

PSCI 202
World Politics:
An Introduction to International Relations
Fall 2016

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Course Description

This course will provide an overview of the central theoretical concepts and debates in the field of international relations. The first part of the course will focus on questions that have preoccupied scholars since the time of Thucydides: What are the implications of anarchy for order and justice in world politics? What are the conditions of peace and stability in world politics? What is the national interest? Is military power all that matters in determining politics among nations? Should statesmen follow the policy prescriptions of Realism or Liberalism? What role should moral considerations play in international relations?

The second part of this course will examine the historical development of world politics with a focus on great power politics in the 20th century. We will examine topics such as the origins of the First and Second World Wars, the Cold War, and the nuclear revolution. The third part of the course will examine whether traditional concepts and debates continue to be relevant in the contemporary world. What new concepts and theories have scholars developed about world politics since the end of the Cold War? How does the rise of lethal non-state actors like ISIS change the nature of world politics? Will conflicts among nations be replaced by clashes among civilizations? Will new great powers like China and India fundamentally change the international system as they become more powerful?

This course is not explicitly focused on current events, but since our subject matter involves theoretical and conceptual issues about the nature of world politics I expect all students to be up to date on important events and arguments. All students must keep up with the *New York Times* and it is helpful to follow one or more of the many websites and blogs that focus on international relations. The websites at *realclearworld.com* or *ForeignAffairs.com* are excellent places to start.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

- a) Two 6-7 page essays. Each essay will count for **25% of final grade**. Both of these essays will be based on the assigned readings. Due dates will be assigned well in advance.
- b) Final Exam. **25% of final grade**. The final will be an in-class exam that covers material for the entire semester. The date of the exam will be scheduled by the registrar.
- c) Class Participation, Attendance, and Glow Participation. **25% of final grade**. All three of these components are important in determining your grade.

Regular attendance and participation is crucial for the successful functioning of this course. We do not formally take attendance every class, but we do note absences and will be in touch with any student that misses class without an explanation. Repeated unexplained absences will have a noticeable impact on your final grade.

We expect students to be ready and prepared to participate intelligently in every class session. We do not judge quality of class participation by quantity and it is important to allow everyone a chance to participate. Instructions and expectations for GLOW participation will be outlined on a separate handout.

The use of laptops is not permitted without express written permission from the Dean of the College. All smartphones or equivalent devices must be securely put away and out of reach or sight before class begins. Any intentional violation of this policy may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the course.

Teaching Assistant

The TA for this course is Greg Steinhelper. Greg can be reached at ges2@williams.edu. He is available for help with drafts of papers and anything related to posting on the GLOW system.

Course Materials

There are no required books for this class. All class readings will be found in the course packets or handed out in class. I do not use the packet room. All course packets will be either brought to class or available at my office.

All students are required to obtain a subscription to *The New York Times* for the duration of the semester. You can subscribe for one dollar a week, which is a great bargain. You can find out more information here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/edu/lp898Q4.html?campaignId=3J4JL>

I understand that there are other ways, legal and illegal, to access the *NYT*. But in order to ensure that we are all on the same page, we are requiring all students to subscribe through the official channel. Proof of a subscription must be provided by September 13.

Class Schedule

Sept 8: Introduction

Sept 13: Violence and the Logic of Anarchy

Anarchy is the central concept in the study of world politics. The fact that world politics takes place in a system without a central authority has tremendous implications for all of the actors.

Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (2011), pp. 1-30. A great overview of our violent and brutal past, which Pinker believes has been steadily declining and which will likely continue. Much of this class will be devoted to examining competing explanations for the relative peacefulness of our current era. Please note the use of the word “relative.”

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), Chapter 13, pp. 86-90. An indispensable foundation for understanding the condition of anarchy. You should read these four pages several times.

Jesse McKinley, “California Officials Tackle a Toothy Lake Predator,” *New York Times*, September 12, 2007. If I had to explain the logic of international relations in less than three pages, this article about the Northern Pike and Lake Davis might be my first choice.

Sept 15: Realism and World Politics

There is no single theory of world politics that everyone accepts as persuasive, and there are also many variations within theoretical traditions such as Realism. “Classical” Realism can be found in the philosophy of both Niccolo Machiavelli and Hans Morgenthau. The chapter by Mearsheimer represents the school that is known as “structural” Realism. Think about the ways in which all three of these Realists emphasize different things about world politics, as well as what they share in common.

