

GOVT 322-003: International Relations Theory

Spring 2016
George Mason University

Wednesday: 7:20-10pm
East 201

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Introduction

Govt 322 is an advanced look into the field of International Relations. The class has three broad goals. The first is to provide a solid foundation into the core theories and concepts of the discipline, emphasizing the three central ~~religions~~ paradigms of IR: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The course will span many levels of analysis—from the international system to individual decision making—and cover a broad spectrum of topics from terrorism to environmentalism.

The second goal is to leverage these theories to better understand history and current events. Over the course of the semester we will critically debate how well—or poorly!—our theories can explain global dynamics.

The final goal is to enjoy the course! This is no time, literally and figuratively, to be too cool for school. IR is an exciting topic, and there is always something interesting happening in the world. A portion of each class, particularly as the semester progresses, will be devoted to active discussion and debate.

Readings

Three books are required for the course:

Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, 6th Edition (New York: Basic Books, 2006)

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 9th Edition (Boston: Pearson, 2012).

Karen A. Mingst and Jack L. Snyder, *Essential Readings in World Politics*, 5th Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013).

Copies are on reserve at Fenwick library and are available for purchase at the George Mason bookstore.

Policies

Be Respectful

Active participation is a major part of the course. While debate is encouraged where appropriate, in the spirit of productive discussion it is vital to remain thoughtful and respectful.

No Electronics

No electronics of any kind—laptops, cell phones, recorders, surveillance drones, etc.—will be allowed during class. Please silence your phone before class starts.

Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability, please contact me and the Office of Disability Resources. Accommodations will be arranged in accordance with their policies.

Blackboard

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the course's Blackboard page. Your journal assignment and grades are both hosted through the site. In addition, I will post lecture slides after each week, additional readings as noted on the syllabus, and general content on an ongoing basis.

Academic Honesty

Integrity is integral GMU's academic and social culture. Cheating and other forms of academic will not be tolerated, and suspected violations will be referred to the Honor Committee. Please refer to Blackboard for additional information about the Honor Code. But, seriously, you're all adults. Just don't cheat.

Extra Credit

There will be several changes for extra credit throughout the semester. All opportunities will be available to everyone. Details will be provided in class and on Blackboard. In fairness to fellow students, absolutely no extra credit work will be assigned on an individual basis.

Summary of Grading

Course grades are based on five components:

Attendance & participation	15%
Quizzes & activities	10%
Current event journal	15%
Midterm	25%
Cumulative Final Exam	35%

Note: Blackboard will contain the grades for each assignment, not your final course grade weighted by each category.

Attendance & Participation

Discussion and debate—about both theory and practice—is a major part of the course. Just showing up is not enough; *everyone* is expected to participate. Expect to be called on at random.

Quizzes

In-class quizzes will only cover, at most, two weeks of content. Material from the current and previous week's **reading and lecture** is fair game. It is possible—hint hint—that portions of the quizzes may show up in some form on the midterm and final exams.

Current Event Journal

Theory can inform our understanding of current events. Starting on week 6—IPE—you will be expected to peruse the news for an article related to international relations. Please restrict yourself to coverage from mainstream news site—CNN, Fox, the Economist, BBC, etc.—or specialized organizations like World Affairs. By the end of the semester, you should complete 10 entries spanning a range of topics. Once you have selected an issue of interest, go to BB and create a journal entry. Entries should include the following:

- A link to the original article.
- A brief summary of the central issue.
- Most importantly, you need to *analyze* the coverage from the perspective of a political scientist. Opinion is fine; thoughtful analysis is better. A-level work requires you to critically apply theory to explain the underlying dynamics.
- Total length should not exceed one double-sided page.

Midterm & Final Exam

The midterm and final exams incorporate both written and multiple choice components. You are responsible for bringing a blue book, pencil, and Scantron to the day of the exam.

The date for the midterm exam *may* be changed as the semester progresses. A revised date can only be pushed back to a later class, never forward.

The final exam is cumulative. *At least* one-third of the final exam's multiple-choice questions will come directly from the midterm and/or the in-class quizzes.

Make Up Exams

In-class quizzes and activities cannot be made up.

In the interest of fairness, three rules govern absences for the midterm or final exams. Without exception:

- Missed exams without a valid justification count as a 0.
- If an exam is missed, a make-up exam will be offered only with documented evidence of an emergency. Appropriate documentation must be provided in a timely manner.

Calendar & Readings

Part I: Theoretical Groundwork

		N&W	Axe	M&S
1/20	Intro and... Anarchy!	-	-	-
1/27	Roadmap to IR	1-16 38-76	3-54	Snyder "One World," 2-10
2/3	-	-	-	-
2/10	Realist Pradigm	16-24	-	Thucydides "Melian Dialogue," 11-13 Morgenthau "Realist Theory," 32-36 Mearsheimer "Anarchy," 37-56 Morgentau "Balance of Power," 99-105
2/17	Liberal Paradigm	193-206	-	Doyle "Liberalism," 57-71 Putnam "Diplomacy," 174-194 Keohane "After Hegemony," 338-354 Mearsheimer "False Promise," 355-367 Gartzke "Capitalist Peace," 532-536
2/24	Constructivist Paradigm	-	-	Wendt "Anarchy is What," 73-97 Huntington "Clash," 256-262 Donnelly "Human Rights," 672-685
3/2	IPE	254-284	-	Gilpin "Political Economy," 523-531 Milner "Globalization," 537-559 Drezner "Irony of Global," 560-580 Gruber "Globalization" 581-602
3/9	Spring break!	-	-	-
3/16	The World Wars	78-140	73-87	Wilson "Fourteen Points," 14-16
3/23	Midterm	-	-	-

Part II: Cold War & Beyond

3/30	The Cold War	141-191	-	Kennan "Soviet Conduct," 17-22
4/1	Foreign Policy	In early April I will be posting readings and/or a recorded lecture to BB in lieu of a makup class. You will be responsible for this content for the final exam. I will be free to discuss during office hours, but will not commit time during a scheduled lecture.		
4/6	Nuclear War		-	Readings posted to BB
4/13	Non-state & Terrorism	285-314	-	K&S "Transnational," 382-393 K&W "Strategies Terrorism," 471-495 Additional reading posted to BB
4/20	The Middle East		-	Roy "Transformation," 245-255 Posen "Nuclear Iran," 451-466 Waltz "Why Iran," 467-470 Additional readings posted to BB
4/27	Climate Change		124-141	Hardin "Tragedy," 707-717 Ostrom "Institutions," 718-730 Additional readings posted to BB
5/4	Final Exam			Runs from 7:30-10:15.