robert Powell, editors, *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), chapter 2;
- James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, editors, *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 53-72.

### Week 04 (Feb. 04) -- Power and Anarchy [TM]

- Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, "Power in International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (2005): 39-75;
- Charles Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1997): 171-201;
- Lloyd Gruber, *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), chapters 2-3; [available as an ebook at: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/yale/docDetail.action?docID=10031933>];
- John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), chapters 2 and 3;
- Janice Bially Mattern, "Why 'Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics," *Millennium*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2005): 583-612.

### Week 05 (Feb. 11) -- Domestic Institutions [TM]

- Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (1997): 513-553;
- Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-level Games," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No.3, (1988): 424-460;
- James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (1994): 577-592;
- Kenneth Schultz, "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (1999): 233-266;

- Jack Snyder and Erica Borghard, “The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No. 3 (2011): 437-456;
- John Owen, “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1994): 87-125.

### **Week 06 (Feb. 18) -- International Institutions [TM]**

- James Fearon, “Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1998): 269-306;
- Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, “The Politics, Power and Pathologies of International Organizations,” *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (1999): 699-732;
- George W. Downs, David M. Roache, and Peter N. Barsoom, “Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation?” *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (1996): 379-406;
- John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1994/95): 5-93;
- Bruce Russett, John Oneal, and David Davis, “The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod: International Organizations and Militarized Disputes, 1950-1985,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (1998): 441-467.

## **PART II: APPLICATIONS TO KEY AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **Week 07 (Feb. 25) -- The Causes of War [PM]**

- James Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1995): 379-414;
- Jack Levy, “The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 1 (1998): 139-165;
- Robert Jervis, “Theories of War in an Era of Leading-Power Peace,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (2002): 1-14;
- Nuno Monteiro, “Unrest Assured: Why a Unipolar World Is Not Peaceful,” *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2011/12): 9-40;
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, “Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (2014): 1-32.

### **Week 08 (Mar. 04) -- Deterrence and Brinkmanship [PM]**

- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), chapters 1-3 and 6;
- Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), chapters 1-2.

### **Week 09 (Mar. 25) -- Nuclear proliferation [PM]**

- Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1996/97): 54-86;
- Etel Solingen, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1994): 126-169;
- Scott D. Sagan, “The Causes of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2011): 225-244;
- Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, “The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation,” Yale University mimeo;
- Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro, “The Effect of Alliances on Nuclear Proliferation,” Yale University Mimeo.

### **Week 10 (Apr. 01) -- The Transformation of the International System [PM]**

- Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapters 1-5 & 8.

### **Week 11 (Apr. 08) -- Norms and Cooperation [PM]**

- Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1998): 887-918;
- Nina Tannenwald, “Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo,” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2005): 5-49;
- Ronald Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, “Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2007): 35-66;
- Susan D. Hyde, “Catch Us If You Can: Election Monitoring and International Norm Diffusion,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2011): 356-369;
- James R. Vreeland, “Political Institutions and Human Rights: Why Dictatorships Enter into the United Nations Convention Against Torture,” *International Organization*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (2008): 65-101;
- Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, “Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression,” *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (2005): 593-629.

### **Week 12 (Apr. 15) -- International Environmental Politics [PM]**

- Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (1968): 1243-1248;
- Thomas Bernauer (2013) ‘Climate Change Politics,’ *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 16 (2013): 421-448;

- David Michaels and Celeste Monforton, "Manufacturing Uncertainty: Contested Science and the Protection of the Public's Health and Environment," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 95, Suppl. 1 (2005): 39-48;
- Jana Von Stein, "The International Law and Politics of Climate Change: Ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2008): 243-268;
- Robert Keohane and David Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2011): 7-23;
- Charles Lipson, "Why Are Some International Agreements Informal?" *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (1991): 495-538.

### **Week 13 (Apr. 22) -- What Good Is IR Theory For in the Conduct of International Relations?**

- Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, "Between Utopia and Reality: The Practical Discourses of International Relations," in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3-40;
- Stephen M. Walt, "The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 8 (2004): 23-48;
- Steven Bernstein *et al.*, "God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 6, No. 1(2000): 43-76;
- Dale Jamieson, "Scientific Uncertainty and the Political Process," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 545 (1996): 35-43.