THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Political Science 370

Instructor: Eric Hyer
209 HRCB, ext. 2-4699
E-Mail: eric_hyer@byu.edu

MW 3-4:15 p.m.                     231 MARB
Office hours: MW 10:30-11:30 a.m.

“Nothing is less real than realism. Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things” Georgia O’Keeffe

Course Description and Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to introduce the most important theoretical ideas and patterns of international relations by analyzing the great theoretical debates in international politics. This is important for students that will seek advanced training in political science and international relations or careers requiring analytical skills. We will pursue these objectives by focusing on major debates over traditional and contemporary theories that seek to analyze and explain international relations and then use theory to analyze contemporary issues. To help students achieve the course objectives, students are expected to participate in class discussions of assigned reading, complete writing assignment, and take weekly quizzes and a final on the assigned readings and lectures. Due to the nature of this course, active participation in class discussion is important. Students should complete the assigned reading before class and be prepared to participate in a discussion of the material.

Students often believe that succeeding in a particular course is the result of memorizing a set of “facts” (that they believe speak for themselves) and conclusions. The result is students read a “textbook” highlighting the parts deemed to contain the answers to questions that possibly will appear on the exams. Such a collection of “facts” is about as easy to remember as a collection of random numbers, and not much more useful and generally results in forgetting most of what was “learned” shortly after the exam. This course is based on the assumption that “facts” are hard to remember but easy to look up, so instead of concentrating on “facts” we will focus on ways of thinking. Do not get caught in the trap of memorizing conclusions, but rather focus on the underlying assumptions and the logical process used to reach the conclusions. Stress comprehension, critical thinking and communication rather than memorization. The assigned reading and class discussions should all make sense. If you feel confused, seek an explanation in the reading, from a fellow student, or from the teacher.

Course Outcomes

Students will acquire knowledge of important concepts and theories in international relations and understand key actors and processes in international politics. Students will understand how different theories lead to different interpretations of key events and processes in international politics. Students will develop skills of comprehension, thinking critically, analytically and synthetically, and be able to communicate ideas effectively.

Course Requirements, Quizzes, Exams, Writing, and Grades:

Weekly quizzes will be based on the assigned reading and class discussion. The quizzes (10 points each) will be available on Learning Suite Wednesday through Friday of each week. The final exam is cumulative and will draw upon material from the entire course (100 points) and is on
Wednesday, April 23, 3-6 P.M. University policy prohibits rescheduling exams except under extraordinary circumstances and never allows early exams. Obtaining exam answers from fellow students is unethical. But, students are encouraged to organize study groups.

Student are expected to write one 4-5 page book review (follow the guide) on Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (50 points) due **February 18 by 5 p.m. in the Department Office** (745 SWKT). The second writing assignments is a 750 word maximum Op-Ed on a contemporary foreign policy issues of your choice (25 points) due **March 19 by 5 p.m. in the Department Office**. The third writing assignment is a 5-6 page literature review on a theory of your choice (75 points) due **April 14 by 5 p.m. in the Department Office**.

Grades are based on a standard percentage point breakdown. **Total points possible 350.**

**Required Reading:**


The required reading for each class session in Burchill et al. is identified by chapter(s) and for Viotti/Kauppi is identified by chapter(s) then “Selected Readings” are identified by the author’s name. The “Glossary” should be studied; these terms will appear on quizzes and the final exam. As indicated, some readings are posted on Learning Suite under the Content Tab.

**Academic Standards and Policies:**

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time as well as the challenges of the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2013-2014ucat/GeneralInfo/AcademicHonesty.php for BYU policy and specific examples of intentional or inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification.

Federal law and BYU policy prohibits sex discrimination. This extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. This includes discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and sexual harassment. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 888-238-1062 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Brigham Young University seeks to accommodate qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). If you need assistance, or you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through the established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office (422-5895 or 888-238-1062) in D-282 ASB.

It is always a struggle to balance encouragement, compassion, and support for students in their intellectual and career pursuits with the necessary rigorous evaluation of their work and intellectual honesty. As a teacher, I always feel the pressure to grant inflated grades and often students seek exceptions on the grounds that they need a high grade to graduate, or get into the
desired graduate program. I seek to be fair, but at the same time maintain rigorous standards. Your grade is based upon your performance.

*The schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*

**READING AND DISCUSSION TOPIC SCHEDULE**

**I. The Study of International Relations**

January 6. The Study of IR Theory – Burchill, Ch. 1 & 12.

January 8. Theorizing in IR – Burchill, Ch. 1; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch.1, selected readings: Rosenau, Walker.

