

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

GOVERNMENT 155

WESLEYAN UNIVERSTIY

**Winter 2021
M-F 10-11:40
Online**

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I. Course Description

This course represents an introduction to the central concepts, theories, and empirical findings in the study of international politics. The principal actors, structures, and processes of international relations will be analyzed in a theoretical and historical context. Major topics include nationalism and the national interest, power, diplomacy, game theory and bargaining, the causes of foreign policy, nuclear weapons and international security, imperialism, underdevelopment, international organizations, international resource management, the environment, and transnational actors.

II. Requirements

Final course grades will be based on two research papers, several short memos, responsibility, and class participation. It is essential that you keep up with the readings so as to enhance participation, as well as avoiding excess reading before assignments. The lectures and discussions will be based upon the readings for the day. Discussion questions will be available on the syllabus. The questions will also serve as good study guides. Participation will be evaluated based on the quantity and quality of comments, and familiarity with the readings. There will be a grade for the entire class and also a grade for each individual. Responsibility encompasses all aspects of participation in the course: attendance, timeliness in giving in assignments and coming to class, corresponding in a

timely manner, supporting an equitable load in group projects, and all other expectations related to the responsible execution of duties connected to this course.

Grades will be assigned based on the following weights:

Class Participation	20%	
Responsibility	20%	
Short papers	20%	
Paper 1	20%	Due on January 19
Paper 2	20%	TBD

Disability Resources

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860/685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

III. Readings

All the readings on this syllabus will be required. Most reserve readings (not those recommended for purchase) will also be available online in electronic reserve.

Access to the readings will be password protected. The password for this course is

“govt155”

The following books will be used extensively and are recommended for purchase:

Robert Art and Robert Jervis, Eds., International Politics, 13th Edition

Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella, World Politics, 10th Edition

Giulio Gallarotti, The Power Curse

Giulio Gallarotti, Cosmopolitan Power in International Relations

Robert Kennedy, Thirteen Days

IV. Course Outline

1. BASIC CONCEPTS, PROCESSES, AND THE NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

A. Nationalism and the Rise of the Nation State (January 4)

Discussion Questions: What is the nation-state? What functions does it serve? It is commonly argued that nationalism is an important factor holding nations together. Is this true? Is nationalism a natural phenomenon or does it have to be created by national leaders? Think about both the good and the bad effects of nationalism. Is the nation-state the ultimate form of human collectivity, or is there something beyond the nation-state?

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 3

John Herz, "The Rise and Demise of the Territorial State"

Assignment: Come prepared with some ideas of what you think it means to be an American. We will discuss this at length.

B. National Interests and Goals (January 5)

Discussion Questions: What is the national interest? Whose interest is it really? Is Morgenthau correct in saying a general national interest exists for all nations, and that this national interest can be defined in terms of the accumulation of power? What is this power of which he speaks? If this were

true, would it make the world a more dangerous place or peaceful place? What are Wolfer's "goals of foreign policy?" Do they make the world more dangerous or more peaceful?

Hans Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, Chapter 3

Arnold Wolfers, "The Goals of Foreign Policy" in Discord and Collaboration, Chapter 5

Assignment: You are National Security Advisor, write a one-page single-spaced memo to the President on "What are the major international interests of the US?"

C. Theories of International Politics

1. International Anarchy and Realism (January 6)

Discussion Questions: The Realist school of international politics has traditionally looked to Hobbes' Leviathan as an intellectual precursor. In Chapter 13 Hobbes paints a picture of what a community would be like without central organization or rule. How would you describe this state-of-nature existence? What is anarchy all about? Can we draw realistic parallels between this state of nature and the world of international politics?

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Chapter 13

**Art and Jervis, International Politics,
pp. 1-9, 19-27, 48-77**

Assignment: In-class experiment on Realism.

2. Alternatives to Realism (January 7)

Discussion Questions: What are the alternatives to Realism? Are idealism and feminism a better way to approach world politics?

Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society, Chapter 2

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, pp. 21-41

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 28-40, 78-86

Cynthia Cockburn, "Militarism and War"

D. The Means of Foreign Policy

**1. The Use of Force
(January 8)**

Discussion Questions: In the nuclear age, is the large scale use of force still a useful means of statecraft?

