

POSC 249
From the International to the Global: Critical Theories of World Politics

Willis 114
Mo, We 9.50 – 11.00 am, Fri 9.40-10.40 am

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-4.30 pm (in person OR on Zoom, please indicate your preference)
Thursdays 3-4.30 pm (Zoom only) and by appointment
Please always make an appointment by using the gCal link on moodle

This course is an introduction to theories of and approaches to the study of International Relations in the global age. The first part of this course will cover both major paradigms and concepts used by scholars to study of conflict and cooperation and the thorny trade-offs and dilemmas that practitioners face. In the second half we will use these to discuss a limited number of current events scenarios that are illustrative of some 21st century “Big Questions”. By the end of the course you will be familiar with basic concepts and theories used by students and practitioners and employ these effectively in analyzing current events. You should also find yourself on friendly terms with some of the key authors and debates in the academic literature as demonstrated by class discussion and in written form.

Expectations

In order to achieve these learning goals you are expected to think independently and critically, form arguments based on evidence and be prepared to defend these in writing and in class discussion. The expectations for the course therefore include thinking – evidenced by active reading, writing and speaking. You will need to make an effort to understand very diverse cultures through the comparative study of policy choices in their historical context.

You will be expected complete the readings and think critically about these *before* the beginning of class. This will require attendance and active participation. This course is conceived as an interactive discussion seminar that will include short lectures but also regular group discussions, pre-writes, student presentations and in-class readings of shorter pieces. Usually I will be introducing a new theme or concept on Mondays, we will have extensive class discussion of the academic background literature on Wednesdays and dedicate Fridays to the discussion of assignments and current affairs relating to themes in the course.

Reading

Assigned readings are to be completed before the class meets. It is crucial that you also understand what you read, take notes on what you read (especially if the reading is in electronic format) and write down any questions that you have regarding unfamiliar terminology or concepts and come to class prepared to work collectively on clarifying these. If you find yourself struggling to please talk to me as soon as possible so that you can fully participate in class. You must be prepared at all times to discuss the readings and relate them to concepts developed in previous lectures and in-class discussions. There are several required texts for this course. **Due to supply-chain issues affecting the availability of textbooks we will be working with electronic copies this term.** While this is more economical

this also means that you will need to take notes on the reading before coming to class I do not want you to be reading texts on your devices in class time (more on classroom etiquette below).

Richard Haass, *The World – A Brief Introduction*, New York: Penguin, 2020.

Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Walters & Christian Scheinpflug (eds.), *International Relations Theory*, E-International Relations Publishing, Bristol (UK), 2017.

Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss (eds.), *Global Politics. A New Introduction*, New York: Routledge, 2014.

Karen A. Mingst, Jack L. Snider (eds.), *Essential Readings in World Politics*, 2nd ed., New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 2004.

Helen Thompson, *Oil and the Western Economic Crisis*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Current affairs literacy

Many of the issues covered in this course are “live” and developing rapidly over the course of this term. This why following current affairs is vital for this course to work. You are expected to keep abreast of current issues by reading news items I will distribute most weeks either in class or on moodle. Being up to-date with current affairs will also help you in completing some of the writing assignments below.

Writing

You will write one policy memo and one literature response paper in this class. In addition there will be two examinations that assess your familiarity with the course material. The paper assignments for this course must be typed, paginated, and double spaced in 12 cpi font size and one-inch margins. These assignment must be turned in as MS Word files on moodle at the times and dates indicated below. I will subtract one letter grade for each day an assignment is late. Please not that extension on written work are now a matter for the Dean of Students Office and no longer granted by the instructor. Please always submit MS Word files labelled FirstnameLastnameAssignmentname.docx so I can comment on your work electronically. Most importantly, take the time to read my comments and not just the grad you received.

Class Participation & classroom etiquette

First and most importantly, my classes are **no laptop** classes unless otherwise specified. Rows of open screens are not conducive to a discussion seminar as they distract you and others. With the use of online material in this course it is not possible to have an open book in front of you – in this case you will be relying on your sharp note-taking skills. Summarize the reading very briefly prior to coming to class on a piece of paper that you bring to class in which you outline 1) the argument(s) made in the reading 2) not the most important concepts that are mentioned and 3) any questions that you have regarding the text.

I am counting on your enthusiastic and respectful participation in class. This means that we treat material you have read in preparation as a starting point for constructive discussion and debate rather than an end in itself. There are many ways of participating actively: listening, questioning, commenting, active note-taking, maintaining eye contact. Note that these are basic requirements – not a mark of excellence. In order to receive a good or excellent grade for your class participation you will need to go considerably beyond the basics. I will also assess your ability to communicate your ideas and

arguments through a formal, scheduled final presentation and through informal class discussions. In addition I will also call on students to make short presentations based on analytical reading responses submitted on moodle. You are also required to take notes during class discussion, from lectures and your readings and prepare several discussion questions for the readings for each class.

Attendance: I will take attendance at each class as part of your participation grade. As this is a discussion-based seminar your regular attendance is crucial to the success of the class, especially since it involves a group project. Unexcused absences and frequent lateness will lead to reductions in your participation grade so please let me know of absences in advance of the class and by providing me with a valid reason – illness, especially common at the moment, is a valid reason to miss class. Extending your mid-term break holiday is not.

