International Relations 402: Theories of War

Fall 2014 Syllabus (version of 8/21/14)

Course time: T-Th 3:30-4:50

Place: VKC 158

**Professor: Jacques E. C. Hymans** ([hymans@usc.edu](mailto:hymans@usc.edu))

**Office: SOS B5.**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 and by appointment.**

**Course description:** In this seminar, we study some theories of the causes and consequences of war. War has always been the central concern of the discipline of international relations. Therefore, some of the best minds in our field have devoted their careers to studying it. The perspectives they have developed are quite diverse, and in this course we will explore some of that diversity.

The seminar is heavily theoretical in orientation. If you know you like IR theory, this is the seminar for you. If you don’t know if you like IR theory or not, this seminar will try to convince you that it can be very valuable and even fun. If you know you don’t like IR theory, run for the hills.

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar in international relations that requires a major original research paper. You need to have prior familiarity with the IR discipline, e.g. at least some course background in IR: certainly IR 210 and preferably other courses, too.

**Assignments and grading:**

1. *1-page “puzzle” memo for seminar paper (5%)*
2. *Revised 1-page “puzzle” memo for seminar paper (5%)*
3. *10 minute powerpoint presentation of seminar paper (10%)*
4. *15-20 page seminar paper (30%)*
5. *9 1-page response memos on reading assignments (each worth 3%: 27%)*
6. *Chapter outline(s) and in-class discussion leadership (8%)*
7. *In-class participation (15%)*
8. *Extra credit for TIRP participation (2%)*

**Notes on the assignments:**

* The 1-page “puzzle” memo explains what will be the empirical or theoretical problem driving your seminar paper research. The idea of a good social science “puzzle” will be discussed extensively in class. You can pick the overall topic as you please. The revised memo could be on a completely different topic if necessary—speak with me first. The memos must be *no longer than a single page,* *no smaller than 12 point font*, *1-inch margins*.
* For the revised 1-page memo assignment, in some cases I will ask you to start over from scratch; in other cases just a few modifications will be required.
* The powerpoint presentation should present not only the puzzle but also your provisional answer to the puzzle, including a taste of the empirical evidence with which you can back up your claims. You must rigorously stick to the maximum time allotment. (This time allotment may be changed due to the size of the class.) After your presentation you will receive oral feedback from students and professor. Techniques for effective powerpoint presentations will be discussed in class.
* The seminar paper should be an original research paper, approx. 15 pages in length, double spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins. The paper takes the place of a final exam. By university rules, no extensions will be granted. Late papers will be graded down 1 half letter grade (e.g., B to B-) for each 12 hours late.
* Your 1-page response memos answer the question “What are two specific shortcomings of the logic or evidence presented by the author?” You should discuss each shortcoming for about half a page. Make sure that you are making two *standalone* critiques. Cite specific passages from the book, with page numbers. Do not waste space summarizing the author’s overall argument before diving into your critiques. The memos must be *no longer than a single page, no smaller than 12 point font, 1-inch margins.* These will be ***due*** ***via email*** ***by 9 PM*** ***the day before*** the reading is to be discussed. You must turn in at least ***one memo per week***, not including the 1st week. You can skip writing a memo during 2 weeks. If you aren’t satisfied with your grades on the memos you can write more than the requirement and I will count the top 10. There will also be the opportunity to write one or two extra credit memos that are on subjects other than the reading assignments—I will announce these in class.
* As discussion leader your first job is to write up a chapter outline. Chapter outlines should contain page references to key definitions of concepts, key theoretical hypotheses, and key empirical claims in the chapters being read for the upcoming session. Keep the outlines to one page per chapter maximum. They should be sent via email to me no later than 11:59 PM ***two days*** before the reading is to be discussed (e.g., if the reading is to be discussed on Wednesday, you need to get the outline to me by Monday night). I will send you feedback the following day so that you can adjust your outline if necessary and make handouts for everyone to read in class.
* As discussion leader your second job is to relate the day’s reading to some current event happening in the world. Send me your idea along with a link to a news article from a major mainstream US newspaper (*New York Times*, *LA Times*…) via email no later than 11:59 PM ***two days*** before the reading is to be discussed. I will send you feedback the following day so that you can adjust the question if necessary and make handouts of the article for everyone to read in class. In class, first express your own point of view on how the theoretical work and the current event relate to each other, then ask others for their thoughts, and then press them to clarify/defend their position. This student-led discussion will take up approximately the final 15-20 minutes of each class session.
* The key to the in-class participation grade is to **speak up**. This class rises or falls on the dedication and involvement of the students. Openly expressing your questions and confusions counts as much as providing answers or clever critiques.

