**Theories of International Relations**

__Objectives.~ This course is designed as an introduction to contemporary theories, debates, and major scholarly traditions in international relations. As the "core" course offered in this field, the intention is to provide a general, but not elementary, overview. Most of the course explores nine traditions in international relations scholarship, five "mainstream" (realism, neo-realism, institutionalism, society of states, and liberalism) and four critical (marxist, constructivist, critical/post-structural, and feminist). Our primary concern is to examine and assess each approach's foundational assumptions, method and scope of the problem defined, understanding of the units of global politics, how it conceptualizes international institutions, and the relationship between agency and international structure. As we march through the course we also want to ask ourselves about the relationship between these different approaches. Are these approaches necessarily exclusionary? Do bridges and connections between them exist? To help us think through this issue, we will examine the issue of international change and explore how different theories attempt to explain the end of colonialism. Subsequently, we examine how we might reimagine international space - that is, the international as consisting of non-anarchy based organizing principles) and international change. We conclude by asking whether it is possible to have theoretical progress in international relations; if so, what would it look like, and, if not, why not.

__Requirements.~ The class format will place a premium on discussion; therefore, it is expected that everyone will come prepared to discuss these materials in an informed and critical manner. There are a set of general questions posed at the top of each week's reading list, and the assumption is that this will both guide your reading of the required materials and provide a set of questions for some of the week's discussions. The questions, however, provide only a set of suggestions for, but do not determine, the seminar's content for that week.

For each week after the first two sessions, several topics are identified on the syllabus. Each student must select two of these topics and write a short, four to five page, typed, double-spaced, critical, "thought piece" for each, based on readings presented on the syllabus. Papers are due by the class session for which the topic is assigned. Each paper will account for 25% of your course grade. As members of a graduate seminar the expectation is that you are active participants; accordingly, 10% of your grade will be based on discussion. Finally, there will be take-home essay worth 40% of your grade. The final will be distributed in class on December 7 and due on December 14,

__Office Hours.~ My office is in 261 HHH and I have office hours on Tuesdays from 2-3 and Thursdays from 10:00-11:00. I am happy to make an appointment for those who cannot make these hours. My telephone number is 626-3194 and my email address is mbarnett@umn.edu.

__Calendar.~ The following is the list of class dates and topics to be covered over the semester:

- September 7    The Discipline of the Discipline
- September 14   Realism
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**Course Readings.** The articles are available on WebCT and the books are available at the University Bookstore:

September 7. The Discipline of the Discipline

This week provides a broad overview to the study of international relations as a discipline; offers a set of organizing themes and concerns that have motivated students of the field; and review various themes. Think about: how has the historical development of the discipline of international relations shaped its contemporary character?


September 14. Realism

Realism represents the oldest and the dominant paradigm in international relations theory. In fact, its dominance is reflected by the simple fact that all other approaches that we will examine in this seminar define and situate themselves in opposition to realist thought. This week we will read some of the classics of the realist thought. Questions for the week include: What is entailed by being a realist? How does a realist see international politics? What constitutes the core of having a realist vision of international politics? What are the limitations of a realist view of the world?


Short Paper Topic #1: How Useful is the Concept of the "National Interest"?


Short Paper Topic #2: Should (Have) Nuclear Weapons Transform(ed) the Character of the States System?


Short Paper Topic #3: What is the Nature of Power in Realist Thought?


Short Paper Topic #4: What Is Gained and Lost by Expanding the Concept of Security?


Short Paper Topic #5: How Useful is the Concept of Balance of Power?

Short Paper Topic #6: How Should We Think About the Peloponnesian War?

Short Paper Topic #8: How Should We Think about Unipolarity?

Short Paper Topic #9: What is the American in American Realism?

Short Paper Topic #10: Why Not Appease?


**Short Paper Topic #11: What is Asia’s Future?**


September 21. Beyond Classical Realism

Neo-realism represents an attempt to make realism "scientific" by offering a deductive theory of international politics. In the readings for this week we will examine and evaluate neo-realism, with particular attention to the benefits that might be gained from a more self-conscious "scientific" approach. Questions include: What is the relationship between neorealism and realism? What does neorealism gain over realism by its more "scientific" approach? what is lost? What are the big questions that neo-realism can answer?


Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition, Cornell University Press, Read Chapter One.

Short Paper Topic #1: Does Neo-Realism Need to Account for Nationalism?


Short Paper Topic #2: What Conditions Produce Stability in the International System?


**Short Paper Topic #3: Can Neorealism Save Itself After the Cold War?**


**Short Paper Topic #4: Does the Offense-Defense Distinction Matter for System Stability?**


**Short Paper Topic #5: If the U.S. Is So Bad, Why is there no Balancing?**


**Short Paper Topic #6: What is So Good About Multilateralism and Bad about Unilateralism?**

Short Paper Topic #7: Are Alliances Formed by Ideologies?

Short Paper Topic #8: What Role Do Ideas Play in Shaping Postwar Orders?
September 28. Institutionalism, I: Foundations

Over the last few years political science in general and international relations in specific have "rediscovered" institutions. Institutional analysis has been applied to a myriad of substantive issues in international relations, but are generally unified by the understanding that institutions can help self-interested states both overcome collective action problems and encourage cooperation in an anarchic and insecure environment. What are the limitation of institutions for affecting cooperation? In response to the charge that institutions - and not anarchy - may be important for understanding interstate behavior, neo-realsists have presented a countercharge. This week will look at the foundations of neoliberal institutions, with particular attention to its roots in economic theorizing.


Joanne Gowa. 1986. “Anarchy, Egoism, and Third Images: The Evolution of Cooperation and

**Short Paper Topic #1:** What is the nature and role of learning in transforming international politics? How useful is this idea?

**Short Paper Topic #2:** Are States Seekers of Relative Gains?

**Short Paper Topic #4:** How Does the Concept of Multilateralism Add to our Understanding of International Order?

**Short Paper Topic #5:** What Role for International Institutions in Resolving Ethnic Conflict?

Short Paper Topic #7: What is the Nature of Power in Institutionalism?
October 5. Institutionalism, II: Recent Developments

The previous week examined the foundations of neo-liberal institutionalism, with particular attention to functionalist and rationalist logic behind institution building and the prospects of cooperation. This week we examine recent extensions and developments of institutionalist analysis. By no means is this a reasonable sample of the impressive developments that have occurred over the last few years; instead it is intended to consider different ways in which the institutionalist foundation has expanded in response to empirical anomalies, logical-analytical difficulties, and toward a tighter specificity of exactly how and the conditions under which institutions matter.


Short Paper #1: Is the European Court of Justice More than the Sum of Its Parts?

Short Paper #2: What are the Domestic Roots of Multilateralism?

Short Paper #3: What Does it Mean to have a Rationally Designed Institution?

Short Paper Topic #4: Do Institutions Minimize the Security Dilemma?

Short Paper Topic #5: Less Filling? Tastes Great? The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate?
1. David Baldwin, ed., Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism: Baldwin.chap. 1; Stein.chap. 2; Axelrod and Keohane.chap. 4; Grieo.chap. 5; Keohane.chap. 11; and Grieo.chap. 12.
Short Paper Topic #6: How Might Neoliberal institutionalists incorporate ideas?

Short Paper Topic #7: Do International Organizations Promote Peace and Democracy?

Short Paper Topic #8: What is a “Fair” Institution and Does it Matter?

Short Paper #9: How Do Ideas Diffuse?

Short Paper Topic #10: How Does the Security Council Matter?
October 12. Society of States

The Society of States approach offers a "British" view of the structure of global politics. How does this approach differ from neo-realism? What is entailed in adopting an international societal perspective, and how might this affect international relations theory? How is order understood in this view?


York: Oxford University Press.
Chapter 2, "The Society of States," pp. 18-34.

Short Paper Topic #1: What is the Grotian Tradition?
1.  Read the following in Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsburg, and Adam Roberts, eds.. 1990. Hugo Grotius and International Relations.  Oxford University Press:

Short Paper Topic #2: What is Meant and Implied by Intervention?