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (1999), pp. 29-54. Mearsheimer is perhaps the leading Realist scholar of the 21st century. Not all Realists would agree with some of his specific points, but this chapter lays out some of the more important arguments of the tradition.

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1515), Chapters 14-15, 17-18. Machiavelli’s purpose here was not really to write about international politics, but his perspective is very important for understanding the essence of Realism. If you can understand the advice Machiavelli provides to the prince, you will also understand a great deal about state behavior in world politics.

Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (1948), pp.564-570. This very brief excerpt provides you with a sense of what Realism meant in practical terms to American elites after the Second World War. No international relations theorist exerted nearly as much influence as Morgenthau did in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Sept 20: Liberalism and World Politics

Liberalism is the main rival to Realism in efforts to understand the nature of world politics. The first two readings examine some of the more influential pre-Wilsonian liberal theorists such as

Immanuel Kant and Richard Cobden. Ikenberry and Krauthammer offer contrasting assessments of the value of liberalism to modern international relations.

Immanuel Kant, "To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1795)," in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, pp. 107-119.

Peter Cain, "Capitalism, War and Internationalism in the Thought of Richard Cobden," *British Journal of International Studies* (1979), pp.229-247.

G. John Ikenberry, "Why Export Democracy?" *The Wilson Quarterly* (1999), pp. 56-65.

Charles Krauthammer, "A World Imagined: The Flawed Premises of Liberal Foreign Policy," *The New Republic* (1999), pp. 22-25.

Sept 22: Constructivism and World Politics

Constructivism is a relatively new way of thinking about international relations, which differs markedly in its emphases from both realism and liberalism. The Wendt article is one of the most influential pieces in the field of the past quarter century and offers an introduction to the constructivist perspective. The Steele article applies the theory to the case of British policy during the American Civil War. These are both abstruse, difficult readings. Do not feel deterred or discouraged—grappling with and trying to comprehend tough material can be an extremely valuable experience. If they seem confusing, it is because they are. For the Wendt article, try to discern what his fundamental argument is and how it differs from the realist and liberal paradigms. For Steele, focus on why the example he gives about the influence of American slavery on British policy matters in conceptual terms.

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* (1992), pp. 391-425.

Brent Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-Identity: British Neutrality and the American Civil War," *Review of International Studies* (2005), pp. 519-540.

Sept 27: Thucydides and the Causes of War

Many scholars insist that almost everything you need to know about the essence of international relations can be gleaned from Thucydides. While that may be overstated, this account of conflict in Ancient Greece is an excellent and gripping introduction to the causes of war. Pay particular attention to the specific reasons offered by the Athenians and the Spartans for the decisions they make, as well as to the speeches of Pericles.

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (circa 400 B.C), pp. 48-49, 72-87, 103-108, 118-123, 156-164, 212-223, 400-408.

Sept 29: The Concert of Europe and the Rise of Germany

All of the readings for this class try and help explain the relative peacefulness of 19th century Europe after the carnage of the Napoleonic Wars. The Concert of Europe was far from perfect, but it did restore stability to the European state system. The Concert eventually collapsed, but stability was maintained to a large extent by the policies of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Developing British fears about the rise of German power are brilliantly put forward by Eyre Crowe. His 1907 memo is still fascinating reading, as is the powerful critique of it put forward by Thomas Sanderson, a colleague in the British Foreign Office.

Jonathan Green, "Europe's Enlightened Order," *The American Conservative* (July/August 2015), pp. 38-42.

Donald Kagan, *On the Origin of War and the Preservation of Peace* (1995), pp. 81-85, 100-141.

Eyre Crowe, "Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany," January 1, 1907, and Thomas Sanderson, "Observations on Printed Memorandum on Relations with France and Germany, January 1907," in G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. III: *The Testing of the Entente, 1904-6* (1928), pp. 397, 402-407, 416-422, 428-431.

Oct 4: Germany and the Origins of the First World War (II)

The First World War is often described by scholars as an "inadvertent" or "accidental" war. Not surprisingly, many other scholars disagree with this way of characterizing the origins of the war. The Schelling and Trachtenberg pieces will make you familiar with the arguments on both sides. The Kehr chapter offers a Marxist account by examining the domestic sources of German policy and their role in bringing on the war.

Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 220-225.

Marc Trachtenberg, "The Meaning of Mobilization in 1914," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1990-1991), pp. 120-150.

Eckart Kehr, "Anglophobia and Weltpolitik," in Eckart Kehr and Gordon Craig, eds., *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy* (1977), pp. 22-49.

Oct 6: Woodrow Wilson and American Intervention in WW1

Realists often refer to U.S. intervention in the First World War as a classic example of great power balancing behavior. When reading the pieces by Mearsheimer, Lippmann, and Morgenthau, focus on the causal logic that each employs to advance that argument (they are not identical). You then have five primary documents; analyzing these records will let you decide for yourself whether the three authors have a valid case.

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), pp. 252-254.

Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), pp. 33-39.

Hans Morgenthau, "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (1950), pp. 847-850.

Primary documents:

Diary Entry of Edward House, November 4, 1914

Diary Entry of Edward House, December 14, 1916

President Woodrow Wilson's Address to the Senate, January 22, 1917

Robert Lansing Memorandum, Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, March 20, 1917

Wilson's Address to a Joint Session of Congress, April 2, 1917

Oct 11: Reading Day

Oct 13: Appeasement and the Origins of the Second World War

It was the fervent hope of President Woodrow Wilson that the end of the First World War would usher in an era of peace and collective security. Why Wilsonianism did not bring about a world of great power cooperation, and how Adolf Hitler was able to plunge the world into another total conflict, is one of the central issues of IR theory and world history. Spoiler alert: the answer is more complicated than "appeasement."

A.J.P Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961), pp. xi-39. A masterful work of revisionist history that argues Hitler did not intend to start the Second World War. Pay careful attention to Taylor's implicit theories about the nature of international relations. Taylor may not be correct, but he is always provocative.

John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (2007), pp. 50-65.

Paul Kennedy, "A Time to Appear," *The National Interest* (July/Aug 2010), pp. 7-17. A great statement of the case for appeasement in international relations.

Oct 18: Morality and the Use of Force

Even the most justifiable uses of force kill innocent civilians. Is it justifiable to kill innocent civilians as long as they are not intentionally targeted? Can states justify killing innocent civilians if doing so will save the lives of their soldiers and citizens? These readings analyze two controversial uses of force: the atomic bombing of Japan and the increasing use of predator drones by President Obama.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, pp.262-268.

Paul Fussell, "Thank God for the Atom Bomb," in Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz, eds., *Hiroshima's Shadow* (1997), pp. 211-222.

Jane Mayer, "The Predator War," *The New Yorker*, October 26, 2009.

Scott Shane, "The Moral Case for Drones," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2012.

Daniel Brunstetter, "Can We Wage a Just Drone War?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 21, 2012.

David Bell, "In Defense of Drones: A Historical Argument," *The New Republic*, January 27, 2012.

Oct 20: The Long Peace: Bipolarity and the Cold War

The United States and the Soviet Union were ideological enemies armed with the most destructive weapons in history. Many people predicted that the Cold War would either go on indefinitely or end in another world war. The Waltz chapter is the most influential theoretical analysis of why a bipolar system turned out to be more stable and peaceful than predicted.

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 161-193.

Oct 25: The Nuclear Revolution and the International System

Most of us now take it for granted that nuclear weapons lead to a more peaceful world, at least at the level of great powers. It is hard to appreciate that for many decades the prospect of a nuclear exchange between the great powers was far from unthinkable. The Jervis chapter explains why a world with nuclear weapons is qualitatively different than one with conventional weapons. The Mueller chapter raises some skepticism about the widely held belief that the non-occurrence of WWII is primarily due to nuclear weapons. The Gavin chapter analyzes this debate in light of the historical evidence relating to the Berlin crisis, perhaps the most dangerous confrontation of the nuclear age.

Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (1984), pp. 19-46.

John Mueller, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda* (2010), pp. 39-43.

Francis J. Gavin, *Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America's Atomic Age* (2012), pp. 57-74.

