Course Objectives:

This is an advanced class on theories of international relations. I assume that students have taken GOV 760 or its equivalent. The main objectives of this class are threefold 1) To familiarize students with current debates in international relations theory, 2) To prepare students for the comprehensive exam and 3) To get students thinking about their own research.

The primary assignment for the class is a mock comprehensive (take home) exam. In addition, I assign a few short essays that are similar in style to comprehensive exam questions. Finally, each student is required to write a two-page research proposal and discuss this with me.

The reading list is dominated by articles published in the field’s top journals in last 15 years. The readings will also showcase some research done by IR faculty here at Georgetown. This may help students in their selection of a dissertation committee. In preparing the syllabus, I have sought to minimize overlap with the most recent offerings of GOV 760, International Security and International Political Economy. The syllabus focuses on articles rather than books because this allows us to discuss several theoretical perspectives in the same week. Each week, I will place the readings in a broader context and will offer a more extensive bibliography of suggested readings.

Focusing on articles also gives me some flexibility. I want to make the syllabus somewhat endogenous on student interest, meaning that I will change some of the readings in later weeks based on our conversations.

The syllabus is divided into three general conceptual areas that I perceive as central to contemporary international relations scholarship. First, power, authority, and legitimacy. Second, norms, laws and organizations. Third, the interaction between domestic and international politics. These distinctions are both broad and fluid. For example, in the second section we will ask if and how international organizations acquire authority or legitimacy. Similarly, in the third section we will start by studying the interaction between domestic politics and decisions to join international institutions.

Course Requirements:

Grading is based on four components:

1) Class participation and discussion questions (25%)
This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Your contribution is essential. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings. Your participation grade is based on:
a) Active participation in the seminar discussions;
b) A 1-2 paragraph comment that discusses some aspect of each week’s readings. The paragraph could contain an argument that you have about a particular thesis in a reading, a synthesis between different readings, an aspect of the reading that you would like to see discussed in class, etcetera. You should not summarize the readings nor do you need to talk about each of the week’s readings. The purpose of these paragraphs is both to show me that you have thought about the reading as well as to help steer discussion in class. The paragraphs should be emailed to me each week by noon on the morning of each class.
c) Once a semester, each student will be asked to defend one of the readings.

2) Two short papers (15% each). The first paper is due by Spring break, the second by Easter break. The papers will be on the first and second parts of the course respectively. Each paper should be about 2000 words. I will discuss these assignments further in class.

3) A short research proposal (10%) Each student will prepare a two page research proposal by April 26. We will discuss these proposals on the last day of class. All students read all proposals. I require each student to discuss ideas or a draft of this proposal with me during office hours at some other point during the semester.

4) A final take home exam (35%). A mock take-home comprehensive exam. The exam is based on the readings for this class but you can use other materials as well. We will discuss scheduling in class.

Class Schedule

   No class January 18 (MLK day)

Part I: Power, Authority, and Legitimacy

3. February 1: Concepts: Power, Authority, and Legitimacy
4. February 8: Unipolarity
   No class February 15 (Presidents Day)
5. February 22: Rising States
6. March 1: Network Theory
   No class March 8 (Spring Break)

Part II: Norms, Laws, and Organizations

7. March 15: International Norms
8. March 22: International Laws
9. March 29: International Organizations
   No class April 6 (Easter Monday)

Part III: The Domestic-International Interaction and Transnationalism
10. April 12: Domestic Politics and International Institutions
11. April 19: The Second Image Reversed
12. April 26: Non-State Actors
13. May 3: Discussion of Research Proposals

Detailed Syllabus


   No class January 18 (MLK day)


   Read following for methodological controversy:


3. February 1: Concepts: Power, Authority, and Legitimacy


   Weber, Max. “Domination” (Chapter XII from Law in Economy and Society)


4. **February 8: Unipolarity**

A. *World Politics* special issue on unipolarity (*61, 1 (2009)):


Wohlforth, William C. “Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War.” 28-57

Finnemore, Martha. “Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity: Why Being a Unipole Isn’t All It’s Cracked Up to Be.” 58-85

Walt, Stephen M. “Alliances in a Unipolar World.” 86-120


B. Browse Controversy on Soft balancing


No class February 15 (Presidents Day)


6. **March 1: Network Theory**


No class March 8 (Spring Break)

Part II: Norms, Laws, and Organizations

7. **March 15: International Norms**


8. March 22: International Law

Hans J. Morgenthau. “The Main Problems of International Law” ch. 18 Politics Among Nations


9. March 29: International Organizations


No class April 6 (Easter Monday)

PART III: THE DOMESTIC-INTERNATIONAL INTERACTION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

10. April 12: Domestic Sources of International Politics

Danner, Allison and Beth Simmons. "Credible Commitments and the International Criminal Court." International Organization, 64, 2 (Forthcoming).


11. April 19: Second Image Reversed


Risse, Thomas and Kathryn Sikkink. "The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices." (From the *Power of Human Rights*)


12. April 26: Non-State Actors


13. May 3 Research Proposals