Short Paper Topic #3: Is the Future Medieval?

Short Paper Topic #4: Does International Society need an “Other”?
1. Iver Neumann and Jennifer Welsh.1991.  "The Other in European Self-Definition: An Addendum to the Literature on International Society," Review of International Studies, 17,


Review of International Studies, 17, 1, January, 3-17.
October 19. Liberalism

Since the end of the Cold War we have seen an explosion of liberal theorizing that is explicitly micro-oriented and value-oriented. Although closely associated with Kant's classic Perpetual Peace, in fact the liberal tradition is much richer and varied than Kant and the renewed focus on the democratic peace. What are the different orientations that are situated under "liberalism"? How does liberalism differ from its "neo" progenitor? What kind of research agenda is associated with and flows from its assumptions? What is gained and lost in the way that liberalism is being brought into international relations theory?

*Michael Doyle, Ways of War and Peace, Part II.


Short Paper Topic #1: Are Democracies Pacific? Choose five of the following:

1. See the following in International Security, 19, 2, Fall, 1994: Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace"; Daniel Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace."

Short Paper Topic #2: What is the relationship between economic interdependence and war?


Short Paper Topic #3: Do Liberals have a conception of power?

Short Paper Topic #4: Why Do Nations Behave?


Short Paper Topic #5: Can We Toss Out The Liberal without Losing International Law?


Short Topic #6: What Sort of States Do Liberals Like?


Short Topic #7: Can Peace-loving Democracies Also Kick Butt?


Short Paper Topic #8: Does International Law Matter - and how?


The term "constructivism" derives from Onuf's *World of Our Making*, 1990, and is used to denote those approaches that are unified in their understanding that the world is socially constructed. That is, this week's readings attempt to analyze what people "know" about international life, what they take as given, and how this knowledge appears objective and real. Or as Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue in *The Social Construction of Reality*: "How objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is...humanly produced", p. 60. In this first week we want to examine the roots of constructivist theorizing, primarily though not exclusively from sociological underpinnings.

* Alexander Wendt 1999. *A Social Theory of International Politics*, Read chaps 1, 3, 6, 8.


Short Paper Topic #2: What Does Constructivism Tell Us About Sovereignty?

Short Paper Topic #3: What is at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?

Short Paper Topic #4: Why Can’t I Hire A Private Army Anymore?

Short Paper Topic #6: Culture and War: Is Anarchy What States Make of it?
Short Paper Topic #7: Are Regions Socially Constructed?

Short Paper Topic #8: Where does Legitimacy Come From?

Short Paper Topic #8: Why Comply?
November 2. Constructivism, II: Recent Developments

In this week we want to examine several recent developments in constructivist thinking, with particular attention to how constructivists might think about action and persuasion, the construction of state identity and interests, and processes of normative transformation.


Jutta Weldes. 1999. Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Masato Kimura and David Welch. "Specifying 'Interests': Japan’s Claim to the Northern Territories and Its Implications for International Relations Theory," ISQ, 42, 2, June, 213-44.

Short Paper #1: How Should We Think About Medieval Europe?

Short Paper Topic #2: What Can Sociological Institutionalism Tell Us About International Politics?

Short Paper #3: How Should Constructivists Think About Identity?

Short Paper #4: Why Outlaw Bad Things?

Short Paper #5: Did ideas and that little NGO with a fax machine end the Cold War?

Short Paper Topic #6: What are Epistemic Communities and How Do They Shape World Politics?

Short Paper Topic #7: Where do Collective Identities Come From?
Short Paper Topic #8: Should We Get All Emotional?

Short Paper Topic #9: Are States Socialized?

Short Paper Topic #10: Can We Force Legitimacy or is Legitimacy Forced?

