INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy

Political Science RPOS 370
Fall Semester 2016
Monday and Wednesday, 1:40 PM – 3:00 PM, SS0116

Professor: Irina A. Chindea
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Office: Milne 121A
Office Hours: take place in the Contact Office (Humanities B-16)
   Monday: 3:15 PM — 4:15 PM
   Wednesday: 12:15 PM — 1:15 PM.

Course Description: This class examines the core international relations paradigms: realism, liberalism and social constructivism. It presents their historical origins, the evolution of their various branches (classical realism, neo-realism, neo-liberal institutionalism etc), and studies the contemporary application of the most important theories in the field. The course also explores the core concepts and assumptions around which the study and practice of international relations revolve, such as anarchy, sovereignty and the nature of power. The class will include a simulation of global politics in which students are expected to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical foreign policy situations. It is strongly recommend that students have previously taken RPOS102.

Expectations: This is a reading intensive course and students are expected to attend every class having read and prepared to discuss the assigned texts. Attendance is mandatory and will be especially important during the simulations. All students are expected to turn in the assigned work on time. Late submissions will incur a penalty of 1/3 grade point per day.

Course objectives: By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Explain the major theories of international relations.
2. Identify and describe the main similarities and differences among the major IR theories.
3. Identify the leading authors in the IR field, as well as the theories, seminal works and key concepts they are associated with.
4. Understand the historical evolution of IR theory over time.
5. Apply theoretical frameworks to understanding practical international relations issues.
6. Assess the behavior of actors in international politics in light of IR theories.

Course Requirements: There are four requirements for this class.

a. Attendance and active participation will count 20% towards your final grade.

b. Take home mid-term exam: 25%. The exam will be distributed 24 hours in advance prior to its due date and time: 7:00PM on Wednesday, October 19th. All students are expected
to submit their exam through Blackboard. You may email me a back-up copy within the
deadline specified above. If you do not submit your exam on time nor email me the back-up copy prior to 7:00PM on 10/19, your assignment will be considered to be late. The mid-term exam will have two parts. In the first part, you will be expected to write a critical analysis of some of the individual theories covered during the class (e.g., classical realism, neo-realism, liberalism, neo-liberalism etc). In the second part, you will be given a real world foreign policy event and required to analyze it through the prism of the theories we discussed in the first half of the semester. More details on the points that you are expected to cover in both parts of the exam, and its format will be provided to you in advance.

c. Simulation participation and write-up: 20%. Students will participate in a team-based simulation using the International Relations in Action book. Attendance and full participation in the simulations are mandatory, and represent 12.75% of the grade. Each unexcused absence during the simulation will result in a 1/3 grade point penalty from the student’s simulation participation grade. At the end of the simulation, will write a brief 2-3 page paper describing how IR theory could explain countries’ or leaders’ behaviors in a particular case during the simulation. The simulation write-up is worth 7.25% of the grade, and it is due on December 12th, at 5PM through Blackboard. You can also email me a back-up copy within the deadline.

d. Final Exam: 35%. The final evaluation is cumulative and will cover the entire semester’s course material. Students will be provided in advance with details regarding the format of the exam.

Important Dates:
- Mid-term Exam: Wednesday, October 19th, 2016
- Simulation write-up: Monday, December 12th, 2016 at 5:00 PM.
- Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14th, 2016 – 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

Readings: There are two required books for this course. Both are available at the bookstore.


BT: International Relations in Action, by Brock Tessman, Lynne Rienner Pub.

Besides the textbook, the rest of the readings for this course are either available on Blackboard (under Course Materials) or can be accessed using the University Libraries online databases (http://library.albany.edu/db/). The readings posted on Blackboard are marked on the syllabus with BB next to them. The articles available on-line through the University Libraries online databases are marked as Electronic Resources (ER). The readings assigned from the two assigned books are marked with JM (John Mearsheimer) and BT (Brock Tessman).

Academic Integrity: Assignments that you submit for this course will be reported to Judicial Affairs if any evidence of academic dishonesty is detected. To avoid such an unpleasant occurrence and its consequences (e.g. failing the course), please familiarize yourself with the undergraduate bulletin’s descriptions of cheating and plagiarism. You can find it at: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. If you have any questions about plagiarism, proper citation or any other issues involving academic integrity, please do not
hesitate to come and see me. The penalties for plagiarism and cheating are severe, and it is better to clarify them as soon as they arise rather than to make a mistake in this area.

**Accommodations:** “Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in any Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (BA-120, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.” For the University’s policy, please see [http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml). If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**August 29, 2016: Course Introduction**

- *Discuss Syllabus, Course Organization, Grading, and Class Policies*

**August 31, 2016**


**September 5, 2016: No class – Labor Day.**

**September 7, 2016: Anarchy and Levels of Analysis**


**September 12, 2016: Decision Making Theories (1)**


September 14, 2016: Decision Making Theories (2)

September 19, 2016: Decision Making Theories (3)

September 21, 2016: Classical Realism (1)

September 26, 2016: Classical Realism (2)

September 28, 2016: Simulation Day (1)
– Brock Tessman. 2007. “Part 1.” (BT)
– Brock Tessman. 2007. “Part 2.” (BT)

**October 3, 2016: No class - Rosh Hashanah.**

**October 5, 2016: Liberalism (1)**

**October 10, 2016: Liberalism (2)**

**October 12, 2016: No class - Yom Kippur.**

**October 17, 2016: Neo-Realism**

**October 19, 2016: TAKE HOME MID-TERM exam.**

**October 24, 2016: Theories of Hegemonic Leadership and Unipolarity**

**October 26, 2016: Simulation Day (2)**
– Brock Tessman. 2007. “Alliance Politics.” (BT)
October 31, 2016: Neo-liberal Institutionalism (1)

November 2, 2016: Neo-liberal Institutionalism (2)

November 7, 2016: Simulation Day
  − “Brock Tessman. 2007. “Territorial Disputes” (BT)

November 9, 2016: Constructivism

November 14, 2016: Simulation Day
  − Brock Tessman. 2007. “Nuclear Proliferation” (BT)

November 16, 2016 Post-Classical Realism (1)
  − John Mearsheimer. 2001. Chapters 1, 2 and 3. (JM)

November 21, 2016: Post-Classical Realism (2)
  − John Mearsheimer. 2001. Chapters 4, 5 and 8. (JM)

November 28, 2016: Simulation Day
  − Brock Tessman. 2007. “Collective Action Problems” (BT)

November 30, 2016: Domestic Politics
December 5, 2016: Simulation Day

- Brock Tessman. 2007. “Global Security Organizations” (BT)

December 7, 2016: Global Governance. Non-State Actors in International Relations.


December 12, 2016: Conclusions.


December 14, 2016: Final Exam – 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM