Course Description: This course will examine international relations theory through the study of the leading theories of international relations in terms of how they have been practiced over time, indeed in many cases, over the centuries. Course material will be related to what is actually happening in the international arena today. We will examine the different ways countries or groups of countries seek security in a dangerous world. We will examine international relations theory in both the philosophical and historical context and gain a better understanding for how international relations are conducted and why they have changed or remain the same in terms of war, peace, alliances, trade, diplomacy, terrorism, and globalization.

Course Prerequisites: This is an upper-division course and should not be casually undertaken by students absent some background in foreign policy, international relations or comparative politics. To come to this course without such a foundation invites the prospect of difficulty - if not potential failure. How else can I put it? It is like taking geometry before taking (and passing) algebra and then expecting to do well – in geometry.

Course Procedures: Lectures will supplement required readings in the text. It is important to read the assigned readings prior to class. How many times have you heard this before? I’m not kidding. Read the assignment. Also, read the international or world section of a major newspaper like the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, the Wall Street Journal, or the Washington Times - regularly. Read the commentary and opinion (op-ed) editorials concerning international events in addition to the news stories. We will discuss current world events as they relate to the textbook assignments in every class. And then you will see some of the things we discuss in class and are not in the text – on the midterm and final exam. Our classes will be interactive. I will ask students questions about text assignments and major events covered in newspapers. Be prepared to participate. Participation can increase your final course grade.

Class Participation: Participation in class is encouraged and expected. Be prepared to participate as individuals and in group discussions. It is important to come to class. How many times have you heard this before? Again, I am not kidding. You will hear things in class and in the lecture that you will not read about in the text or in the newspapers. Much of what you hear will be incorporated into test questions that you will have difficulty answering - if you are not here in class to learn them. Participation accounts for 15% of your overall grade. Attendance will be taken on all on-line classes. On-line classes will occur each Monday night beginning at 7:20 PM and end around 10 PM. The on-line class will be on Black Board Collaborate. Come to, or rather be present for, the on-line classes.
Attendance and Lateness: Poor attendance affects a student’s ability to participate and take exams. If you miss class it can affect your grade on the midterm or final. Keep absences to a minimum. If you are not going to be here, I expect to be informed by email. If I am not going to be here, I or my Teaching Assistant will inform you by email or on BB or both. I expect the same courtesy in return. Try to be on-line and on time and ready to go at 7:20 PM Mondays. Your course grade will be higher if you attend the on-line sessions. It will for sure, be lower if you don’t.

Preparation: Students should be prepared for class, particularly an upper-division course that requires preparation to better understand the material discussed in class. However, sometimes “life” gets in the way of adequate preparation. If you are occasionally unprepared for class please bear in mind that I have a higher regard for the occasional unprepared student than for no student at all. Read your assignments and attend the weekly classes.

Examinations: There will be two examinations during the semester, a midterm and a final. The midterm will be worth 30% of your grade and the final will be worth 35% of your grade. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short answer questions. Any student that does not achieve a “C” or better on the midterm examination is asked to make an appointment with me to discuss his or her work and what can be done to improve it. Exams will be sent by email to students registered in the class on the day of the exam. More detailed instructions will follow by email and posted to BB.

Class paper/analysis: Students, as part of their final grade are required to complete a paper based on two of the authors studied in the textbook. For instance, you might choose from Huntington, Thucydides or Machiavelli as an example of authors we will discuss in class. However, we will discuss many authors in class. Regarding Huntington, Machiavelli, and Thucydides, you can only choose one of these three authors to be one of your two authors in your paper. In your paper give a brief overview of the thesis (position/main point) that each author espouses. Then show how the author's position relates to the current security environment faced by the nations of the world in the modern era (choose examples from the French Revolution through today, 1789-2020). For instance, Huntington suggests that post-Cold War conflict will be based on a "clash of civilizations." Was Huntington right or wrong and how so? Thucydides relates the story of the Melian Dialogue where the island state of Melos refuses to ally itself with Athens against Sparta. One modern example of this may be the case of Belgium when it chose to fight impossible-to-win wars against Germany - twice! Are there others? Sure, there are. What does Machiavelli suggest to his "prince" (likely Cesare Borgia)? Discuss one or two modern leaders who seem to have followed, or not followed, the advice of Machiavelli. For instance, do you think Barack Obama followed his advice? Do you think Donald Trump does? Make a case for the positions you take. Again, choose any two authors and use your imagination and as your analytical skills and knowledge of international political theory to do a great job. By the time you begin your paper all of this will look easier than it may look right now. And if it does not, well, maybe you should be working harder than you are in this course. I will discuss the paper requirement with you in more depth in the coming weeks. The paper will be worth 20% of your final grade. I want you to provide a short overview of the authors you choose and what you plan to do in your paper on 28 September. The paper is due on 9 November.
papers will be graded and returned within two weeks (23 November). I will give additional guidance on the paper in class.

**Required Reading:** The required text is *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, by Richard K. Betts. In addition to assigned readings, each student is expected to stay up to date in current world affairs by reading a major newspaper on a regular basis.

