Political Science 7940: Seminar in International Politics

Spring 2012
Class Meeting: Thursday 1:10-4:00
Class Location: 210 Stubbs

Instructor: David Sobek
Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00-10:00
            Thursday 9:00-10:00

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Summary:
This class is the introduction to the study of international politics at the graduate level. It is important to keep in mind that this course does not present a comprehensive coverage of international politics (no course could do that), but it will introduce you to a number of the most important debates within the field and force you to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

This course divides into three main topics: the original debates, the original debates today, and the new debates. Aside from giving you a broad coverage of the literature and ideas, this setup is meant to highlight the fact that scholarly debates are dialogues across time. People do not write articles and books in isolation from one another; rather, they are responses to the previous literature. This will become clearer when you are able to trace ideas across time and through the literature.

Because this course is a seminar, its main job is to expose you to the literature and prepare you for more advance courses. As such you will be required to read and assimilate a large amount of the literature in a short period of time. In addition to the readings, you will have a number of writing assignments meant to reinforce the readings and further your knowledge of the literature.

Ultimately, at the end of the course you should have a broad knowledge of international relations. In addition, you will have developed the skills needed to succeed in more advance courses. Thus, it is important for you to use this class not only as an introduction to international relations, but also, an introduction to graduate work.

Brief Overview of Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: 20% of final grade.
Three Reviews and presentations: each is 10% of final grade.
Final Paper Assignment: 20% of final grade.
Final Exam: 30% of final grade.
**Reading assignments**

Many of the readings for this course come from the books. Significant portions of the readings, however, come from articles that you will need to acquire. For each week the assignments are listed in a specific order meant to demonstrate the development of the literature. Please read them in the order that they are listed.

**Required Books:**


**Optional Books:**


Grading System:

Attendance and Participation (15%): Attendance and participation account for 20% of your final grade. It is vitally important for you to come to class prepared, i.e. having carefully read the assignments. Simply showing up for class is not sufficient. You will need to consistently contribute to class discussion in order to satisfy the participation aspect of this part of your grade.

3 Reviews and Presentations (10% each): Three times in the semester you will be required to read and discuss the optional readings. During these weeks you need to prepare a summary for each of the required and optional readings (roughly a half page single-spaced for each article/about 1-2 pages for a book). You will also be expected to present the optional readings to the class (about 15-20 minutes). The written reviews need to be sent to the class and me by 5:00 PM the Wednesday before the class.

Paper Assignment (25%): During the semester you will be required to write one 10-12 page paper on one of the course topics. This paper is essentially the first half of what would be in a research paper. You will be required to have a literature review and theory section. The additional readings provide a starting place to learn more of the literature but you will need to move outside of the course readings.

Final Exam (30%): At the end of the semester you will be given a final exam. The format of the exam will attempt to mimic the comprehensive exams that you will eventually have to take in graduate school.
Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: Meta-Theoretical Debates

Required Readings


Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:

The Original Debates

Week 3: Violence in the International System

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:


Week 4: Classical Realism

Required Readings:

Thucydides. The Melian Dialogue.


Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:
Week 5: Structural Realism

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:

Week 6: Realism and Change

Required Readings:
Gilpin, Robert. War and Change in World Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:

Week 7: Liberalism and Beyond

Required Readings:


Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:
Week 8: Neo-Liberalism

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:

The Original Debates Today

Week 9: Power and War

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:

Additional Readings:


Week 10: Democratic Peace Debates

Required Readings:


Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:

**Week 11: Information and War**

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:
The New Debates

Week 12: Rational Choice 1

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:

Week 13: Rational Choice 2

Required Readings:


Optional Readings:


Additional Readings:


**Week 14: Social Constructivism**

**Required Readings:**
Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Chapters 5-8

**Optional Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**