Oct 27: The Unipolar Revolution

The Cold War and the bipolar distribution of power, which Waltz and others had argued was the most stable and peaceful system possible, ended dramatically at the end of the 1980's. What would or should replace bipolarity was the subject of much debate. Mearsheimer argued that

Europe might return to the conflictual nature that characterized the pre-1945 era. Over the course of the 1990's, it became clear to many that we were entering an unprecedented era of unipolarity: the domination of the system by only one great power. Whether this was a good or bad development for the United States or the world remains an important topic of debate.

John Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic Monthly* (1990), pp. 35-50.

Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," and Tyler, "Lone Superpower Plan: Ammunition for Critics," *The New York Times*, March 8 and 10, 1992.

Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The Benevolent Empire," *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1998), pp. 24-35.

Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs* (July/Aug 2002), pp. 20-33

Max Boot, "The Case for American Empire," *The Weekly Standard* (Oct 2001). This article is helpful because it is an excellent example of the mindset that led to Iraq and other misadventures after the September 11 attacks.

Nov 1: The Rise of Humanitarian Intervention: The Responsibility to Protect

In the aftermath of the Cold War, humanitarian intervention emerged as one of the more controversial developments in the international system. The abstract idea of great power intervention to save threatened populations appealed to many liberals, but in practice such interventions raised many troubling questions. Under what authority was intervention legal and/or legitimate? Did the development of the concept of "Responsibility to Protect" represent an advance over earlier ideas about humanitarian intervention? Why intervention in Libya, but not in Syria?

Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, "The Responsibility to Protect," *Foreign Affairs* (Nov/Dec 2002), pp. 99-110.

Benjamin Valentino, "The True Costs of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* (Nov/Dec 2011), pp. 60-73.

Allan Kuperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2015), pp. 66-77.

Thomas Weiss, "Military Humanitarianism: Syria Hasn't Killed It," *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 2014), pp. 7-20.

Nov 3: Nuclear Proliferation and Disarmament

The end of the Cold War led to a massive reduction in the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers. These readings debate whether the United States and other nuclear powers should proceed to a complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

President Barack Obama, Speech in Prague, April 5, 2009. Calls for “a world without nuclear weapons.”

Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, “The Great Debate: Is Nuclear Zero the Best Option?” *The National Interest* (Sep/Oct 2010), pp.88-96.

Joe Cirincione, "Nuclear Terrorist Threat Bigger Than You Think," *CNN Opinion*, April 1, 2016

"US Nearly Detonated Atomic Bomb over North Carolina," *The Guardian*, September 20, 2013.

Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (2012), pp. 2-5.

Matthew Kroenig, “Think Again: American Nuclear Disarmament: A Smaller Atomic Arsenal Isn’t Just Wishful Thinking—It’s Bad Strategy,” *Foreign Policy* (Sept/Oct 2013), pp. 44-49.

Nov 8: The Presidential Election and World Politics

Given the central role of America in the international system, how the two candidates think about the nature of world politics is important to everyone. We will assign readings for this topic as the election date gets a little closer.

Nov 10: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict represents one of the most intractable political disputes in modern history. Despite continuous efforts and negotiations, a settlement—the broad contours of which are basically already known to everyone—has proved elusive. Why has this problem been so difficult to resolve? What are the prospects for Arab-Israeli peace today? And what will be the role of the United States in future negotiations?

Ron Pundak, “From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?” *Survival* (2001), pp. 31-45.

Thomas L. Friedman, "The Many Mideast Solutions," *New York Times*, February 10, 2016.

Aluf Benn, "The End of the Old Israel," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2016), pp. 16-27.

Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Crisis in U.S.-Israel Relations Is Officially Here," *The Atlantic*, October 28, 2014.

Nov 14: The Middle East and World Politics

The Middle East has proved a violent and unstable place for decades. These readings introduce some of the various arguments that scholars and policymakers have come up with to explain why the region has experienced so many problems over the years, point to possible future flashpoints, and debate how the United States should deal with the area going forward.

Bernard Lewis, "What Went Wrong?" *The Atlantic*, January 2002.

Max Fisher, "Syria's Paradox," *New York Times*, August 26, 2016.

Dan Byman, "Six Bad Options for Syria," *The Washington Quarterly* (2015), pp. 171-186.

Kenneth Pollack, "Fight or Flight," *Foreign Affairs* (2016).

Robert D. Blackwill and Meghan L. O'Sullivan, "America's Energy Edge: The Geopolitical Consequences of the Shale Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* (2014), pp. 102-114.

