Political Science 4048: International Conflict and Cooperation

Fall 2015
Class Meeting: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-2:50
Class Location: 220 Stubbs
Instructor: David Sobek
Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00
Wednesday 9:00-10:00
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Course Description:

International relations comprises a number of areas ( interstate conflict, civil war, international economy) and uses a wide range methods (quantitative, qualitative, game theoretic, psychological). This course serves as an introduction to a number of these theories and the methods used to test them. In particular, you will be introduced to a set of theories on the origin of interstate conflict and the evidence rallied in their respective defense.

The first part of this course examines realist and liberal conceptions as to the origin of interstate conflict. While learning these arguments you will also be exposed to both qualitative and quantitative ways to develop and analyze theories. The second section of this course moves away from the realism/liberalism dichotomy and compares rational (game theoretic) and psychological explanations of conflict. This “third debate” in international relations has become increasingly important.

This course has three main goals. First, it is meant to provide a more in depth knowledge of the theories of conflict that were first presented in your introduction to international relations course. Second, you should leave this class with the ability to more critically, and scientifically, evaluate various theories of international politics. Last, this course will introduce you to a more systematic way to study political science and prepare you for advanced undergraduate and, perhaps, graduate classes.

Grading:

Reading Quizzes (25% total): There will be three (3) unannounced Reading quizzes throughout the course. These will consist of two short answer questions based on the readings for that day. Of the three quizzes, your lower score will be dropped and only the two highest will count towards your final grade. These quizzes will be given in the first couple minutes of class. If you arrive late and miss the quiz, you will miss the quiz. There will be no make ups of the quizzes.

Mid-Term (30%): Tuesday, October 20th is the mid-term examination. This test will consist of a set of short answer questions.

Final Exam (35%): There will be a cumulative final exam in the class. As with the mid-term, it will contain a series of short answer questions. It is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8th, 3pm-5pm.

Participation (10%): Participation in class discussion is critical for this course. As such, you will need to actively participate in six (6) classes throughout the semester. At the end of the classes in which you felt you participated, you need to write on a sheet of paper your name and how you participated and hand this in to me. I will either accept your participation and count it towards your grade, or reject it (in which case it will not be recorded).

Course Texts (required readings):

Grading Scale:
A+: 97% or higher
A: 93%-97%
A-: 90%-93%
B+: 87%-90%
B: 83%-87%
B-: 80%-83%
C+: 77%-80%
C: 73%-77%
C-: 70%-73%
D+: 67%-70%
D: 63%-67%
D-: 60%-63%
F: Under 60%

Note: Border percentages are given higher grade, i.e. a 90% is an A- not a B+.

Reading Schedule

Part 1: Realism, Liberalism, and War

Week 1:
August 25th: Introduction
August 27th: Russett and Oneal, Chapters 1-2

Week 2:
September 1st: Russett and Oneal, Chapters 1-2, continued.
September 3rd: Russett and Oneal, Chapter 3

Week 3:
September 8th: Hero movie
September 10th: Hero movie

Week 4:
September 15th: Russett and Oneal, Chapter 4
September 17th: Russett and Oneal, Chapter 5

Week 5:
September 22nd: Russett and Oneal, Chapters 6-8

Week 6:

October 1st: Blainey, Chapters 1-5

Week 7:
October 6th: Blainey, Chapters 6-9
October 8th: Blainey, Chapters 10-12

Week 8:
October 13th: Blainey, Chapters 13-17
October 15th: Mid-Term Review

Week 9:
October 20th: Mid-Term Exam
October 22nd: Axelrod, Chapter 1

Week 10:
October 27th: Axelrod, Chapters 2-3
October 29th: Fall Break

Week 11:
November 3rd: Axelrod, Chapters 4-6
November 5th: Axelrod, Chapters 7-9

Week 12:
November 10th: Axelrod movie
November 12th: Axelrod movie

Week 13:
November 17th: Jervis, Chapters 1-2
November 19th: Jervis, Chapters 3-4

Week 14:
November 24th: Jervis, Chapters 5-6
November 26th: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15:
December 1st: Jervis, Chapter 7
December 3rd: Final exam review

**Final Exam: Tuesday December 8th, 3pm-5pm.**