PL SC 370: Theories of International Relations, Spring 2012
Department of Political Science, Brigham Young University
1:00-3:30pm Tuesday, Thursday 280 SWKT

1 Contact Information

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2 Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to expose you (the student) to principles and ideas central to the study of international political phenomenon such as conflict, trade, the rise of non-state actors, etc. These principles and ideas are typically organized into theories. Understanding how these theories work (and how they fail) is an important step into developing your own ability to describe, explain, and analyze events and trends in international relations. In favor of full disclosure, this title of this course is a bit misleading. We will not spend all of our time talking about theories. Why? Because studying theory (in my opinion) is fairly useless without attempting to put it into practice. To this end, we will have a number of policy discussions and group projects geared towards the application of the theories that we learn in this class.

But the end of this course, it is my hope that you feel comfortable describing the major theories of international relations of the past, as well as theories and ideas that form part of the discussion with challenges faced today. In addition, I want you to come to an understanding of why all of these theories are important. At the end of this course, you must be able to answer the question: why do I care about all of this? Finally, I hope that, in addition to the knowledge you will gain about theory and the application of theory, you will learn to think for yourself about the political world and how it works. If you do this, you will find that even if you are not going to be involved in politics, the things that we learn will serve you as you move beyond BYU to pursue your goals and dreams.

3 Required Text


The textbook should be available at the BYU Bookstore. As noted above, it is required. Please notify me as soon as possible if you have trouble obtaining the text. If you decide to forego purchase at the BYU Bookstore and order them through your favorite online retailer, that is fine. However, you will be responsible for securing copies before class discussions and tests. In addition to the readings from the textbook, we will be reading articles from newspapers and journals.
throughout the semester. I will post the articles on the course website when they are not available through library resources or internet search engines (i.e. Google).
I expect that you will read the material assigned before you come to class.

4 Grading Components

1. Syllabus E-mail (-1% if not completed)- Things move quickly, especially in the shortened spring term. I want you to read over the syllabus, take note of important dates and deadlines, and send me an e-mail by classtime on Monday, April 30th.

2. Group Presentations (40%) - You will be divided into groups of four at the beginning of the semester. There will be a total of four group presentations, giving each member of the class one opportunity to present their group’s product. The specific dates of these presentations are noted in the course schedule. The memos are worth 10% each. On each memo, the weighting of grades is as follows: 55% is based on my evaluation of the overall memo (65% when you are not presenting); 35% is based on the peer evaluations that you must turn in after each presentation; and, when you are actually the individual presenting, the quality of your presentation is worth 10%. We will talk about this more in class, but don’t hesitate to ask me any questions.

3. Midterm Exam (15%) - There will be one midterm examination in the Testing Center. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. These questions will come from lectures/discussions, readings, and the Morning Brief (see below). The number of questions will be determined before the exam.

4. Final Exam (25%) - The final is not cumulative and will only cover the material from the second portion of the semester (i.e. after the second midterm). It will contain the same type of questions as those present on the midterm exam.

5. Essays (20%) - Over the course of the semester, you will turn in two essays (worth 10% each). These essays will encourage you to accurately describe theoretical paradigms and apply them to current policy challenges in the world. In other words, to successfully complete these essays, you must combine theory and policy. These papers should be about 10 pages, doubled-spaced, with one-inch margins. You will need to turn them in by 11:59pm via e-mail on the due date. The first essay will be due on May 11th and the second on June 1st.
5 Course Policies

5.1 Grading Scale

5.2 A Spring Term Disclaimer

I understand the desire to graduate as quickly as possible. For many, taking classes in the spring and/or summer terms is a way to accomplish that. I also understand the perception on the part of some that classes in the spring and summer terms should be easier or require less work than classes during the fall or winter semesters. Please dispel this notion from your minds. This course will require an immense amount of effort and time. Deadlines come quickly. Reading loads for each day are heavy. It is very difficult to recover from falling behind. That said, the workload is manageable provided you stay on top of everything. I think you will learn a great deal and that we will enjoy our time together. I will do everything I can to help you in this endeavor.

5.3 An Important Note on Attendance

I want you to pay special attention to the fact that I do not require attendance. This is not because I do not think attendance is important. Rather, this is because I feel that attendance is a choice that you make each day (similar to the one a person makes when they go to their job each day). While there is no grading component directly based on attendance, you should note the make-up policy below.

5.4 The Morning Brief

Enrolling in a class like this and not keeping up with current events is similar to purchasing a GPS system for your car but never updating the maps. For this reason, we will dedicate a small portion of each day (perhaps 5-10 minutes) to a short discussion of relevant news items. These items will show up on tests. You can keep up with these items (and I recommend that you do) by going to the Foreign Policy website (www.foreignpolicy.com) and clicking on the ‘Login’ link at the top. Following the instructions to register (it’s free) and check the “Morning Brief” box in the ‘Newsletter’ section. You should begin receiving an e-mail every morning in which someone has conveniently compiled important news stories from around the world. I draw test questions from these news articles (and will occasionally bring up an article in class that wasn’t included in the Morning Brief). If you have any questions, please let me know.
5.5 Extra Credit Policy

I will not offer any extra credit opportunities.

