Fall 9-1-2004

PSC 530.01: International Relations Seminar

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International Relations Seminar

Course Description and Objectives
This course introduces graduate students to the major literatures in international relations and provides them with theoretical, methodological, and empirical tools to evaluate and advance arguments about the contemporary international system. In particular, it explores the possibility that a "new world order" of diminishing conflict and increasing cooperation is emerging. By the end of the semester, students will be well-versed and able to participate in scholarly debates about the structure, character, and future of the international system.

Prerequisite
Graduate standing. Seniors with 3.0 GPAs and a strong record of upper-division coursework in international relations may be admitted upon request.

Required Texts
The following texts are required. The first one is available for purchase at the U of M Bookstore.


Various online readings, denoted by a plus sign (+). These readings are available on the World Wide Web, via the library catalogue, or on the course's Blackboard website. For information on accessing Blackboard, see handout entitled "Using Blackboard."

Reserve readings, denoted by an asterisk (*), available in hard copy at the Information Desk of the library or electronically via the library's website.

Additional readings to be disseminated by arrangement.

Course Requirements and Grading
Students must read, analyze, and synthesize all of the assigned readings before class; attend and actively participate in class (20% of course grade); write and present 3 reviews of assigned readings (40%); and write a 20-25 page research paper (40%). Plus/minus grades will be assigned.

I. Reading and Preparing for Class
International relations is a venerable and far-reaching field composed of many literatures, each with many arguments and contributors. To provide as intensive and extensive an introduction to the field as is needed for Master's examinations and theses, this course has a significant reading load – an average of 200-250 pages per week. This means you need to set aside at least 6-8 hours per week to prepare for the seminar. To facilitate planning, weekly reading totals are noted on the reading schedule.

Reading the assigned books and articles is necessary, but insufficient, to prepare for seminar meetings. You must also analyze and synthesize the material and reflect on the questions it has raised for you:
A. Analysis
- What is the central question or problem addressed by the author, and what is his or her answer or argument?
- What is the logic of this answer or argument? Does it make sense? Is it plausible? Into what school/s of thought does it fall?
- What evidence does the author use to support his or her argument? Does the evidence support the argument? Is it convincing? Are you aware of other evidence that would support or weaken the argument?
- What is your overall position on this argument, and why?

B. Synthesis
- What are the overarching themes developed in these readings?
- To what extent, and how, do the readings compete with or shed light on one another?
- Which of these selections do you find most and least interesting and convincing?
- How do these themes and readings speak to those in other sections of the course?

C. Reflection
- What questions (theoretical, methodological, empirical, etc.) have these readings raised for you that you would like to resolve or discuss in class?
- What insights (about theory, methodology, history, current events, etc.) have you had in reading, analyzing, and synthesizing these selections? How did you arrive at these insights? What theoretical and/or policy implications do they have? Is this something you might want to pursue in future research? If not, why not? If so, how?

Making notes on these questions and bringing them to the seminar meetings will ensure that you have something to contribute to the seminar. It will also assist you in preparing for the department's comprehensive examination in international relations and in your future research and teaching.

II. Participating in the Seminar
Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings and participate in seminar discussions by contributing informed questions and comments, and responding constructively to those of others. Participation will constitute 20% of the course grade and will be graded based on regular attendance, contributions to weekly seminars, and one or more incidental assignments (e.g., an intellectual autobiography the first week).

III. Writing and Presenting Reading Reviews
Students are required to write and present 3-4 short papers, each on one week's reading assignment. Assignments will be made in consultation with the instructor. Together, the papers and presentations will constitute 40% of the course grade.

Papers should be analytic and synthetic, focusing on the questions elaborated in Section I (especially those in parts B and C). They should be in essay form, with an overarching argument developed over 3-5 pages (double-spaced, with 10 or 12 point font) and proper footnote or endnote citations. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day of the presentation. Papers that do not conform to the stipulated length and format will be marked down at least one grade. Late papers and missed presentations will receive marks of 0 except in documented emergencies discussed with the professor before class on the due date.

Presentations should be clear, concise, and informative, and they should raise questions for the
class as a whole to discuss, preferably in a logical, sequential order. To ensure that your presentation is polished and conversational and that it fits within 10 minutes, practice your remarks in advance.

IV. The Research Paper
Preparing, writing, and presenting a 20-25 page research paper will constitute 40% of the course grade. Early in the semester, each student will develop a research proposal for review by the professor, who will provide comments and suggestions. Students will then write the paper and present it to the class during one of the last two seminars, which will be conducted like American Political Science Association panels (with a chairman and discussants). Papers must have both theoretical and empirical elements and should apply one or two theories to understand a significant contemporary or historical issue or problem. A detailed assignment will be provided in class.

Make-Up Policy
I will excuse absences and accept make-up work only in the event of documented emergencies. If you find yourself in the midst of an emergency, you must notify me as soon as possible (in advance of the exam or due-date if possible) that you will be unable to attend class or submit the work on time. To do so, call me or send me an email explaining the circumstances of your emergency and giving me a way to contact you. I reserve the right to deny any and all petitions for make-up work, and to administer makeup assignments substantially different from the regular assignments. Note: if you miss an exam or fail to submit your paper for any other reason you will receive a 0 for the assignment. This will put you at risk of failing the course.

Course Outline and Schedule

I. Introduction to the Course and One Another (8/31)
Assignment due in my email inbox on or by Sunday, 9/5: Your intellectual autobiography and aspirations. Write an essay in which you explain what you have studied, what you have learned, and what you would like to know about international relations. In doing so, please let me know which (if any) of the theorists in A&J you have read before, and well as which (if any) of the families of IR theory – realist, liberal, or critical – you tend to favor, and why. Also discuss three topics upon which you may be interested in writing your research paper, and discuss your goals for graduate study and beyond. This will help me tailor the class to your needs. Papers should be in essay form, with an overarching argument developed over 5-10 pages (double-spaced, with 10 or 12 point font) and proper footnote or endnote citations. Please send your paper to me both in the text and as a Word, Word Perfect, or pdf attachment.

II. Course Organization (9/7; 48 pp)
Today, based on your intellectual autobiographies and the number of people in the class, we will divide up and plan the work for the semester. Come to class prepared to discuss your intellectual autobiography, current international events, and the following reading. Please also bring your calendar, as we will be setting presentation and paper deadlines.

III. Idealism & Realism; Levels of Analysis; Theory & Application; Structural Realism (9/14; 157 pp.)
+Woodrow Wilson, "The World Must Be Made Safe for Democracy" (Address to Congress Asking for Declaration of War, April 2, 1917) and Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points" (Address to Congress, January 8, 1918) available at the World War I Document Archive, http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/ (select year, then scroll down to dates) (9 pp).

IV. Applying Realism (9/21; 132 pp.)

V. Liberalism: Economic, Political, and Cultural/Ideological (9/28; 165 pp.)


Economic Liberalism (34 pp)


Political Liberalism (20 pp)


Cultural & Ideological Arguments (53 pp)


Applications (58 pp.)


+Francis Fukuyama, "The west has won: Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism, We're still at the end of history," Guardian (London), October 11, 2001, available through LexusNexxus Academic (2 pp).

VI. Neoliberalism (10/5; 246 pp.)
International Organizations and Law (25 pp.)


Integration and Interdependence (77 pp.)


Regimes and Other Avenues of Cooperation (62 pp)


Applications (82 pp)


VII. Marxism-Leninism, Dependency Theory, World Systems Theory, Historical Materialism
(10/12; 209 pp.)

Theories (106 pages)


Applications (103 pp.)


VIII. Constructivism and Postmodernism (10/19; 226 pp.)

Constructivism (94 pp)


Postmodernism (132 pp.)