Nov 17: Terrorism and the Rise of ISIS

The events of September 11, 2001 elevated terrorism to a top priority among national security strategists around the world. Many countries, especially the United States, have invested prodigious sums of money in counterterrorism programs in an attempt to keep their citizens safe. Yet, terrorist organizations like ISIS continue to rise. What are the causes of terrorism? What are ISIS's main objectives? How significant is the terrorist threat? And what exactly constitutes an act of terrorism?

Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic* (March 2015).

Audrey Kurth Cronin, "ISIS Is Not a Terrorist Group," *Foreign Affairs* (2015), pp. 87-98

John Mueller, "Is There Still a Terrorist Threat? The Myth of the Omnipresent Enemy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (2006), pp. 2-8.

Rick Gladstone, "Many Ask, Why Not Call Church Shooting Terrorism?" *New York Times*, June 18, 2015

Nov 21: The Rise of China and the Future of the International System

As we all know from Thucydides and the First World War, the rise of new great powers and the decline of established great powers can lead to system shattering conflicts. Whether China's rise will have that impact is considered by many to be the most important question in contemporary world politics. But that larger question turns on many other questions. Is China actually rising? Is the U.S. actually declining? Do the lessons of history from the era of Thucydides and the European balance of power system still apply in the 21st century?

David Shambaugh, "The Illusion of Chinese Power," *The National Interest* (July/Aug 2014), pp. 39-48.

Brooks, Stephen and William C. Wohlforth, "The Once and Future Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2016), pp. 91-104.

John Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?" *The National Interest* (April 2014), pp. 1-22.

G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive," *Foreign Affairs* (Jan/Feb 2008), pp. 23-37.

Nov 28: Conflict in the South China Sea and the Fate of Taiwan

Howard French, "China's Dangerous Game," *The Atlantic Monthly* (Nov 2014), pp. 1-29.

Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Parting the South China Sea: How to Uphold the Rule of Law," *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2016), pp. 76-82.

John Mearsheimer, "Taiwan's Dire Straits," *The National Interest* (March/April 2014), pp. 29-39.

Charles Glaser, "A U.S-China Grand Bargain?" *International Security* (Spring 2015), pp. 49-52, 68-78.

J. Michael Cole, "Don't Let China Swallow Taiwan," *The National Interest* (April 2015), pp. 1-2.

Dec 1: A New Cold War? Putin, Russian Revisionism, and NATO Expansion

Russia may not be the superpower it was during the Cold War, but the annexation of Crimea and other aggressive actions by Vladimir Putin have caused great concern among the members of NATO. To be sure, many scholars have pointed out that NATO and the West have taken actions that Russia has perceived to be threatening as well.

Daniel Treisman, "Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2016), pp. 47-54.

Graham Allison and Dimitri K. Simes, "Stumbling to War," *The National Interest* (May/June 2015), pp. 9-21.

John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2014), pp. 77-89.

Elbridge Colby, "The United States, NATO, and Dissuading Russian Aggression," *Foreign Affairs* (August 2015), pp. 1-3.

Doug Bandow, "Should the US Leave NATO?" *The National Interest* (Dec 2015), pp. 1-3.

Dec 5: American Decline and Offshore Balancing

After the Second World War, American officials believed that it was better for the nation to have troops on the ground in both Europe and Asia in order to stop conflicts before they started. Some scholars believe that this strategy is now both unnecessary and/or too expensive given American economic decline. But other scholars question whether America is actually in decline and whether a strategy of “offshore balancing” is likely to be as effective as the traditional strategy of deep engagement.

Robert Kagan, “Not Fade Away: The Myth of American Decline,” *The New Republic* (February 2012), pp. 19-25.

Charles Kupchan, “The Decline of the West: Why America Must Prepare for the End of Dominance,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 2012), pp. 1-9.

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2016), pp. 70-83.

Hal Brands, “Fools Rush Out? The Flawed Logic of Offshore Balancing,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2015), pp. 7-28.

Dec 8: Conclusions: Did History Really End?

This class will go over what we have learned this semester and debate the future of world politics.

John Mueller, “Did History End? Assessing the Fukuyama Thesis,” *Political Science Quarterly* (2014), pp. 35-54.

Bruno Tertrais, “The Revenge of History,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2016), pp. 7-18.

Additional Readings TBA