RPOS 370 International Relations: Theory  
Dr. Douglas M. Stinnett

Office Hours  
Office Hours: Wed & Fri. 2-3pm (B16 Humanities)  
Email: dstinnett@albany.edu

Class  
MWF: 12:35 – 1:30  
Location: Humanities 129

Course Description  
International relations is a very broad subject. It covers history dating from the Peloponnesian war to the present day. It involves issues as widespread as military conflict, economic relations, human rights, and the environment. The objective of this course is to introduce a variety of theories that can be used to understand the main issues and controversies that comprise international relations. To do this, we will start with the three main theoretical schools in IR: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. In addition, we will contrast these three theories with more modern approach to international relations that emphasizes three broad, but flexible, concepts: interests, institutions, and interactions (or the three Is).

Course Materials  


We will also read several articles and selections from longer works. I will put PDF copies of these readings on Blackboard, under the “Course Content” section. Each of these readings is identified on the syllabus.

Course Requirements  
Class Participation: You are required to attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, you will find the class more enjoyable if you are actively engaged. The readings will serve as the basis for lectures and discussions. Some class meetings will be reserved for discussion and debate, but even on lecture days I will ask questions of the class and expect active participation. A portion of the final grade will be made up of my estimation of your degree of participation. A record of attendance will also be kept.

Readings: It is important that you keep up with the readings as the semester progresses. It is important that you to **read the assigned materials prior to class**, which will be critical to learning the material. In addition, if I feel that students are not doing the readings, I reserve the right to replace part of the participation grade with unannounced quizzes on the reading assignments.

Important Dates  
In-class simulation: February 25th and 27th  
Simulation paper due: Friday, March 1st  
Take-home mid-term handed out: Friday, March 8th  
Take-home mid-term due: Monday, March 11th  
Paper due: Wednesday, May 8th  
Final: Thursday, May 16th, 1:00-3:00
## Grade Break-down
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Take-home Midterm: 25%
- Theoretical Critique: 20%
- Simulation Participation and Report: 10%
- Final Exam: 35%

### Letter Grades
- A 93-100
- A- 90-92.9
- B+ 87-89.9
- B 83-86.9
- B- 80-82.9
- C+ 77-79.9
- C 73-76.9
- C- 70-72.9
- D+ 67-69.9
- D 63-66.9
- D- 60-62.9
- F < 60

## Course Policies
**Office Hours:** I encourage you to come see me with any questions or difficulties that you have about the readings or class discussions. I am also available to meet with you at my Downtown Office (220 Milne). You are free to ask me questions immediately after class, but be aware that my attention is often focused on several different things at this time. To get my complete attention, it is best to come see me during my office hours.

**Honesty:** All students will be held to the University at Albany’s Standards of Academic Integrity.

**Absences:** Absences will be excused in case of family emergency or documented illness. If you will be absent from class due to religious, academic, or university obligations please let me know in advance. Make-up examinations will be given at the earliest date convenient following the exam date. Exams will not be given in advance of the scheduled exam date.

**Grade Re-evaluation:** Students may ask the instructor to re-evaluate assignments that they feel have been graded incorrectly. Re-evaluation requests should be in the form of a short, typewritten statement explaining specifically why the student thinks that the grade should be reconsidered. These requests must be submitted to the instructor, along with the assignment, within one week after it has been returned to the class.

**Changes to the Syllabus:** This syllabus is a general plan for the course; changes during the semester may be necessary and will be announced in class by the instructor and posted on Blackboard.

## Part I Overview of International Relations Theory

**Wed Jan 23**
- Intro Day

**Fri Jan 25**
- Foundations: Actors and Interests
  - WP: Introduction Chapter and p. 39-49

**Mon Jan 28**
- Power, Capabilities, and the Use of Power
  - WP: 52-61

**Wed. Jan 30**
- Discussion Day: Power
  - Questions: Where does power come from? What specific characteristics make a state powerful? What determines how strong a state’s capabilities are?