IX. Feminism and the English School (10/26; 185 pp.)

Feminism (89 pp.)


The English School (96 pp.)


X. Paper Proposals Due (11/2)


There will be no class today due to the election day holiday. By 5:00 p.m. tonight, please email me your proposal for the research paper (both as an attachment in Word or pdf format, and pasted into an email). Your proposal, which should be no more than 10 pages, should address the following points:

1. What is the question you will answer in the paper, and why is it interesting, important, or puzzling?

2. Which of the theories we have discussed this semester are unlikely to help you answer this question, and why? Support your answer with reference to course readings on the logic and/or application of these theories.

3. Which of the theories we have discussed this semester could shed at least some light on the question, and why and how would they do so? Again, support your answer with reference to course readings on the logic and/or application of the theories.

4. Of the theories that could be applied, which do you think will shed the most light on your question, and why? Support your answer with reference to course readings on the logic and/or application of the theories.

5. Which one or two theories will you apply to answer this question, and why have you chosen it/them?

6. What answers to the question does this theory/do these theories offer? If you are using a positivist theory or theories, be clear about the hypotheses you are deriving from the theory/ies, and explain how they apply to your question. If you are testing post-positivist theories, explain the methodology you will use to answer your question. In either case, support your inferences with reference to course readings on the logic and/or application of the theories, as well as any additional theoretical reading you have done. For additional readings, see the "Further Readings" section of each chapter by Jennifer Sterling-Folker, as well as the footnotes and bibliographies of readings in each section of the syllabus. If you send me an email that explains what you're looking for, I may be able to provide you with additional suggestions. Note: for the purposes of the proposal, you need not have done any additional theoretical readings. You should cite at least one or two in the final version of your paper, however.

7. What kind of evidence would support (and weaken) the argument/s laid out in item 6?

8. Where will you look for evidence of this nature? Provide a bibliography containing at least 6 scholarly books or journal articles. If you have already found such evidence, summarize it here.

9. Provide an outline of the sections and sub-sections of your paper.

10. Summarize the conclusions you expect to reach about the answer to your question and the utility of the theory/ies you will apply to answer it.
XI. Contemporary Issues in International Political Economy

A. Globalization, Human Rights, and the Future of the State, IGOs & NGOs (11/9; 163 pp.)

Paper Presentations:
- Kimberly Hannon, US Intervention in El Salvador
- Jennifer Hathaway, NGOs and Human Rights
- Julianna Crowley, Women's Human Rights
- Katrin Madayag, A Foreign Policy for the Vatican

B. Environmental Challenges and Opportunities (11/16; 22 pp.)
Additional readings will be assigned later in the semester.

Paper Presentations:
- Randy Tanner, The Creation & Maintenance of Transboundary Protected Areas in Southern Africa
- Chad Dear, The Concept of Integrated Conservation and Development in the Convention on Biological Diversity
XII. Contemporary Issues in International Security

A. The Functions and Utility of Force: Offense, Defense, and Deterrence; Coercion/Compellence; Terrorism and Counterterrorism (11/22, 4:10-7:00 pm – note different class time; 133 pp.)


Paper Presentations:
- Kristin Inbody, Turkey’s Participation in the First Gulf War
- Paige Pavalone, Unipolarity and the War on Terrorism
- Rajendra Acharya, Political Realism and Counterterrorism

B. The Offense-Defense-Deterrence Balance and the Spread of WMD (11/30, 121 pp.)


Kedra Arnold, Nuclear Safety
C. US Foreign Policy and the Rise of New Great Powers (12/7; approx. 139 pp.)

*Paper Presentations:* Khalid Sagnawi, How to Improve US-Saudi Relations
Emily Orchard, The US and AIDS in Africa

*Note for students in the PSC Masters' program:* The Comprehensive Exam in International Relations will either be given or due on Wednesday, 12/15 from 3:20-5:20 pm.