

GVPT 200: International Political Relations
Spring 2014
MW 2-2:50PM
Tydings 0130

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Introduction

This course will serve as a broad introduction to the analytical study of international relations. Students will be exposed to a number of key issues relating to international security and the politics of international economic relations, including (but not limited to): the causes of war; arms races and the security dilemma; the determinants of international cooperation; international institutions; the politics of trade; international monetary relations; and the implications of China's rise for world politics.

The course consists of two lectures each week given by the professor, and a discussion section on Fridays led by one of the teaching assistants. Both the lectures and the discussion section are mandatory. Course readings are substantial, and students are expected to complete all readings for each week prior to attending discussion section.

Prerequisite

The course prerequisite is GVPT 100.

Learning Outcomes

Course learning outcomes are as follows:

Developing a strong understanding of key concepts relating to international relations:

Students will be introduced to key concepts relating to international politics, and will learn to identify and apply these different concepts.

Improved critical thinking skills relating to international politics: Students will learn to think rigorously and analytically about international politics. Lectures will often be framed in terms of empirical questions and puzzles, such as: why do wars occur given that they are costly? Why do states place restrictions on trade given that most economists view trade as welfare-enhancing for countries? Why are states able to cooperate in dealing with some problems, but not others? The course aims to help students visualize these sorts of puzzles, and to begin to unravel them. Student will also be exposed to numerous different perspectives and arguments relating to international politics, and will learn how to apply and evaluate these different arguments.

Improved writing skills: The course includes a major writing assignment, where students will be expected to relate course material to news and policy articles on contemporary international politics. This assignment provides students with an opportunity, over the course of the semester, to refine their writing skills.

Assignments and Grading

Grades

Grades will be based on a midterm exam (20 percent of final grade), a final exam (30 percent), a writing/scrapbook assignment (25 percent), and participation in discussion section (25 percent). More details on the writing/scrapbook assignment are given below.

Dates:

Midterm exam: Wednesday, March 12, in class.

Writing/scrapbook assignment: Due in section on Friday, May 2.

Final exam: Monday, May 19, 1:30-3:30PM (please double-check final exam schedule; the exam will occur at the officially set time)

Challenges:

Students wishing to challenge a grade must do so within 1 week of the day the assignment is handed back. Challenges must be made in writing, with a clear argument explaining the reasons for the challenge. In these cases, the entire assignment will be graded again.

Writing/Scrapbook Assignment

The writing assignment will consist of a scrapbook, in which students print out stories/articles from newspapers, magazines, and policy-related journals each week and comment on them (approximately 1 page per article) in a way that relates them to material covered in the course. All together the scrapbook should include 12 articles (and hence approximately 12 pages of commentary to go along with the articles). The articles should be distributed fairly evenly across the semester (i.e., don't hand in an assignment with all or nearly all articles dated just before the assignment due date). The articles should come from a variety of sources, including: major daily newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Financial Times*; from magazines such as *The Economist*; and from policy journals such as *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Quarterly*, or *Orbis*. It is fine to use other sources too, but students should avoid short, superficial news clips. Use of op-eds is fine. The articles should relate to a variety of topics covered in the class.

The writing assignment should be done over the course of the semester: writing commentary on at least one article each week—relating the article to material covered in class that week—will make the assignment very manageable. The assignment will be graded on the quality of the writing, the sophistication of the arguments made in the commentary, the degree to which the commentary reflects strong understanding of the course topics it addresses; the degree to which the articles chosen relate to a variety of topics covered over the course of the semester; and the degree to which students use a variety of sources and avoid short, superficial news clips.

I will discuss expectations at greater length in the first class. The assignment is due in section on May 2, and will count 25% toward the final grade.

Readings

I have ordered the following book for the class:

- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001)

I have placed several copies of Mearsheimer's book in the McKeldin Library 2 hour reserves.

I have also assigned numerous articles for the course. Some of these are chapters from books that are available through the ELMS course reserves. Other readings are journal articles. Students are responsible for retrieving journal articles themselves using the library web page.

Other important information

Honor code/Academic integrity

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>.

Medically necessitated absences

The University of Maryland has a policy regarding medically necessitated absences from class. I do not take attendance in lectures, but discussion section participation is mandatory. Under university policy, we will accept a self-signed note from the student attesting to the date of the illness as an excused absence from a single discussion section. A student is allowed only ONE self-signed note per class per semester.

There are three major scheduled grading events: the midterm exam which will take place in class on March 12; the final exam (which will occur at the officially-scheduled time on May 19); and the writing assignment (which is due in section on May 2).

A student who experiences a prolonged absence or an illness preventing attendance at a major scheduled grading event (see above) is required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or an outside health care provider, verifying the dates of the treatment and the time period during which the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

Students with disabilities

I will make every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. If you need accommodation, please see me as early as possible; I will need written documentation from the Disability Support Service Office.

