International Politics

GOVT 540-003                        Prof. Ming Wan
Fall 2017                            Research 340
Tuesday: 7:20-10 pm                   Tel: 703-993-2955
West 1001                             Email: mwan@gmu.edu
                                      Office hours: T: 6:30-7:10 pm;
                                      R: 1:30-2:30 pm

Course Description:

This graduate course examines in depth international relations theory. It offers a survey of
major approaches to IR scholarship and examines some prevailing questions and
concepts. It groups assumptions, concepts and theories into distinct research programs.
Students will engage in extensive class discussions, conduct research and present research
findings in teams.

Learning objectives:

1. Students develop a critical view of international relations theories. At the end of the
class, students should be able to determine whether and how a theory is logically coherent
and whether and how a theory may be applicable empirically.

2. Students combine a critical view of IR theories with a sharper understanding of the
methodologies IR scholars in different approaches use and how research is actually
conducted.

3. Students become more comfortable and competent discussing IR issues theoretically in
public.

4. Students acquire the ability to recognize the assumptions, concepts, theories,
methodologies and facts in what they read and hear.

5. Students begin to construct their own research program with assumptions, concepts,
thories, methodologies and facts.

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short essays (3 x 4-5 double-spaced pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (discussions and attendance)</td>
<td>Weekly 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel Presentation (7 minutes)</td>
<td>Nov. 28 and Dec. 5 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper (20-25 double-spaced pages)</td>
<td>Due December 5 45%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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1. Short essays: Write three 4-5-page short essays summarizing and critiquing the
assumptions and one or two signature theories of realism, liberal institutionalism and
constructivism.
2. **Discussions**: Each weekly session starts with discussions. Discussion questions are distributed in advance. Students should sign up for questions to lead discussion of those questions in class. Performance is based on how many times students sign up (counting only one question per session) and how prepared they are for the questions. Theoretical thinking is valued. In addition, performance is based on participation in discussion of questions students have not signed up for.

3. **Panel presentation**: Students should sign up to be part of four panels (5-6 students each). I will ask for your top two picks and will try my best to accommodate your preferences. Members belonging to a panel should work as a team and strategize early on how to present at the end of the semester (each presenter responsible for one dimension of the issue, for example).

   Panels:

   1) The Brexit
   2) The North Korean Nuclear Crisis
   3) President Trump’s foreign policy
   4) US-China trade disputes

4. **Research paper**: Your research paper should answer a specific research question. Your research paper proposal, due on September 26, should have the following elements: a clear question, a hypothesis or what you think might be the answer to your question, and a preliminary literature review.

   You can use your research paper as the basis for your panel presentation if they are similar.

   You can use any citation system as long as it is consistent.

   **Late work policy**: Request for extension and incomplete has to be made in writing 24 hours before due time. Request will be granted by the instructor if there is a legitimate reason such as family emergency and illness.

**Required books:**

This course requires four books. There are additional readings that can be downloaded from GMU library database or will be put on e-reserve at the GMU library. Reading is due before class. I have suggested some additional important readings for each topic for your reference. You may read them now or in the future. Suggested readings do not have to be read before class.


Those who need to have a better understanding of International Relations and Political Science may want to read the following books.


**Reading Assignments**

**August 29: Introduction**


September 5: Realism: Assumptions and Power

Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Chapters 1, 5-6.


September 12: Realism: Structuralism


September 19: Realism: Wars


**September 26: Realism: Alliances**


**September 26:** First short essay due

**September 26:** Research paper proposal due

**October 3: Liberal Institutionalism: Assumptions and Preferences**


**October 10: Columbus Day. No Class**

**October 17: Liberal Institutionalism: Structuralism**


**October 24: Global Financial Crises**


October 24: Second short essay due

October 31: Constructivism: Assumptions and Theories

Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chapters 1, 3-4, 6.


November 7: Norms and Identities

Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, Chapter 7.


**Suggested readings**: Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (Simon & Schuster, 2006).


**November 7**: Third short essay due

**November 14: Rational Choice Theory**


**Suggested readings**: James D. Morrow, *Game Theory for Political Scientists* (Princeton University, 1994).


**November 21: Evolutionary Theory**


Kevin D. Lafferty, Katherine F. Smith, and Elizabeth M.P. Madin, “The Infectiousness of Terrorist Ideology: Insights from Ecology and Epidemiology,” in Raphael D. Sagarin and Terence Taylor, eds., *Natural*


**November 28: Panel Presentations**

**December 5: Panel Presentations**

**December 5: Research Paper Due**
HONOR CODE POLICY

The Honor Code policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs:
1. Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.
2. Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.