Theories of International Politics
Mon. Wed. & Fri., 2:10-3 pm, 210 Bessey Hall
Fall 2005, Iowa State University

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Dept. of Political Science

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 3:15-4:15
517 Ross Hall
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Precis
This course examines several leading theories of international politics in detail. Unlike an introductory course in international relations, which surveys various theories broadly, this course dissects several theories. The Greek word theoria — the root of the contemporary English word theory — can be translated as spectacle. In that spirit, we will examine the theories as ways of seeing international politics (like a spectacle as a lens) and as objects of our gaze in their own right (as extraordinary things). We will examine the tradition of political realism, with its focus on military force, material wealth, and prestige as the basis of international politics. We also examine the so-called “democratic peace theory,” which argues that democracies are fundamentally different in their relations with each other than with non-democracies. Then we turn to a new wave of theorizing focusing on the transformative power of ideas and beliefs to reshape our understandings of war and cooperation. Next we examine a synthesis of realist and institutionalist accounts of international politics and the concept of sovereignty, followed by a critique of the preceding theories. Last, we examine two of the traditions applied to recent United States foreign policy.

Requirements
All students must do the assigned reading. This course will involve extensive class discussion. It will be more a colloquium than a lecture course. Therefore, doing the reading is crucial to doing well. (I reserve the right to distribute unannounced in-class quizzes on the assigned readings for the week.) We will read most of each book (I will announced the omitted chapters in class the week before).

In addition to course readings, students should follow current events in international affairs. The New York Times, The Washington Post or National Public Radio (NPR) news broadcasts (on WOI 640 AM and KTPR 91.1 FM) are excellent daily news sources. I will also post items on the course website. The Economist provides a good weekly analysis of world affairs, although with a pro-market slant. There are numerous on-line news sources listed at the course website.

The main course website is at this URL: <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~pol_s.356/>. The WebCT site is used only for participating in the discussion forum, releasing test grades, and posting non-public copyrighted material under fair use provisions. For regular information and relevant links you should monitor the main course website, not the WebCT version.

ISU advises: “If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you will need to go to the Disability Resource (DR) Office for coordination of your academic accommodations. The
DR is located in the Student Services Building, Room 1076. Their phone number is 515-294-6624, TDD 515-294-6335 or email Bea at <Awoniyib@iastate.edu>.

**Class Participation:** All students should be prepared to participate in class discussions and in the on-line discussion via WebCT. Students are not expected to perform Periclean orations, but everyone should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, current events, and questions that I pose. Criticisms of points made in readings, by fellow students, and by yours truly are welcome, and debates may emerge among students. Students should respect their classmates’ contributions, and refrain from partisan or parochial philippics. The purpose of these discussions is not to win imaginary debating points, but to learn beyond solitary reading and unexamined listening.

Participation in class and on the WebCT discussion forum is worth 25% of the course grade. Each student has a D as his or her default grade. If students participate well, their grades will be increased. Students who fail to participate or who do so poorly will get a D.

**Written Work:** During the term, students will write four essays, one due roughly every three weeks (I will divide students into three groups with different schedules listed below). Each essay should be 3-4 pages long. I will present a list of question students might answer, or a student can choose her own topic. The grading is progressive. The first essay is worth 5%, the second 10%, the third 15% and the fourth 20% of the course grade.

The final essay will be based on a question that I present. It is due 15 Dec. and is worth 25% of the grade.

**Penalties:** Students must submit assignments on time. Students may not ‘make-up’ essays at will. There are two exceptions. First, for personal emergencies (e.g., a death in the family, medical problems), students should obtain a note from the dean of students. Second, for students with extra-curricular activities that conflict with in-class assignments, arrangements for an alternate date and time must be made at least a week in advance. The student must provide verification of the activity in order to be eligible for an alternate test appointment. I do not accept notification after the fact (e.g., “I didn’t turn in my paper last week because I had a match”).

A computer mishap will not excuse a late paper. You should make frequent and multiple back-ups of your work (to at least 2 separate floppy disks or other removable media), so that you never lose more than one hour’s worth of work. If you own your own computer, be sure you familiarize yourself with the ISU’s computer labs in case your system breaks down.

**Grade Components**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:
- Participation: 25%
- Term Essays: 50%
- Final Essay: 25%
Syllabus for Political Science 356

Each component will be assigned a letter grade, converted to a grade point, and multiplied by its percentage weighting. I do not accept make-up assignments, re-writing of papers, or extra-credit work.

**Academic Honesty**

Iowa State University regulations regarding academic honesty will be enforced. See *Iowa State University Catalog*, “Academic Dishonesty,” p.38-39. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating on tests or exams is **failure for the course**.

**Readings**

There are seven books available for purchase for this course at University Bookstore (294.5684) in the Memorial Union and the Campus Bookstore (292.1616), 2300 Lincoln Way. Used versions of most of these books should be available via Internet stores. The books are also available on reserve at Parks Library.


22-26 Aug.
Introduction
Gilpin, Introduction & chap.1

29 & 31 Aug.
Realism, Power, and Change
Gilpin, chap. 2-3
Syllabus for Political Science 356

No Class on 2 Sep.

No Class on 5 Sep. (Labor Day)

7 & 9 Sep.
Theories of IR
   Gilpin, chap. 4, 5, 6 & Epilogue

12, 14 & 16 Sep.
Liberalism and the Democratic Peace
   Reiter & Stam, chap. 1-2, 4

19 & 21 Sep.
Limits of Liberalism
   Reiter & Stam, chap. 5-8

23 & 26 Sep. Class Canceled

28 & 30 Sep.
Ideals, Norms, and War
   Finnemore, chap. 1-3

3, 5 & 7 Oct.
Order, Purpose, and Change
   Finnemore, chap. 4-5

10, 12 & 14 Oct.
Sovereignty as an Institution
   Krasner, Chap. 1-3

17,19 & 21 Oct.
Practice v. Purpose
   Krasner, Chap. 4-5, 7-8

24, 26 & 28 Oct.
Breaking Eggs…
   Ferguson & Mansbach, TBA

31 Oct. & 2 & 4 Nov.
… Making Omelets?
   Ferguson & Mansbach, TBA

7, 9, & 11 Nov.
And Now for Something Completely Different
   Gray, Chap. 1-3 (to p.77)
Syllabus for Political Science 356

14, 16 & 18 Nov.
Strategy or Strategery?
   Gray, Chap. 3 (from p.77)-5

Thanksgiving Break

28 & 30 Nov. & 2 Dec.
Nobody Expects… the Paradox of Power
   Reus-Smit, chap. 1-3

5, 7 & 9 Dec.
Making Mess-o-potamia?
   Reus-Smit, chap. 4-5

Final Exam Due 15 Dec., 10 am, at 517 Ross Hall

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Essay Due Dates

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