Short Paper #11: Do Transnational Activists Change the World?
November 9. Marxist Approaches

There is no single Marxist perspective, and particularly so for the study of international relations. For our purposes Marxist approaches can be distinguished by their attention to production categories and economic forces and substantially determinative of for understanding international life. It is useful, however, to distinguish various schools of thought, including Gramscian and classical traditions. How does a Gramscian perspective depart from a classical Marxist perspective? Can a Gramscian approach be usefully transferred from the domestic to the international system? How do Marxism offer a different conception of the central actors of international relations? What is the relationship between class and state? What produces systemic stability? How does this differ from neo-realism's account? What is considered meaningful change in the international system?

1. For the classical Marxist perspective

*Michael Doyle, Ways of War and Peace, Part III.

Mark Rupert and Hazel Smith, eds., 2002. Historical Materialism and Globalization, Routledge:

2. For the Gramscian-inspired perspective


3. For the World-Systems Perspective.


Short Paper Topic #1: How is the End of the Cold War Viewed Through a Marxist Lens?

Short Paper Topic #2: How should we think about empire in today’s world?

2. Hardt and Negri
November 16. Critical and Poststructural Theory

This week we examine critical and poststructural theory. Similar to the other theories we have studied, both theories that we examine this week are highly heterogenous, in part because they derive from different intellectual traditions and have emerged in relationship to different intellectual battles. The readings on critical theory are mostly concerned with what are its defining elements and how these elements have been imported into international relations. Specifically, a major source of debate is the Habermasian interpretation versus the alternatives. What is gained and lost by following the Habermasian trail (as presented in current international relations scholarship)? Poststructural theory has many sources, including post-Marxism and cultural studies. We will not have time in this course to explore the many possibilities, but instead will read an empirical investigation influenced by different branches of poststructural theorizing.


Frank Harvey and Michael Brecher, eds., Critical Perspectives in International Studies, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.


Janice Bially Mattern. Ordering International Politics: Identity Crisis, and Representational
Short Paper Topic #1: What Happens When Force Meets Communicative Rationality?


Short Paper Topic #2: To what kind of critical theory of international politics does a poststructural orientation lead?


Short Paper Topic #3: How Does Foucault Help Us Understand Third World Development?


Short Paper Topic #4: How Does Poststructuralism Problematize the Concept of Security?


Short Paper Topic #5: How does poststructuralism affect our understanding of the conceptual foundations of international relations theory: sovereignty?

Short Paper Topic #6: How Do Critical and Poststructural Theories Imagine Power?


November 30. Feminist Approaches

What constitutes a feminist theory of international relations? What is distinctively feminist? Is it the objectives of inquiry? Is it the method? What does it mean to say that gender, rather than class or states, is the category of analysis? What happens to our understanding of world politics as a consequence?


Marysia Zalewski. 1999. "Where is Woman in International Relations? To Return as a Woman to be Heard," Millennium, 27, 3.


Jill Stearns. 1998. Gender and International Relations, Rutgers University Press. Read Chapter One, "Gender, Feminism, and International Relations." Read Chapters 1, 5.


Short Paper Topic #1: Is War a Man Thing?

Short Paper Topic #2: How is Development Gendered?

Short Paper Topic #3: How Is Gender Being Mainstreamed?
December 7. Can We Have Theory in International Relations Theory?

The formal discipline of International relations is only ninety years old, yet it has managed to have at least three (maybe four) great debates, many schools that go through periodic bouts of hand-to-hand combat, strained etentes, mutual indifference; and predictable moments in which it doubts whether there ever can be knowledge cumulation. In recent years, though, there has been greater interest in the question of whether and how it is possible to have knowledge cumulation. Sometimes this question is fought at the level of methodology and at other times it is fought at the level of epistemology. Rather than getting dragged into these particular discussions, we will conclude this semester by asking the narrower but highly important question of the relationship between existing schools of thought. Guiding questions for the week include: What are the possibilities for international relations theory? Why, if at all, should we be attentive to paradigmatic differences? What sorts of theories should scholars of international relations attempt to build?


Hayward Alker.1996. ”The Return of Practical Reason to International Theory,” in his Rediscoveries and Reformulations: Humanistic Methodologies for International Studies,
chap. 12, Cambridge University Press.


B. On paradigms


C. How Should We Test Our Theories?