Religious observances

Please let me know in advance if a religious observance will cause you to miss a grading event. Please let your TA know in advance if a religious observance will cause you to miss a section. Provided you give advance notice, you will not be penalized for any discussion sections missed for this reason, and you will be given the opportunity to make up exams or other assignments.

Course Schedule

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The first week of the course will serve as an introduction to the class. In addition to summarizing course expectations, we will briefly survey major approaches to the study of international politics.

Week 1

January 27: Introduction.

January 29: Approaches to the study of international relations: Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism.

Week 1 readings: Mearsheimer, chapters 1-2.

PART II: INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CONFLICT

The second part of the course examines international security and conflict. In week 2 we will take a closer look at the realist worldview of an anarchic international system in which states struggle for power and security. In week 3 we consider the causes of war, focusing in particular on rationalist explanations for armed conflict. In week 4, we continue the focus on war by considering how domestic politics can influence the prospects for military conflict. We also discuss the relationship between democracy and war and the relationship between economic interdependence and war.

Key questions:

- What is the security dilemma, and what factors make it more or less severe?

- How do states seek security?
- Wars are very costly, so why do they occur?
- Do democracy and trade promote peace?

Week 2

February 3: Power and the security dilemma

February 5: Seeking security in an anarchic world

Week 2 readings:

- Mearsheimer, chapters 3 and 8 plus pp. 155-164.
- Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Limits of American Power," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 117, No. 4 (Winter 2002/2003), pp. 545-560. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- Robert Jervis. 1978. "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* Vol. 30, No. 2. Read pages 186-214 only (start with section III). LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

Week 3

February 10 & 12: Exploring the causes of war

Week 3 readings:

- Dan Reiter, "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 1, no. 1 (2003): 27-47. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- David A. Lake, "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security*, Volume 35, Number 3 (Winter 2010/11), pp. 7-52. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

Week 4

February 17 & 19: Domestic politics and war; the liberal peace.

Week 4 readings:

- Sebastian Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 97, no. 4 (November 2003), pp. 585-602. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- Erik Gartzke and Yonatan Lupu, "Trading on Preconceptions: Why World War I Was Not a Failure of Economic Interdependence." *International Security* vol. 36, no. 4 (Spring 2012), pp. 115-150. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

PART III: COOPERATION

Part 3 of the course shifts the focus away from conflict and toward cooperation. Week 5 serves as a transition week. Here we begin with a discussion of nuclear weapons, their implications for international politics and state security, and efforts by states to cooperate in slowing nuclear proliferation. We then consider in more detail what is meant by “cooperation.” In week 6, we consider the factors that make cooperation more or less likely between countries. We also discuss international institutions and the role that they might play in facilitating cooperation between countries. The midterm takes place in week 7 (with Monday of that week set aside for review). After spring break we continue with cooperation in week 8 by focusing on two specific cases. First, we discuss efforts by states to achieve collective security, and we consider the United Nations here in particular. Second, we examine efforts by states to cooperate on environmental issues. Here, we contrast the relative success countries have had cooperating on ozone depletion with the relative lack of success they have had in dealing with global warming.

Key questions:

- What is meant by international cooperation?
- Why are states able to cooperate on some issues, but not others?
- What are international institutions, and how might they affect the prospects for cooperation?
- What is meant by collective security, and how successful have states been at achieving it?
- How important is it for states to cooperate to limit nuclear proliferation?

Week 5

February 24: Nuclear weapons; cooperation over nuclear proliferation.

February 26: Conceptualizing cooperation.

Week 5 readings:

- Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: WW Norton, 2003), Chapter 3 (“Indian and Pakistani Nuclear Weapons: For Better or for Worse?”), pp. 88-124. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Ivo Daalder and Jan Lodal, “The Logic of Zero: Toward a World without Nuclear Weapons.” *Foreign Affairs* vol. 87, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2008), pp. 80-95. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

Week 6

March 3 & 5: The prospects for cooperation in international politics; international institutions.

Week 6 readings:

- John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions.” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 5-49. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutionalist Theory.” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 39-51. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

Week 7

March 10: Review for midterm.

March 12: MIDTERM EXAM

NO READINGS OR SECTIONS THIS WEEK

SPRING BREAK, week of March 17

Week 8

March 24: The United Nations.

March 26: The global environment: prospects for cooperation.