Robert Kagan, "Power Failure"

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 195-217, 229-245, 376-392

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, "Complex Interdependence and the Role of Force"

**E. Balance of Power
(January 11)**

Discussion Questions: What is a balance of power? How does it differ from Elrod's Concert of Europe? When will nations prefer to bandwagon as opposed to balance according to Walt? What are the necessary conditions for a balance of power? Do we have a balance of power today?

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 153-160

**Richard Elrod, "The Concert of Europe" World Politics
(January 1976)**

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, pp. 79-97

F. Strategic Interaction: Bargaining and the Games States Play

**1. Game Theory
(January 12)**

Discussion Questions: We will discuss our experience in the simulation game. Think fully about how the Prisoner's Dilemma can be used to explain world politics. What reasons can you give for why you followed the strategy that you did? What relation does this have to international politics?

Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma"

Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation, Chapters 1,4

2. Bargaining (January 13)

Discussion Questions: Schelling presents numerous strategies for bargaining. Especially interesting are his concepts of "the power through binding oneself," "the advantage of the last clear chance," and the whole idea of the rationality of irrationality. What are these strategies? How can they be used to win a chicken game?

Thomas Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict, Chapter 2 up to p. 46 and Chapter 3 up to p. 58

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, pp. 89-97

Assignment in class: Prepare a strategy to play a chicken game. We will coordinate the plans in two groups in an in-class experiment.

2. DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

A. The Levels of Analysis (January 14)

Discussion Questions: What is the whole concept of levels of analysis? How does Waltz' 3 levels (which he calls images) explain war? Russett and Starr present an alternative "menu" of levels. Which of Russett and Starr's levels do Waltz' levels correspond to?

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 1

B. Structural Causes of Foreign Policy

(January 15)

Discussion Questions: How does the structural level explain foreign policy? What are its advantages and disadvantages? How would you explain the Gulf War on a structural level? Why does Mearsheimer say we will miss the Cold War? Do you agree with his argument?

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapters 4

John Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Miss the Cold War"

C. Domestic Causes of Foreign Policy

(January 18)

Discussion Questions: Woodrow Wilson, former teacher and football coach at Wesleyan University, argued that a democratic world (i.e., where all nations are governed by democratic principles) was a safe world. Michael Doyle has recently restated the argument in terms of the passivity of liberal states. What is the logic of their argument? What are the strengths and weaknesses? Consider the evidence too (pay attention to Doyle's use of the evidence). In democracies, popular views are supposedly the primary shapers of foreign policy. Is this true of the U.S.? Does the U.S. have a truly democratic foreign policy?

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 5

Woodrow Wilson, excerpts from Public Papers, in Wolfers and Martin, Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs (look under Wilson "Excerpts" in Reserve Room)

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 139-152

D. Bureaucratic Politics

(January 19)

Discussion Questions: What are the main principles of the bureaucratic politics approach to explaining foreign policy as described by Arnold Kanter and Morton Halperin? How do these principles explain the Vietnam War? What are your main critiques of the BP approach to foreign policy?

Morton Halperin and Arnold Kanter, "The Bureaucratic Perspective"

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, pp. 135-142

James Thompson, "How Could Vietnam Happen?" (look under Halperin and Kanter in Reserve)

E. Decision Making and Psychological Sources of Foreign Policy

**1. Psychological Theories of Foreign Policy
(January 20)**

Discussion Questions: The decision-making level of analysis explains foreign policy by looking at the belief systems and thought processes of leaders. Hence, it proposes that we learn about foreign policy through a familiarity with the psychology of leaders. What are the principal psychological processes that affect foreign policy decisions?

Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception"

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 6

**2. Psychological Sources and the Cuban Missile Crisis
(January 21)**

Discussion Questions: Which of these psychological processes were especially visible and important in the Cuban Missile Crisis case?

Robert Kennedy, Thirteen Days

Assignment: You are an advisor to President Kennedy before the decision to blockade Cuba was made. Based on what you learned about the decision, write a one page single-spaced memo to President Kennedy suggesting the best plan to deal with the missiles in Cuba.

F. Levels of Analysis and the Decision to Drop the A-Bomb

The class will watch the documentary "The Decision to Drop the Bomb."

The film analyzes the formative events which led to Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb. While watching the film, think about which levels of analysis best explain Truman's decision.

January 22

Discussion of the decision to drop the bomb and levels of analysis.

Assignment: You are an advisor to President Truman before the decision to drop the a-bomb was made. Based on what you learned about the a-bomb decision, write a one page single-spaced memo to President Truman suggesting the best plan to end the war.

3. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

January 25

The class will watch the documentary "War Plans." The film discusses the problem of national security in the nuclear age.

January 25

Discussion Questions: What is the best nuclear strategy for nations to follow in order to assure ongoing peaceful relations? There has been a long debate between MAD (mutual assured destruction) advocates and counter-force (aim at and destroy weapons rather than cities). MAD proponents argue that you minimize peace when you aim at cities (i.e., when you hold the other nation's population hostage). Which do you think is a more stabilizing strategy? Where is the best place to aim your weapons? Moreover, what should our plan be if we begin fighting a war? Which targets would we attack first? What kind of retaliation can we expect? Some people (e.g., MAD advocates) might argue that the best plan is no plan because other nations will be convinced that the war will get out of hand and therefore be deterred from starting hostilities. (In this case, "no plan" would signal an irrational conduct of war which would be akin to using the strategy of the rationality of irrationality in a Chicken game). Can nuclear deterrence be better modeled as Chicken or Prisoner's Dilemma?

We will discuss the film and the following readings:

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 203-228, 259-274

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics,
Chapters 7,8

Robert Art, "A Defensible Defense"

John Mueller, "Nuclear Weapons"

Anna Simons, "Soft War=Smart War? Think Again"

Assignment: In-class security-policy exercise and crisis simulation.

4. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, LAW, AND TRANSNATIONAL ACTORS

A. Transnational Actors (January 26)

Discussion Questions: LeFeber talks about the advent of a global culture based on the spread of common images and values (capitalism, the Swoosh) through the media. Chang cites hip-hop and youth culture as a main factor driving these images and values. Is this the origin of the new global civilization, or will nationalism and other forms of restricted identification (ethnicity, religion) keep the world from making the leap to one community? Will we have one world, or will we be faced with what Huntington calls the "clash of civilizations"?

Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World"

Walter LeFeber, "Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism"

Sam Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations"

Leslie Sklair, "Sociology of the Global System"

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, pp. 344-354

Art and Jervis, International Politics, 454-460

Assignment: In-class culture experiment

5. POWER AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

1. Power (January 27)

Discussion Questions: What are the ideas of the power curse and power illusion? Is the U.S. presently suffering from such a curse? What can it do to avoid the pitfalls of power illusion?

Giulio Gallarotti, The Power Curse, whole book

Giulio Gallarotti, Cosmopolitan Power in International Relations, Chapters 1,4,6,7

You are a top consultant to the President. Based on the ideas of the power curse, cosmopolitan power, and power illusion, try and construct a plan by which the U.S. can maximize its influence over the next two decades. What strategies should it embrace? What strategies should it avoid?

Assignment: Write a one page single-spaced memo on keeping America strong over the next two decades. We will try to forge a single power augmentation strategy for the US in a meeting.

6. INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

A. Theories of International Political Economy (January 28)

Discussion Questions: Gilpin describes and analyzes the three major theories of international economic relations: liberalism, Marxism, and mercantilism. What are the major tenets of each theory? Which theory best describes international economic relations today?

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 282-298

B. Underdevelopment
(January 29)

Discussion Question: Which of Gilpin's three theories best explains economic underdevelopment today?

We will watch segments of Ali Mazrui's "Tools of Exploitation" and discuss the following readings

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 13

Theotonio Dos Santos, "The Structure of Dependence"

Peter Kilby, "The Internal Forces Afflicting Africa"

Bauer and Yamey, "Against the New Economic Order"

C. The Tragedy of the Commons: Preserving Our
Global Environment
(January 29)

Discussion Questions:

Dialogue from Star Trek, Original Series

Kirk: "Spock, our planet has been ravaged by war for so many years. How can you explain it? It is so brutal and violent. Surely, there must be a better way?"

Spock: "Yes Captain, violent and brutal indeed. But it is true of you humans that you so often obtain that which you least desire."

Mr. Spock's comments, from a Star Trek episode, ring true of the environment. Surely, no one wants the environmental degradation which now exists on our planet, but we do indeed experience such degradation. How do you explain it? Is the environment indeed in serious trouble; or as Solow suggests, are environmentalists overstating the problem?

Robert Solow, "Sustainability: An Economist's Perspective"

Art and Jervis, International Politics, pp. 480-490

Russett, Starr, Kinsella, World Politics, Chapter 14