

**International Relations  
POLS 202-01, Fall 2013  
Syllabus (Revised 8/29/13)**

Professor Brian Smith

Thursday, 2:30-5 pm, Dickson 275

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Office Hours: Monday 1-2:45 and Thursday 1-2:15 at Café Diem, and by appointment

**Course Description**

This course provides a historical introduction to the political science subfield of international relations. Over the course of the semester, we will devote attention to the varying ways scholars and practitioners in the past and present attempted to understand the nature of politics among nations and peoples. We will focus on four ways to study international politics: 1) through historical analogy and interpretation; 2) through the history of philosophical speculation about the subject; 3) through social science; and 4) as a matter of policy-making. Each section of the course will engage with similar broad questions, but take us down very different paths of inquiry. All of them will help reinforce your understanding of world politics, and expose you to arguments you may not have encountered.

**Course Goals**

Students will improve their ability to interpret political texts and both their written and verbal expression. They will also acquire a basic understanding of the most important problems in international politics and various prominent attempts to grapple with these dilemmas. Moreover, knowledge of these ideas will help prepare students for understanding related notions in political philosophy, comparative politics, and history.

**Course Expectations**

*First and most importantly: Read this syllabus carefully. Clearly understanding the class requirements will save us all trouble later.*

I will conduct the class primarily as a discussion. Some students get a great deal from participating in class discussions; others do not. For this reason, class participation will count for extra credit only. Questions count as a form of participation. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions. Expect to be challenged, but look on it as an opportunity, not a threat.

Students should come to class with the assigned texts in hand and read, and your participation in class should directly reference the readings. The reading load will vary from week to week, averaging between fifty and eighty pages per meeting (sometimes more or less). In order to be prepared for this, you should take notes on the readings that identify key passages for discussion, or which you do not understand. Under each class meeting, I have listed a few questions designed to guide your reading of the texts. In preparing for class, you should try to outline

answers to these questions in your reading notes. This effort will allow you to gain more from the class.

Some additional observations about reading for the class: with one partial exception, these are not standard textbooks with bold lettering around every word you need to know. A casual reading or one undertaken with various distractions present will probably not get you very far. Because of all this, you should probably allot three or more hours of focused attention per class meeting to the material. If you fail to do this, your ability to follow class discussion will be minimal and your chances of doing well on any of the writing assignments will be slim.

In terms of notes on the class readings, I recommend all students both mark up their books and take extensive notes with page references that essentially index the readings. You should type these up so that they are searchable. This is time-consuming, but will benefit you tremendously for the writing assignments.

Regarding note-taking in class, I have noticed that once some time has passed, most students have a very difficult time following their notes from a discussion based class like this. Because of the circuitous nature of most discussions, you will not leave class with a neat outline. This means that if you want decent notes you can use to help you with papers and the final, within a day or so of each class, you should rewrite or type up the class notes and attempt to provide a structure for them that you will understand later in the class.

Silence all cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices while in class. Keep distractions from the class conversation to a minimum, especially side-conversations. You may bring food, but please note that opening plastic food wrappers usually cannot be done quietly, so just tear it open and get the noise over. I will ask anyone who is consistently disruptive to leave.

This syllabus is subject to change, but I will always provide advance notice both in class and via email. You can always find a copy of the most up-to-date syllabus on Blackboard.

### **Assignments and Grading**

Because we will discuss the sections listed in class on the corresponding day, you must keep up with the reading and be ready to talk about it. You must complete two essays and a take-home final. All late essays will be marked down one minus step per day until I receive them. I will determine your grades using the following breakdown:

First Paper:	25%
Second Paper:	25%
Final Exam:	50%

Active participation in class discussions may increase your grade by up to two + steps.

Both the individual components and final grade will be calculated on and entered into the gradebook under the slightly more generous 4.0 scale. So, A = 3.71-4.0, A- = 3.31-3.70, B+ = 3.01-3.3, and so on.