Week 8 readings:

- Kofi Annan, “‘In Larger Freedom’: Decision Time at the UN.” *Foreign Affairs* vol. 84, no. 3 (May/June 2005), pp. 63-74. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- Jon Western and Joshua S. Goldstein, “Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age.” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90, issue 6 (Nov/Dec 2011), pp. 48-59. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- David G. Victor, “Toward Effective International Cooperation on Climate Change: Numbers, Interests, and Institutions.” *Global Environmental Politics* vol. 6, no. 3 (August 2006), pp. 90-103. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

PART IV: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Part 4 of the class serves as an introduction to international political economy. We begin in week 9 with trade. We ask why countries trade with each other, and why they often choose to place restrictions on trade. Here we focus in particular on the domestic politics of trade. In week 10, we continue with the focus on trade by looking at international trade politics. In particular, we consider efforts by states to cooperate on trade issues, and discuss the key institution governing international trade, the World Trade Organization. We also consider international monetary relations in week 10. Here we discuss exchange rates and why they matter, and we consider efforts by states to cooperate on monetary issues. Week 11 shifts attention to currency crises, and how countries respond to those crises. We focus especially on the role of the International Monetary Fund, and we discuss some of the criticisms that have been leveled against the fund for its handling of recent crises. We will also watch a video that explores some of the crises that spread around the world during the 1990s, and some of the controversies surrounding those crises. Finally, in week 12 we begin with a discussion of the European Union. We will examine the evolution of the EU over time, culminating in the decision to create a monetary union. We will also discuss the recent debt crisis that affected many of the EU countries. The week will end with a broader consideration of globalization's implications for state sovereignty, focusing in particular on the "race to the bottom" argument.

Key questions:

- Why do states trade with each other?
- Why do states trade the products that they do?
- Given that economists believe that trade is welfare-enhancing for countries, why do states place limits on trade?
- What are exchange rates, and why are they important?
- What criticisms have been leveled at the IMF for its handling of currency crises, and how valid are those criticisms?
- Does globalization create a race to the bottom?

Week 9

March 31: Why do countries trade with each other?

April 2: Domestic politics and trade.

Week 9 readings:

- William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2008). Introduction. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Kimberly Elliot, "Big Sugar and the Political Economy of U.S. Agricultural Policy," Center for Global Development brief, April 2005. Online at: http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/2794_file_CGDEV_BigSugar3a.pdf
- Douglas Irwin, *Free Trade Under Fire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), chapter 2. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.

Week 10

April 7: International politics and trade; the World Trade Organization.

April 9: International monetary relations.

Week 10 readings:

- William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2008). Chapter 14. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder: The World Trade Organization. Online at: <http://www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/world-trade-organization-wto/p9386#p0>
- Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake and Kenneth Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (New York: Norton, 2010), chapter 8, pp. 297-316 only. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.

Week 11

April 14 & 16: Currency crises and the International Monetary Fund.

Week 11 readings:

- Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake and Kenneth Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (New York: Norton, 2010), chapter 8, pp. 320-327 only. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 2002), chapter 4. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.

Week 12

April 21: The European Union.

April 23: Globalization and the “race to the bottom.”

Week 12 readings:

- Daniel Drezner, “Globalization and Policy Convergence.” *International Studies Review* 3 (Spring 2001): 53-78. LIBRARY WEB PAGE.
- Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake and Kenneth Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (New York: Norton, 2010), chapter 8, pp. 316-319 only. ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Paul Krugman, “Can Europe Be Saved?” *New York Times Magazine*, 12 January 2011. Online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/magazine/16Europe-t.html?src=me&ref=general>

PART V: CHINA'S RISE: IMPLICATIONS FOR WORLD POLITICS

The final part of the course considers one of the most important trends in contemporary international politics: the rise of China as a great power. Week 13 provides background on China. We discuss its political system and its economic reforms. Readings for the week include one reading that is cautious about China's future, and one that is more bullish. In week 14, we consider some of the implications of China's rise for contemporary international politics. We discuss some of the frictions that have emerged between the US and China on economic issues, and the degree to which these are likely to persist. We also consider how China's rapidly growing military capabilities might affect the prospects for conflict and peace in East Asia. Week 14 lectures will aim to apply some of the concepts learned over the course of the semester to China's rise in particular. Week 15 consists of only 1 course (on Monday), and we will use that class to review for the final exam.

Key questions:

- Will China continue its remarkable rise? What challenges stand in its way?
- What are the implications of China's rise for international relations in East Asia?
- Will US-China relations remain peaceful?

Week 13

April 28 & 30: The rise of China.

Week 13 readings:

- Susan L. Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapter 2.
ELMS COURSE RESERVES.
- Arvind Subramanian, "The Inevitable Superpower: Why China's Dominance is a Sure Thing." *Foreign Affairs* vol. 90, no. 5 (Sept/Oct 2011), pp. 66-78.
LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

SCRAPBOOK ASSIGNMENTS DUE IN SECTION MAY 2

Week 14

May 5 & 7: The security and economic implications of China's rise.

Week 14 readings:

- Mearsheimer, chapter 10.
- G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?” *Foreign Affairs* Volume 87, Number 1 (January/February 2008). LIBRARY WEB PAGE.

Week 15

May 12: Review for final

NO READINGS OR SECTIONS THIS WEEK

FINAL EXAM: SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, MAY 19, 1:30-3:30PM. PLEASE CONSULT THE UNIVERSITY’S OFFICIAL FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE TO VERIFY.