THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Political Science 857
Fall 2013
Friday 1:20-3:15 PM
422 North Hall

Andrew Kydd
322c North Hall
kydd@wisc.edu
Office hours: Monday 1:00-2:00pm

Course overview

This course is a graduate-level review of the subfield of international relations within political science. It is intended primarily for first-year doctoral students in Political Science, although more advanced graduate students are also welcome. The primary purpose is to understand the development of the field, and to understand and be able to evaluate the main theoretical approaches in the sub-discipline. The course covers many of what have come to be known as classic works in the field, as well as some more recent theoretical and empirical applications. While it is not designed as a research course, it is useful preparation for more specialized courses of study emphasizing IR research. Another important purpose is to prepare PhD students in Political Science for the preliminary examination in international relations.

Throughout the course, we will focus primarily on alternative theoretical approaches and perspectives, although we will also explore some empirical work. Our goal will be to engage, discuss, and wrestle with the following questions: What do the authors want to explain? What are the critical concepts? How are cause and effect observed? What kind of research design is employed? From what theoretical perspective does the argument originate? With whom are the authors engaged in debate?

Course requirements

1. Participation (1/3 of total grade): All students should come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them in depth each week. I will circulate discussion questions prior to class to guide your reading and organize class discussion.

2. Reading response papers (1/3 of total grade): Each student will be required to write seven short response papers (no more than 2 pages) based on the weekly readings or some subset thereof. A copy of the essay should be emailed to me by noon the day before class (Thursday). The papers should not just re-present the readings, but rather must analyze, compare, and/or critique the quality of the theory and/or evidence, as appropriate.
3. **Oral examination (1/3 of total grade):** Each student will be required to take a 30-minute oral examination with me during the last two scheduled weeks of class. I will ask you to identify three topics in which you would like to be examined. We will make arrangements for the exact timing of this exam later in the semester.

**Readings**
Nearly all of the articles are available online, either through public sources or UW’s library. Books that I recommend you purchase are marked on the syllabus with **; we will be reading substantial portions of these books and/or they are “classics” that should be part of any IR scholar’s library. Readings indicated with ## are smaller portions of books; I will make .pdfs of these readings available on LearnUW.

For each reading, we will summarize the argument, discuss its contribution to IR, and probe the argument and evidence for strengths and weaknesses. The following questions are examples of the sorts of questions that can guide your reading of each piece and will shape our discussion:

- What is the question or puzzle?
- What is the argument?
- What are the explicit or implicit assumptions?
- Who are the relevant actors?
- What are their preferences and interests and where do they come from?
- At what level of analysis is the argument?
- Where does the argument fit into the theoretical landscape of IR and who would disagree?
- What is the relative importance of agency versus structure?
- What evidence is provided in support of the argument and is it convincing?
September 6 – Introduction and overview of the field


September 13 – Classic approaches to world politics


- Kant, *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*.


September 20 – Neorealism: structure, power, and anarchy


September 27 – Neoliberalism: cooperation and regime theory


- Keohane, *After Hegemony*, Chs. 1, 4-7 (5-17, 49-134)


October 4 – Domestic politics: interests and institutions


October 11 – Domestic politics: democracy, peace, and conflict

October 18: International institutions: design, effects, and compliance


October 25: Constructivism I: international society


**November 1: Constructivism II: norms and communication**


**November 8 – Bargaining, conflict, and cooperation**


**November 15 – Civil wars, ethnic conflict, and terror**


November 22 – International trade and globalization


December 6 and 13: oral examinations to be scheduled