

POL 454: Theories of International Relations
Chavez 104

Instructor: Patrick Rhamey, prhamey@email.arizona.edu

Office: Social Sciences 328-B

Hours: Tuesday 2:30-5:30 and by appointment

Website: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~prhamey/teaching.php>

Required Texts:

Classic Readings and Contemporary Debates in International Relations (3rd Edition) -
Williams, Goldstein, and Sahfritz

Recommended Texts:

The New York Times (available at <http://www.nytimes.com/>)

International Relations in Action – Brock Tessman

Course Description and Expectations:

This is an upper division course for political science majors. It assumes some knowledge and background of both political science generally and the field of international politics. The course is designed to allow us to discuss the materials rather than for the instructor to lecture throughout the semester. Therefore, the course has been structured in such a manner as to allow for a primarily discussion format to understanding the contents of the course.

Learning is best accomplished by application; the syllabus reflects that approach. Each subject is addressed so that we learn what it is, critique it, and then discuss it further by applying the material to a series of substantive cases. Finally, we apply what we have learned further, synthesizing the materials through a paper due at the conclusion of the semester.

Throughout the course, the students will engage in three additional classroom activities. First, students will contribute to formal debates where they will be assigned a theoretical perspective to defend. In class they should be prepared to engage in a civil discussion by providing well reasoned arguments with empirical support. Second, students will write three applied applications of theoretical arguments. In each case study, the student will apply relevant theoretical perspectives to an historical event, with each paper being between 7-9 pages. Finally, students will participate in a semester-long simulation where they will be assigned as a member of the leadership of a fictional state. Throughout the course, students will be expected to accurately represent the interests of their state and actively participate in the scenarios.

Additional course material, such as simulation instructions and additional readings, will be posted on the instructor's website. The primary means of communication outside the classroom will be through e-mail.

Objectives for this course are that the student will:

- Learn about competing explanations of international politics
- Learn to evaluate abstract theories
- Develop the ability to apply abstract theories to observed international political phenomenon
- Receive a preliminary introduction to what they might expect in a graduate level introductory international relations course

- Acquire a basic level of research skill, developing a written theoretical argument and providing evidence in defense

Assignments and Grading

Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner:

Debates-----	10%
Participation and Attendance-----	10%
Simulation-----	20%
Substantive Cases-----	30%
Final Paper-----	30%

It is extremely difficult to discuss theories of international relations and international politics without having some common ground for understanding and comparing theories. As a part of this course, you will evaluate theoretical approaches using **substantive cases** drawn from real world events accounting for 30% of your grade (10% each). Furthermore, you will compare theoretical approaches using these substantive cases. There are 3 substantive cases over the course of the semester where you will be expected to evaluate the ability of theories to explain the following: the end of the Cold War, the Second Gulf War, and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. You must go beyond simply knowing the details of what happened, but instead attempt to explain why it happened. Each substantive case should be a succinct argument between 7 and 9 double spaced pages.

Students will also be asked to write a **final paper** "synthesizing" their experience with the course worth 30%. Building on the substantive cases and the simulation done throughout the semester, students will select a current event of their choosing. The student is expected to construct their own original theoretical explanation as to **why** the event occurred and provide support for their argument. Lastly, the student is expected to discuss why alternative theoretical explanatory tools were not chosen. In the final class meetings of the semester, students will present their papers to the class. Further details will be provided later in the semester.

Students will also participate in **debates and semester long simulation**. More information, including argument and simulation assignments, will be distributed later in the semester.

Participation and Attendance accounts for 10% of the final grade. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. In order to participate effectively, students will need to complete the readings before their assigned class sessions. Since the topics are generally controversial and multi-faceted the classroom will be an arena of toleration for conflicting viewpoints. I will randomly call on students in class to answer questions about the readings. If I notice that students are not doing the readings, then I will begin to do random drop quizzes which will be then considered the part of the participation grade.

Attendance will be taken every session. If you miss a class period for any reason, you receive a failing grade for participation for that class period. You will also be responsible for any material that was covered.

A Note on Academic Integrity: Any acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on exams, turning in work completed by others as your own, or plagiarizing assignments will lead to a failing grade for the entire course and further academic disciplinary actions will be taken.

Grade Appeals

You will be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, spelling, and grammar. If you receive a grade on an assignment that you think is inappropriate, you may request, **within a week of when I hand it back**, that it be re-graded. You must include a written explanation of why you believe your grade is inappropriate. Please note that the grade may be adjusted both up as well as down.

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

August 23

- Introduction to the Course

What is Theory? How to Evaluate Theory?

August 30

- Levels of Analysis Problem - Williams et al., Chapter 18
- Foundations of International Relations - Bueno de Mesquita, Introduction, Principles of International Politics (Online)

September 6

- Drezner, "The Night of the Living Wonks: Toward an International Relations Theory of Zombies." *Foreign Policy*, July 2010. (Online)
- One World, Rival Theories - Williams et al., Chapter 39

Some Great and Not So Great Debates About Theoretical Approaches

September 13

- Realism and Neorealism: Williams et al., Chapters 5 and 9
- "Back to the Future" - John J. Mearsheimer (Online)

September 20

- Critiquing Realism and Neorealism: Williams et al, Chapter 16, 21, 23
- "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" - Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik (Online)

September 27

- Liberalism: Williams et al, Chapters 1-4

October 4

- Neoliberal Institutionalism: Williams et al, Chapters 31-34
- Critiquing Neoliberal Institutionalism: Williams et al, Chapter 37

October 11

- The Constructivist Challenge: Williams et al., Chapters 35, 36, 39
- Critiquing Constructivism: Williams et al, Chapters 38

October 18

- **End of the Cold War Case Study Due**
- Debate: The Central Paradigms of International Relations

Theories at Different Levels of Analysis

October 25

- The Individual Level: Williams et al, Chapters 46-47
- Decision Making Williams et al., Chapter 20, 62

November 1

- Domestic Structure: Williams et al, Chapter 42, 52
- **Second Gulf War Case Study Due**
- Debate: Relevance of Domestic Structure Theories

Theories of International Structure

November 8

- Polarity: Williams et al, Chapters 13-15
- Balance of Power: Williams et al, Chapters 24, 28

November 15

- Critiquing Balance of Power: Williams et al, Chapters 25, 49
- Hierarchical Theories: Williams et al, Chapters 63, 64

November 22

- **Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan Case Study Due**
- Debate: Theories of Global Leadership
- Linkage Politics and the International System (Readings TBD)
- Meet Individually to Discuss Paper

Globalization and Global Political Economy

November 29

- IPE: Williams et al. Chapters 10 - 12
- Critical Perspectives on Globalization: Williams et al. Chapters 50, 51
- Debate: Globalization

December 6

- Present Papers

Final Papers due Tuesday December 13 by 5:00pm