**Blackboard:** I was compelled to use BB for the first time last (Spring 20) term when we pivoted from face-to-face teaching to on-line instruction. Therefore, I will be using BB extensively this term. I will use it to communicate with you, to post notes on our classes, and to post assignments and any relevant information for the class. I will also teach on-line thru BB Collaborate Ultra. I will begin by posting the syllabus two or more weeks before the start of class. Consult BB regularly.

**Office Hours:** Generally, I will be available to speak with students and answer questions during class breaks and at the end of each class. The best way to communicate with me one-on-one is by email or phone. My phone number is posted at the top of the syllabus. For general questions, students should feel free to contact Ms. Samantha Moore (our TA) by email: smoore39@masonlive.gmu.edu

**Honor System:** America is a meritocracy. People should not cheat to get ahead at the expense of others. George Mason University students are subject to the school’s honor code. students must do their own work on written assignments and examinations. Students who elect to cheat on examinations or engage in plagiarism in their written work will earn themselves a failing grade. Read your GMU handbook and understand the policy and the ramifications. The midterm and final exams will be sent to all students on the appropriate test date. Students will have three days to complete the exams and get them back to be by regular mail. I will elaborate more on this during the on-line classes and on BB. Each student is required to sign a statement at the end of the exam before he or she mails it to me. This statement will affirm that the student has not shared the exam with anyone and that the student has deleted the exam from his email and from his computer and has no copy of the exam.

**Special Needs/Accommodation:** Students with such needs should make me aware of them. You can talk to me in person by phone or send me an Email.

**Grading:**

**Scale:**

A+ (98-100)  A (94-97)  B+ (86-89)  C+ (75-79)  D (60-69)  F (59 or less)

A- (90-94)  B (83-85)  C (70-74)

B- (80-82)  C- (69)
Recap of point weights assigned to each category:

1. Midterm Exam 30%
2. Final Exam 35%
3. Book Report/Analysis 20%
4. Class Participation 15%

Total: 100%

Lectures, Assignments, and Exams:

24 August: Orientation and introduction. Read the syllabus (posted on BB) prior to class.

31 August: We will discuss "visions of war and peace" as described by Francis Fukuyama, and John Mearsheimer. Assignment due: Textbook, pp.4-15, pp. 16-31 and appropriate news articles.

7 September: Labor Day Holiday. No class.


21 September: We will begin our examination of the theory of realism and how it relates to world order, anarchy and power. We will discuss Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and if we have time, Carr. Assignment due: Text, pp. 70-74, pp.75-79, pp. 80-83, and appropriate news articles.

28 September: Realism continued. Assignment due: Textbook, pp. 108-119, pp. 121-137 and appropriate news articles. For added insight we will discuss Realism as taught at the US Army Command & General Staff College. Note: The outline for your term paper is due today. Review for Midterm Exam.

5 October: Midterm Exam. The exam will be emailed to all students today. You have three days to complete the exam and postmark it back to me via USPS. Good luck.

12 October: Today used to be the Columbus Day holiday. Now it is “Fall Break.” There are no classes at GMU on 12 October. However, and you thought you were gonna get away with no class, all GMU “Monday classes” will meet on Tuesday, 13 October.

13 October: Class will meet on-line at 7:20 PM today, Tuesday, 13 October.

19 October: Idealism: We have already discussed "realism" as it pertains to international relations and security. Idealism approaches international security from a different, perspective in terms of how peace can be achieved as a result of a collective effort.

26 October: Culture: Customs, norms, and learning. The human mind and international conflict. The world is populated by people and run by a small minority of those people. People have flaws, prejudices, fears, desires, and a penchant for sometimes taking advantage of others. Many also have largely good qualities. (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, TR, Churchill and others). And often enough many of the good qualities prevail and become fixed in societies. And sometimes, maybe more often than not, they don't. And therefore some "bad" things become ingrained in all societies. Culture has a lot to do with how the world works or fails to work. Assignment due: Text, pp. 187-248 and news articles.


9 November: Deterrence. A handout will be provided as a study guide. Term Papers due.


23 November: Military Considerations: Should Obama have ordered the deaths of the Somali pirates? Should trump have killed Major General Soleimani? Do nuclear weapons keep the peace? Assignment due: pp. 384-430.

26-29 Nov: Thanksgiving Holiday. Maybe our best holiday! Happy Thanksgiving.

30 November: Revolution, unconventional warfare and terrorism. Text, pp. 462-474, pp. 510-525, 600. We will begin with Osama Bin Laden’s speech to the American people and move on from there. Review for Final.

14 December: Final Exam. Exam must be postmarked NLT 17 December.

Congratulations to graduating seniors. On behalf of Samantha and myself, thanks for being our students. For those of you who celebrate Christmas, Merry Christmas. For our students who are Jewish, Happy Chanukah. To our Moslem students, Ramadan will not be until April 2021. When it comes, Happy Ramadan. We wish every one of you a healthy, safe, and prosperous New Year.