**II. Classical Perspectives**

January 13-15. Idealism and Normative Theory – Burchill, Ch. 4; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 5, selected readings: Grotius, Bull; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 9, selected readings: Kant, Carr, and from Ch. 2, selected readings, Rousseau.

January 22-27. Realism – Burchill, Ch. 2 (pp. 32-36, 49-56); Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 2, selected readings: Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes.

January 29-February 3. Marxism – Burchill, Ch. 5; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 4, selected readings: Hobson, Wallerstein, Reading by Lenin.

**III. Theory and Theorizing in IR**


**IV. Neorealism (Structural Realism)**

February 18 (Tues). Reductionist and Systemic Theories – Burchill, Ch. 2 (pp. 37-49); Reading by Waltz from *Theory of International Politics*, “Reductionist and Systemic Theories.”

*Book review of Man, the State, and War due.*


V. Neoliberalism

March 3-10. Neoliberalism – Burchill, Ch. 3; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 3, selected readings: Brooks, Keohane.


VI. Post-Positivist Critique

March 17-19. Constructivism – Burchill, Chs. 8-9; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 6, selected readings: Wendt, Finnemore. **Op-Ed due March 19.**


March 26-31. Critical Theory – Burchill, Ch. 7; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 7, selected readings: Booth, Campbell.

April 2. Feminist Critique – Burchill, Ch. 10; Viotti/Kauppi, Ch. 8, selected readings: Young, Tickner.

VI. Contemporary Debates

April 7. “The End of History” – Reading by Fukuyama

April 9. “Democratic Peace” – Reading by Russett

April 14. Conclude and Review. **Literature Review due.**

**FINAL EXAM** Wednesday, April 23, 3-6 p.m.
The Purpose of this note is to explain what kind of work is expected in order to fulfill the assignment to write a "book review" in this class.

Perhaps it will be most helpful to begin negatively, by specifying what is not expected. The following are unacceptable:

1. A chapter-by-chapter summary of the book, with a "conclusion" giving your opinion of it tacked on at the end (or the beginning).

2. A statement about how valuable the book was, and how much you got out of it.

3. A statement about how bad the book was, and how little you got out of it.

The above approaches all neglect analysis, and do not place the book you have read in the intellectual framework of the course. Those two qualities are expected. They can be attained in the following ways (among others):

1. You can subject the book to a theoretical (or empirical) review based on what you have learned in the course, demonstrating what points the author has failed to make, connections that have not been perceived, ideas not carried out to their logical conclusion, assumptions taken for granted, etc.

2. You can show how the book considers issues that should have been but were not considered by other authors (or lecturers) you read for this course. In other words, you can reverse the approach of (1), and use the book to criticize the course material or other books.

3. You can, of course, do both of the above at once, in the event that the book, in your opinion, illuminates some problems but obscures others.

4. You can show how the book adds to one or more of the authors you read in the course, by considering their ideas in a different context -- a different model or paradigm, another historical era, another philosophical framework, etc.

5. You can simply discuss ideas, relevant to the course, that are suggested by the book, without ever specifically referring to course material, but demonstrating by the nature of your discussion that the material has become a part of your consciousness. You may, for example, show how the book demolishes or supports conventional notions about the same problems that the course subject matter deals with.
6. You can defend the book against hostile criticisms, calling on material from the course to help your defense.

7. You may take one line of argument discovered in the book and extend it beyond the author's frame of reference by calling on material from the course, from other courses, or from other writings.

Note that whether you analyze the book, or use the book to help analyze something else, you do not have to be negatively critical of the book. Being critical is not simply being negative. It is using your ideas to evaluate the material.

You are encouraged to consult World Politics or The New York Review of Books for examples of book reviews that analyze rather than merely report.

**Book Review Grading Criteria**

**Analysis**

The major idea or premise of the book is made clear, but this is not achieved merely by a detailed description of the books contents. Rather by a "reconstruction" of the underlying assumptions and premises of the author.

What is the contribution of the book? A "critical assessment" of the author's success (or lack of it) in clearly communicating ideas. What does it offer to a student of international politics or how is it helpful in furthering our understanding of international relations?

The book reviewed is placed in the larger context of the course. Is it reviewed in a "vacuum," just on its own merits, or are other ideas incorporated in judging the validity and value of the ideas presented by the author?

**Mechanics**

Are the basic rules of English composition followed?

**X Factor**

The review is "cohesive," offers good "insights" into the material covered by the book and is written with "clarity." (Or simply stated: How does this book review, in all aspects, stack up against other book reviews?)