**Basic required texts (purchase at the campus bookstore):**

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton, 2003, ISBN-13: 978-0393323962)

John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (W. W. Norton, 2001, ISBN-13: 978-0393976847)

John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (Cornell University Press, 2004, ISBN-13: 9780801442391)

Severine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge University Press, 2010, ISBN-13: 9780521156011)

**Class Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments:**

Class meeting 1 (8/26). Introduction to the course.

Readings: no readings.

Class meeting 2 (8/28): Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 1-2 (54 pp.)

Class meeting 3 (9/2): Realism.

Required reading:Mearsheimer, chs. 3-4 (83 pp.)

Class meeting 4 (9/4): Realism.

Required reading:Mearsheimer, chs. 5-6 (96 pp.)

Class meeting 5 (9/9). Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 7-8 (100 pp.)

Class meeting 6 (9/11). Realism.

Required reading: Mearsheimer, chs. 9-10 (69 pp.)

Class meeting 7 (9/16): Liberalism.

Required reading: Oneal and Russett, Preface + chs. 1-2 (67 pp.)

Class meeting 8 (9/18): Liberalism.

Required reading: Oneal and Russett, ch. 3-4 (73 pp.)

Class meeting 9 (9/23): Liberalism.

Required reading: Oneal and Russett, chs. 5-6 (71 pp.)

Class meeting 10 (9/25): Liberalism.

Required reading: Oneal and Russett, chs. 7-8 (72 pp.)

Class meeting 11 (9/30): Constructivism.

Required reading: Mueller, intro and chs. 1-2 (38 pp.)

Class meeting 12 (10/2): Constructivism.

Required reading: Mueller, chs. 3-5 (45 pp.)

Class meeting 13 (10/7): Constructivism.

Required reading: Mueller, chs. 6-7 (56 pp.)

SPECIAL EVENT: 10/8, 12-2 PM: Center for International Studies Panel discussion on 50 Years after the Tonkin Gulf Incident, featuring Tuong Vu and David Elliott.

Attendance is not required, but those who come and write up a short summary of the event will receive a memo credit.

Class meeting 14 (10/9): Constructivism.

Required reading: Mueller, chs. 8-9 (42 pp.)

Class meeting 21 (10/14): Organizational culture.

Required reading: Autesserre, ch. 1 (40 pp.)

Class meeting 22 (10/16): Organizational culture.

Required reading: Autesserre, ch. 2 (43 pp.)

Class meeting 17 (10/21): Organizational culture.

Required reading: Autesserre, ch. 3 (44 pp.)

Class meeting 15 (10/23):

Required reading: Autesserre, ch. 4 (53 pp.)

Class meeting 16 (10/28): Organizational culture.

Required reading: Autesserre, ch. 5-6 (100 pp.)

Class meeting 20 (10/30): Organizational culture.

**No reading for today, no class meeting. TURN IN REVISED PUZZLE MEMO VIA EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT.**

Class meeting 18 (11/4): Organizational culture.

In-class discussion of puzzle memos.

Class meeting 19 (11/6):

**No reading for today, no class meeting. TURN IN REVISED PUZZLE MEMO VIA EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT.**

Class meeting 23 (11/11):

**Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers. Bonus points for early bird presentations!**

Class meeting 24 (11/13).

**Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers. Bonus points for early bird presentations!**

Class meeting 25 (11/18):

**Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers.**

Class meeting 26 (11/20):

**Powerpoint presentations on seminar papers.**

Class meeting 27 (11/25): No class. Happy Thanksgiving week!

11/27: Happy Thanksgiving!

Class meeting 28 (12/2):

**Last-minute seminar paper powwows.**

Class meeting 29 (12/4):

**Course wrapup. Seminar papers due in hard copy at start of class.**