5.6 Make-up Work

Unexcused absences for individual or group exercises and tests cannot be made up. If you notify me prior to the absence and provide documentation, make-up may be considered. Documentation must show an unavoidable reason you cannot be in class (vacation, trips, weddings, etc. do not qualify as unavoidable). Notifying me after an exam or other assignment (save for a documented medical emergency) is not acceptable. It is your responsibility to follow-up with me regarding absences.

5.7 Classroom Conduct

The classroom is a place of learning and exploration of ideas. The amount of learning we take away from the classroom each day will depend on the individual contribution we make to the classroom atmosphere. In that sense, learning is defined both by what we bring into the classroom and by how we act once we are in the classroom. We will be challenged by new ideas and viewpoints that differ from our own. During this exchange of ideas, it is improper to malign or treat your classmates as stupid based on their statements, political views, appearance, or any other characteristics. I expect the same courtesy shown towards me. I reserve the right to lower your participation grade if you choose to conduct yourself in an improper manner (i.e. yelling, swearing, threats, etc.).

5.8 Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change. I may add/remove readings as we get closer to an assigned topic. I will give prior notification via e-mail and, when possible, in-class.

5.9 Academic Honor Policy

Academic dishonesty is a serious academic offense indeed. Specific examples of academic dishonesty include cheating on exams or plagiarism. Without diminishing the academic seriousness of the offense, I wish to convey to you that the academic seriousness is far less important to me than the impact that such offenses have on your character and good name. Academic penalties for academic dishonesty can result in your expulsion from the university. Whether or not such a penalty is the result, the personal consequences of academic dishonesty are

1If you have a reason to disagree with a classmate, “You must be dumb if you believe that” or “I maybe thought that in the third grade” would not be good ways to express your disagreement. Rolling eyes, loud sighs, and other such actions are likewise inappropriate.
much higher. Do all that you can to avoid having to deal with either academic or personal consequences by taking appropriate preparatory actions.

Often, violations of academic honor come about because of poor planning, laziness, lack of knowledge, or something else that is within your control. I hold you completely responsible for educating yourself regarding plagiarism. Assure that everything you write is your own original work. In instances where you need to reference other works to support your ideas, cite them. If you use someone else’s data, cite them. If you are uncertain whether or not something needs to be cited, cite it and ask me later about it.

5.10 Discrimination

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

5.11 Students with Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

6 Course Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday, April 24

Part I - Why Are We Here?

Details about Academic Honesty (and more detailed descriptions of plagiarism) are found at http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2010-2011ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php.

Part II - When I Say Theory...


Thursday, April 26

Part I - Realism and Neoliberalism


Part II - Realism vs. Neoliberalism


Week 2

Tuesday, May 1

Part I - Liberalism


Part II - Applying Realism and Liberalism


3Please note that I do not expect you to read this whole article.

Thursday, May 3

Part I - Measuring Power (Group Presentations)

– Data Sources (non-exhaustive)
  * Correlates of War - http://www.correlatesofwar.org/datasets.htm
  * Trade and GDP - http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/ ksg/exptradeffdp.html
  * Specific Military Indicators - http://www.globalfirepower.com/
  * Regime - http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm
  * Economic and Social Indicators - http://data.worldbank.org/indicator

Part II - Using Force In International Relations


Week 3

Tuesday, May 8

Part I - Anarchy and State Behavior


Part II - Other Perspectives on Anarchy


Thursday, May 10

Part I - International Security Institutions

Part II - Contemporary Challenges of International Security Institutions


Week 4

Tuesday, May 15

Part I - International Political Economy


Part II - Globalization


Thursday, May 17 Examining Interdependence and Globalization

Week 5
Tuesday, May 22

Part I - Designing An Intervention (Group Presentations)
- TBA

Part II - Humanitarian Intervention

Thursday, May 24 The Perils of Intervention (or Not) In Action

- No assigned reading

Week 6
Tuesday, May 29

Part I - Terrorism

Part II - A Media Briefing on Terrorism (Group Presentation)
- TBA

Thursday, May 31

Part I - Terrorists Aren’t The Only Transnational Actors

Part II - Transnational Challenges for the International Community

Week 7
Tuesday, June 5

Part I - Thinking Internationally About Domestic Factors


Part II - The International Consequences of Domestic Factors


Thursday, June 7

Part I - Governance and the World of the Future


4Note that I am only having you read a small portion of this article.
Part II - The Application of Theory, Strategy, and International Relations Tomorrow (Group Presentations)
- TBA

Week 8
Thursday, June 14

- Final Exam - 5:00 p.m. to 6:50 p.m.