**Fri Feb 1**
- Interactions: the Prisoner’s Dilemma
  - WP: 74-79

**Mon. Feb 4**
- Institutions: Overcoming the Prisoner’s Dilemma
• WP 62-72

Wed. Feb 6 Discussion Day: Prisoners and Zombies
• Drezner: 1-9, 21-32.

Questions: what areas of international relations is the prisoner’s dilemma game a good model of? What sort of situations does it apply to? What real-life problems are similar to a plague of walking dead?

Fri. Feb 8 Realism
• Drezner: 33-45
• Thucydides, “The Melian Dialog” Blackboard

Mon. Feb 11 Realism
• Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* Blackboard

Wed. Feb 13 Liberalism
• Drezner: 7-60
• Michael Doyle. “Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace.” Blackboard

Fri. Feb 15 Liberalism
• Andrew Moravesik, “Taking Preferences Seriously.” Blackboard

Mon. Feb 18 Constructivism
• Alexander Wendt. “Anarchy is What States Make of It.” Blackboard
• Drezner: 67-76.

**Part II Realism, Power, and Conflict**

Wed. Feb 20 International Crises and the Game of Chicken
• WP: 76-78

Fri. Feb 22 The Chicken Game
• WP: 47-61

Mon. Feb 25 Territorial Dispute Simulation

Wed. Feb 27 Territorial Dispute Simulation

Fri. Mar 1 Bargaining Failure and the Causes on War *(Simulation response due)*
• WP: 93-117

Mon. Mar 4 Realism and Peace: Credible Deterrence
• WP: 118-123
Wed. Mar 6  Discussion: Deterrence and the Invasion of Iraq
Questions: What implications does deterrence theory have for foreign policy? What are possible alternatives to invasion for dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction?

Fri. Mar 8  Catch-up Day (**Pick up Midterm**)  
**Part III Liberalism, Institutions, and Conflict**

Mon. Mar 11  Liberalism and Peace: the Democratic Peace (**Midterm Due**)  
• WP: 154-164

Wed. Mar 13  Domestic Politics and War: Diversionary Theory  
• WP: 124-153  
• Wilfred Owen, “The Parable of the Old Man and the Young” **Blackboard**  
Questions: In Wilfred Owen’s poem, can we see some of the ideas of the chicken game reflected? What about the role of domestic politics in war?

Mar 18 - Mar 22  **Spring Break**

Mon. Mar 25  Collective Security  
• WP: 188-194

Wed. Mar 27  UN Peacekeeping  
• WP: 195-212

**Part IV Security Issues**

Fri. Mar 29  Realism and Alliances: the Balance of Power  
• WP: 168-187

Mon. Apr 1  Nuclear Proliferation  
• WP: 538-547  
• Sagan, Scott. “The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation.” **Blackboard**

Wed. Apr 3  **No Class**

Fri. Apr 5  **No Class**

Mon. Apr 8  Civil War  
• WP: 214-241

Wed. Apr 10  Terrorists and Suicide Bombing  
• WP: 242-263

**Part V International Law, Human Rights, and the Environment**
Fri. Apr 12  Sources of International Law  

Mon. Apr 15  Does International Law Matter?  
• WP: 421-434

Wed. Apr 17  Human Rights  
• WP: Chapter 12

Fri. Apr 19  Collective Action and the Environment  
• WP: 492-501, 517-533

Mon. Apr 22  Domestic Politics and International Environmental Cooperation  
• WP: 505-517

Part VI: International Trade

Wed. Apr 24  Intro to Globalization  
• WP: 3-37

Fri. Apr 26  Trade Interests: Groups not States  
• WP: 266-275, 306-311

Mon. Apr 29  Trade Interactions and Institutions: Domestic Politics  
• WP: 276-287

Wed. May 1  Trade Interactions and Institutions: International Agreements  
• WP: 287-293

Fri. May 3  Trade Institutions: the WTO  
• WP: 293-304

Mon. May 6  Discussion: What does IR Theory Tell us about the Rise of China?  
• WP: 458-556

Wed. May 8  Last Class: Review for Final (Paper Due)

Final: May 16th, 1:00 – 3:00