## **Textbooks**

Please purchase the following books from a source of your choice. They should all be at the bookstore relatively early in the semester. Other readings and all course documents may be always found online at our course website on Blackboard. Make sure you buy the editions listed. Some students put off buying books or don't buy them at all because of financial concerns. The Dean of Students Office runs a program where you can get a loan to purchase course materials. They are located on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Student Center. You can also find contact information for them at their website:

<http://www.montclair.edu/deanstudents/contact.html>

Angelo Codevilla, *Advice to War Presidents: A Remedial Course in Statecraft*, Basic Books, ISBN: 0465004830

Colin Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*, 2nd edition (make sure you get the 2<sup>nd</sup> and not the 1<sup>st</sup> edition), Routledge, ISBN: 0415594871

Thomas Pangle and Peter Ahrensdorf, *Justice among Nations: On the Moral Basis of Power and Peace*, University Press of Kansas, ISBN: 0700612211

Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Columbia University Press, ISBN: 0231125372

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

Before the first meeting, you should download and read these two handouts on writing and outlining off of Blackboard, as well as complete the readings listed under our first class meeting – we will begin work on the first class session. I will attempt to make time to scan some of the Gray book for those of you who cannot get it in time, but we have a newborn at home and my time is limited and I may only get to the first couple chapters, so please get the Gray book in a timely fashion. You should reference the writing tools for all future courses and writing assignments with me and anyone else:

Colburn and Uphoff, "Common Expository Problems in Students' Papers and Theses," in *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 291-297

J. Budziszewski, "Course Handout on Analytical Outlining"

## **Part I: Strategic History**

Colin Gray develops a historical argument about the nature of international relations by beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century and moving into the present. Throughout, he argues that various elements of world politics have never changed, and that these continuities suggest we ought not to embrace theories that presuppose we can acquire a technical "fix" to questions of war and peace.

9/5: From Strategic Theory to Nineteenth Century Practice

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 1-5, pp. 1-89

Discussion Questions:

- 1) In what senses does Clausewitz argue war depends upon politics?
- 2) How did the French Revolution and Napoleon's efforts undermine the practice of limited war?
- 3) How did 19<sup>th</sup> century changes in technology affect international relations?
- 4) What were the strategic consequences of the Industrial Revolution?

9/12: The Bloody First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 6-13, pp. 91-208

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What lessons does Gray suggest we ought to learn from World War I?
- 2) What were the principal features of the inter-war period?
- 3) How did the mechanization of warfare affect the making of strategy?
- 4) What lessons does the conduct of WW II suggest about international relations?

9/19: One Form of Terror Replaces Another: The Cold War to 9/11 and After

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 14-17, pp. 209-278

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does the Cold War differ from previous conflicts we have studied? Do the ideas that drove it differ significantly?
- 2) How did the absence of the Soviet Union change the conduct of Western foreign policy and diplomacy?
- 3) How does Gray believe we ought to view terrorism?

9/26: Grand Strategies of International Politics

Read: Gray, *War, Peace, and International Relations*, Chs. 18-21, pp. 279-347

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Does irregular war alter the regular conduct of international relations? If so, how great a change does it create?
- 2) How does geography affect strategic history?
- 3) Compare and contrast what the different kinds of military power can and cannot achieve.
- 4) What are the primary continuities of strategic history, as Gray describes them?

Essay 1 Assigned, hard copy due in my mailbox in Dickson 204 on Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup> by 4:30 pm

## **Part II: The History of International Thought**

In this section, we start with ancient political thought and work our way to more recent ideas – the idea is to prepare for the discussion of theories of international relations based in social science by understanding their predecessors in political philosophy.

### **10/3: Classical Thought – Realism, Idealism, and Cosmopolitanism**

Read: Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice among Nations*, Chs. 1-3, pp. 1-72

Discussion Questions:

- 1) In Pangle and Ahrens Dorf's view, what makes classical realism "humane"? What do realists like Thucydides seek to defend in international relations?
- 2) What role does the cultivation of civic virtue play in "classical idealism"?
- 3) How does an idea of natural law shape Stoic thinking about international affairs?

### **10/10: The Just War Tradition**

Read: Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice among Nations*, Ch. 4, pp. 73-124

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How do the various conceptions of justice in international politics within the Christian/Just War tradition clash? What generates these conflicts?
- 2) What are the most important concepts that guide just war thinking? How do they clash with other arguments we have read?

### **10/17: Politics as Amoral Enterprise? Or Something More?**

Read: Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice among Nations*, Chs. 5-6, pp. 125-217

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does Machiavelli challenge the Classical and Christian modes of thinking about international affairs?
- 2) How do the authors define "modern idealism"? What are its aims as a way of formulating an international ideal?
- 3) Contrast the role justice plays in the realist and idealist traditions presented in these two chapters.

## **Part III: International Relations as Social Science**

In this section, we deal with a couple of the most prominent post-WW II efforts to create a genuinely social scientific theory of international relations, especially those of Kenneth Waltz, the father of "neo-realism."

10/24: Morgenthau, Waltz, and the Legacy of World War II

Read: Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice among Nations*, Ch. 7, pp. 218-238  
Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Chs. 1-2, pp. 1-41

Discussion Questions:

- 1) In what sense is Morgenthau driven by moral concerns? How do his ideas about human nature factor into this stance?
- 2) Waltz identifies himself as engaging in a social scientific approach to IR. How does this differ from what we have read so far?
- 3) Why does Waltz think “first image” thinkers are naïve? Is Morgenthau a logical target of this criticism?

10/31: On Individual Behavior and State Structure

Read: Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Chs. 3-4, pp. 42-123

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What does it mean to say that “war is not in human nature”?
- 2) Why does Waltz think that equating knowledge and control is a dangerous fallacy in international relations?
- 3) What is the “second image”? Describe some of the versions of it that Waltz mentions.
- 4) What failings does Waltz ascribe to the “second image”?

11/7: The Second Image and the Third: Ideas Defining State Structure versus Systemic Anarchy

Read: Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Chs. 5-6, pp. 124-186

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What does Waltz attempt to show by examining socialist parties in World War I?
- 2) According to Waltz, to what degree did socialism alter the way states behaved?
- 3) What differentiates his “third image” from the other two?
- 4) What does anarchy mean for international relations?

Essay 2 Assigned, hard copy due in my mailbox in Dickson 204 on Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> by 4:30 pm

11/14: Neorealism Defined

Read: Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Chs. 7-8, pp. 187-238

Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988), pp. 615-628

Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice Among Nations*, Ch. 8 and Conclusion, pp. 239-263

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does Waltz explicitly differentiate himself from Morgenthau's realism?
- 2) In what ways does the international system constrain states to behave? What historical examples does Waltz give to support this idea?
- 3) Why does Waltz believe it risky to depart from balance of power politics?
- 4) What are the main criticisms Pangle and Ahrens Dorf level against Waltz's theory?

11/21: A Brief Look at One Major Debate in International Relations Theory

Read: Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy* (Nov.-Dec. 2004), pp. 52-62

John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter, 1994-1995), pp. 5-49

John Gerald Ruggie, "The False Premise of Realism," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 62-70

Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 71-81

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How do Snyder's traditions of international relations fit or not with the story Pangle and Ahrens Dorf tell of the history of international thought? What are the primary differences?
- 2) According to Mearsheimer, what dooms international institutions to failure?
- 3) How do Ruggie and Wendt challenge his ideas? How do they justify their critique?

**Part IV: Foreign Policy, Simply**

In this section, we read a recent book that challenges just about all of the conventional wisdom in international relations about the conduct of war and diplomacy. It is a relatively quick read, and in light of what we read, should be very accessible.

11/28: No class, Thanksgiving Break

I would suggest starting the Codevilla book over the weekend. It is relatively long to cover in two weeks – try to get as far into it as possible.

12/5: Some Confusions Caused By Bad Theory

Read: Codevilla, *Advice to War Presidents*, Chs. 1-5, pp. 1-144

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What blind spots does Codevilla believe most members of the mainstream American foreign policy establishment share?
- 2) How does Codevilla critique the notion of “soft power”? How does he believe this notion has weakened American diplomacy?
- 3) What relationship does Codevilla believe exists between wealth and power in world politics?

12/12: The Absolute Importance of Clarity about Ends and Means

Read: Codevilla, *Advice to War Presidents*, Chs. 6-9, pp. 145-280

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Comment on the importance Codevilla places on the idea of victory in war.
- 2) What confusions does Codevilla believe exist about the role of the intelligence community in our foreign policy?
- 3) How does Codevilla believe the United States might secure itself more fully?

*Hard copies of take-home final exam due on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> in my mailbox in Dickson 204 by 4:30 pm.*