Grading

Assessment will be based on your performance in two research papers, three reading responses, a group project, and class participation.

Policy Memo (30 %)

Response to and discussion of a “classics of International Relations” piece in pairs: 10 %

Mid-term exam: 25%

Case study discussion assignments (4): 20%

Class Participation: 15%

Academic Integrity

Cases of dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Dean’s Office and may result in a failing grade. I expect that all of you strictly adhere to the Carleton College Academic Integrity policy <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity>.

Special Needs

Carleton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodation must place documentation on file with the Coordinator of Disability Services who will then inform faculty about student accommodations. College policy is that faculty can and should wait for this notification before making course modifications for students. This also and especially concerns the use of laptops and other electronic devices in class. You must have a documented disability in order for me to be able to accommodate you.

Part I

Week 1: Introductory

Wed: Introduction to the course and to the syllabus, class survey.

Fri: What is the International? “Classics of IR” piece of the week: Friedrich Kratochwil, Rethinking the “inter” in International Politics, *Millennium* 35, 2007, pp 495-511.

Week 2: Meta-theory

Mon:

Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 8

Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, pp 1-7.

Wed: Positivism

“Classics of International Relations” piece of the week: Steve Smith, Positivism and beyond, pp 11-44 in: Smith, Booth and Zalewski (eds.) *International theory: positivism and beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Fri: Case Study Discussion I

Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 2.

Hélène Pelerin, Which IR Do You Speak? Languages as Perspectives in the Discipline of IR, in: *Perspectives*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp 59-82, 2012.

Part II: Levels of Analysis

Week 3: The State, Sovereignty, Anarchy

Mon: MLK Day – no class

Wed: Sovereignty

Michael J. Shapiro, Does the nation-state work?, in: Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 13.

Haass, *The World: A Brief Introduction* pages 1-13

Fri: Anarchy

“Classics of IR” piece of the week:

John Mearsheimer, Anarchy and the Struggle for Power in: McKibbin, pp 54-73.

Week 4: The Balance of Power and the Security Dilemma

Mon: Balance of Power

Haass, *The Cold War* pp 40-51.

John Mearsheimer, “What should be the purpose of American Power?” *The National Interest* (September-October 2015).

Wed:

“Classics of IR article of the week”: Alexander Wendt, Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics, *International Organisation*, 46, 1992, pp 391-426.

Fri: Security Dilemma & Case Study Discussion II

John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs* September/October 2014.

Week 5: From International Relations to Global Society

Mon: International Society

"Classics of IR piece" of the week: Hedley Bull, *Society and Anarchy in International Relations* in: Der Derian (ed.), *Political Theory: Critical Investigations*, 1996.

Wed:

Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 25.

John J. Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions*, in: McKibbin pp 283.

Fri: mid-term exam

Week 6: The Individual and Identity

Monday: mid-term break

Wednesday:

Annick T.R. Wibben, *Who do we think we are?*, in: Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 5

Zalewski & Enloe, *Questions about Identity in International Relations*, in: Booth and Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, Polity Press, 1995, ch. 13.

Friday:

Film: *We are All Neighbors*

"Classics of IR" piece of the week: David Campbell, *National Deconstruction. Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998 (excerpts).

Part III: Current Issues

Week 7: Wars Just & Unjust

Mon:

Joanna Bourke, *Why does politics turn to violence?*, in: Edkins and Zehfuss, ch. 22.

Carl v. Clausewitz, *War as an Instrument of Policy*, in: McKibbin (eds.)

Wed:

"Classics of International Relations" piece of the week: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (excerpts).

Fri: Case Study Discussion III

Scott Shane, *The Moral Case for Drones*, NYT, 2012. Brunstetter, *Can We Wage a Just Drone War?* The Atlantic, July 19, 2012.

Week 8: the Global Economy and the Politics of Energy

Mo:

V. Spike Peterson, How is the world organized economically?, in: Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 17.
Richard Haass, Trade and Investment, in: *The World – A Brief Introduction*

Wed:

“Classics of International Relations” piece of the week:
Helen Thompson, *The Politics of Oil*, chs. 1-3.

Friday:

Helen Thompson, *The Politics of Oil*, chs. 3-5.

Week 9: The Politics of Climate Change

Mon:

Richard Haass, Climate Change, in: *The World – A Brief Introduction*.
Simon Dalby, What happens if we don't take nature for granted?, in: Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 3

Wed:

Helen Thompson, The geopolitical fight to cover over green energy, Engelsberg ideas,
<https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/the-geopolitical-fight-to-come-over-green-energy/>
Ed Conway, Rare Earths, <https://www.edmundconway.com/rare-earths-everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know/>

Fri: Case Study Discussion IV – Climate Change Negotiations

Week 10: The rise of “New Powers”

Monday: Russia

Lucy Taylor, Is democracy a good idea?, in: Edkins & Zehfuss, ch. 14.
Graham, Let Russia be Russia
Lukyanov, Putin's Foreign Policy

Wednesday: China

Campbell and Rapp-Hooper, Is China Done bidding its time?
Christensen, Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster?
Gat, The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers

Friday: Final Discussion

Adam Segal, “When China Rules the Web,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sep/Oct 2018).
Alan Beattie, “Technology: How the US, EU and China compete to set industry standards,” *Financial Times*, July 24, 2019.