

SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Political Science 530 / Public Affairs & Policy 630
Portland State University, Winter 2020

[David Kinsella](#)

[Department of Political Science](#)

Office: [Urban Center Building](#), 650L

kinsella@pdx.edu | 503.381.6298

Office Hours: Monday & Friday 11:30-12:30

Description

The course surveys the main theoretical and analytical approaches encountered in the study of international relations (IR). Our primary emphasis is on topics related to international security, organization, and law. We delve into a few topics in international political economy, but fuller examinations of IPE are offered in other seminars. We cover much of the same substantive ground as [Contemporary Theories of World Politics](#) (PS 542), but this course is structured around a different and more extensive reading list and is conducted in seminar rather than lecture format.

The first part of the course covers scholarship representative of two long-standing theoretical traditions in international relations, and one relatively new one: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. We then examine some analytical issues relevant to theory and research in the field, including the application of the rational choice framework. Next we turn to competing perspectives on international ethics: who are the holders of rights and obligations in international society? Finally, we consider some of the wide-ranging critiques of mainstream international relations -- both theory and practice -- offered by contemporary critical thinkers.

The organization of topics is both thematic and chronological -- thematic in that each week's reading and discussion focuses on a particular perspective, tradition, or approach in international relations; chronological in that competing approaches have often unfolded in critical response to scholarship of the previous generation.

Learning Objectives

The general objective of this course is to develop the student's capacity to critically examine theoretical propositions about international relations, consider the applicability of IR theory to real problems in contemporary world affairs, and communicate this analysis to others. This is to be accomplished by exposing students to a body of literature that has helped to shape the contemporary discipline of international relations, including both positive and normative

theory, as well as alternative approaches to research. By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical approaches to the study of international relations as a subfield of political science;
- interpret historical and contemporary international issues using appropriate analytic frameworks; and
- articulate normative positions on some key ethical dilemmas in international relations.

Requirements and Evaluation

The main workload consists of assigned reading. Assignments should be read carefully prior to the session for which they are scheduled. As this is a seminar, participation in class discussion is important to the success of the course and everyone is expected to contribute (20 percent of your course grade). During the term, you are required to make one or two brief [presentations](#) on a reading from a supplemental reading list and write two [short analytic papers](#) (15 percent each). The latter are to be critical reviews of the readings assigned for the week (5-6 pages) and are due at the beginning of class. The first essay must review readings from any of weeks 2 through 5; the second essay, weeks 6 through 10. The remaining 50 percent of your grade will be based on a take-home [final exam](#) distributed on the last day on class.

Readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. All required readings are available online. If a D2L is provided, the reading is accessible only after logging into D2L. Assigned readings without a link are generally journal articles and are available through the PSU library website (off-campus access requires logging into your Odin account).

Conduct, Courtesy, and Student Resources

You should be familiar with the PSU [Student Code of Conduct](#), especially the section concerning academic misconduct – i.e., plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of the definition or consequences of academic misconduct, consult me.

PSU's policies require faculty members to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact a confidential advocate (503.725.5672 or [online](#)) or another confidential employee listed on the sexual misconduct resource [webpage](#). For more information, please complete the required student module [Creating a Safe Campus](#) in D2L.

Because they are distracting to others, cell phones may not be used during seminar and should be silenced at the start of class. Laptops and tablets may be used to take notes, but not for email, web browsing, or social media. Electronic devices may not be used to photograph, video, or stream seminar discussions, but sessions may be audio recorded with permission of the instructor.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The [C.A.R.E. Team](#), hosted by the Dean of Student Life, is available to consult with you regarding any issues of students in distress, including sexual misconduct.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

8 Jan **Introduction**

- Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy* 145 (2004): 52-62.
- Robert O. Keohane, "Political Science as a Vocation." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42 (April 2009): 359-63.

15 Jan **Realism I**

- E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Harper and Row, 1946), chaps. 4-6. ([D2L](#))
- Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Addison Wesley, 1979), chaps. 1, 4-6. ([D2L](#))
- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton, 2001), chaps. 1-2, 9-10. ([D2L](#))

22 Jan **Realism II**

- Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Foreign Policy." *World Politics* (October 1998): 144-172.
- Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States." *International Security* 30 (Summer 2005): 7-45.
- Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "International Relations Theory and the Case against Unilateralism." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (September 2005): 509-24.
- Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists." *Security Studies* 17 (2008): 191-220.

29 Jan

Liberalism I

- David Mitrany, "The Functional Approach to World Organization." *International Affairs* 24 (July 1948): 350-363.
- Robert Axelrod, "The Emergence of Cooperation among Egoists." *The American Political Science Review* 75 (June 1981): 306-18.
- Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton University Press, 1984), chaps. 1-7. ([D2L](#))

5 Feb

Liberalism II

- Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51 (Fall 1997): 513-553.
- Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Summer 1983): 205-235.
- John Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19 (Fall 1994): 87-125.
- G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order." *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (March 2009): 71-87.

12 Feb

Constructivism

- Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992): 391-425.
- Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Cornell University Press, 1996), chaps. 1, 3, 5. ([D2L](#))
- Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics." *International Organization* 53 (Spring 1999): 379-408.
- Emanuel Adler. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." *European Journal of International Relations* 3 (September 1997): 319-63.

19 Feb

Rationalism

- Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Harvard University Press, 1960), chaps. 1-3. ([D2L](#))
- Andrew Kydd, "Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation." *International Organization* 54 (Spring 2000): 325-357.
- James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49 (Summer 1995): 379-414.
- Stephen M. Walt, "Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies." *International Security* 23 (Spring 1999): 5-48.

26 Feb

Ethics and Law I

- Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 5th ed. (Basic Books, 2015), chaps. 1-6, 8-9, 16-17. ([D2L](#))
- Alex J. Bellamy, "No Pain, No Gain? Torture and Ethics in the War on Terror." *International Affairs* 82 (January 2006): 121-48.
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, Andrew S. Tulumello, and Stepan Wood, "International Law and International Relations Theory: A New Generation of Interdisciplinary Scholarship." *American Journal of International Law* 92 (July 1998): 367-397.

4 Mar

Ethics and Law II

- Brian Barry, "Humanity and Justice in Global Perspective." *Nomos* 24 (1982): 219-252. ([D2L](#))
- John Rawls, "The Law of Peoples." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Autumn 1993): 36-68.
- Charles R. Beitz, "International Liberalism and Distributive Justice: A Survey of Recent Thought." *World Politics* 51 (January 1999): 269-296.
- Paul Wapner and Richard R. Matthew, "The Humanity of Global Environmental Ethics." *Journal of Environment and Development* 18 (June 2009): 203-222.

11 Mar

Critical International Relations

- Michael Cox, "Rebels without a Cause? Radical Theorists and the World System after the Cold War." *New Political Economy* 3 (1998): 445-60.
- Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 2002), introduction, chap. 4, conclusion. ([D2L](#))
- Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), chaps. 5-7. ([D2L](#))

Materials for this course are *not* available on D2L. This syllabus is available online at web.pdx.edu/~kinsella/ps530w20.pdf and all course materials can be linked from this address.

Last updated on 9 January 2020.