

INR 3603: THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Fall 2025

Prof. Zachary Selden

Classroom Matherly 16

zselden@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:40-1:00 Anderson 03

Course Description and Requirements

We will carefully consider seven books written by major scholars of international relations. All six scholars share the assumption that the varied interactions among states and nonstate actors in the global arena are vital elements of our world. But they differ greatly from each other in the conceptual perspectives that they employ to analyze world politics. The primary objective of the course is to develop an appreciation of the ways in which perspectives shape different understandings of "international relations."

The seven books vary from one another not only in theoretical perspective but also in analytical style. Some of the analyses consist primarily of abstract reasoning about global politics, while others are empirical in their orientation, ranging from textual analysis, through historical case studies, to statistical analysis. The secondary objective of the course is to familiarize you with some of the ways in which social scientists establish their claims to knowledge of their subject matter.

The seven required books are all available for purchase at the UF bookstore or through Amazon. The books are:

- Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*.
- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.
- Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*.
- Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*.

- Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*.
- Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, Conflict and War*.
- Daniel Drezner, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* (Apocalypse edition, 2022).

Grades will be based on (a) three take-home “thought pieces,” (b) class attendance and participation, and (c) three in-class quizzes.

Thought Pieces: Each one of these three take-home assignments will require you to write a 1000-1200 word essay, in which you will be challenged to demonstrate a firm grasp of theoretical perspectives covered in class. For example, I may ask you to interpret a recent international political event from the perspective of one (or more) of these theories. Or, to give another example, I may provide you with an official foreign policy statement issued by the U.S. government and ask you how one (or more) of the theorists we read would react to it.

The schedule for turning in the assignments is as follows:

Class attendance and participation: I expect you to attend class sessions regularly and to complete all the readings in timely fashion, as specified by the schedule below. Ten percent of the total grade for the class will be based on class attendance and participation. My criteria for evaluating attendance/ participation are as follows. You will earn 10 points if you attend class regularly and participate frequently in class discussions; 8–9 points if you attend class regularly and participate sporadically in class discussions; 6-7 points if you attend class regularly and (almost) never participate, or if you attend class and participate sporadically; 5 points or less if you attend class sporadically and never participate.

Quizzes: These will be very short multiple choice or short answer questions based on the recent reading material.

The final grade for the course will be distributed as follows:

- Thought piece #1 20% (hand out Sept. 12 due Sept. 17)
- Thought piece #2 25% (hand out Oct. 15 due Oct 24)
- Thought piece #3 30% (hand out Dec. 3 due Dec 9)
- Attendance/part. 10%
- Quizzes: 15%

For each assignment/exam, you will receive a numerical score, not a letter grade. Your final cumulative score will be translated into a letter grade according to the following schedule:

93.5+	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 -	F

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

Other policies: Individual extra-credit work is not allowed.

Deadline extensions may be granted under special circumstances, but you must request them prior to the deadline. Retroactive extensions will not be granted under any circumstances.

The class will not be recorded and you will not be able to access the lectures outside of normal class hours. There is no on-line option, this is an in person course.

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/). (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

Class/Reading Schedule

August 22	Course overview
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1. REALIST PERSPECTIVES

August 25	Waltz, pp. 1–15
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August 27	Waltz, 16–41
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August 29	Waltz, 42–79
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September 3	Waltz, 80–123
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September 5	Waltz, 124–158
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September 8	Waltz, 159–186
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September 10	Waltz, 187–238
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September 12	Wrap-up of Waltz (thought piece 1 handed out)
September 15	Mearsheimer, 1–67
September 17	Mearsheimer, 75–90, 96–137 (thought piece 1 due)
September 19	Mearsheimer, 138–162, 168–172, 181–202, 224–233
September 22	Mearsheimer, 234–261, 264–272, 288–304, 322–333
September 24	Mearsheimer, 334–402
September 26	Wrap up

1. A LIBERAL-INSTITUTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

September 29	Keohane, 5–30
October 1	Keohane, 31–64
October 3	Keohane, 65–84

October 6	Keohane, 85–109
October 8	Keohane, 110–134
October 10	Keohane, 135–181
October 13	Keohane, 182–242
October 15	Keohane, 243–259 (thought piece 2 handed out)

1. A LIBERAL-WILSONIAN PERSPECTIVE

October 20	Russett, 3–42
October 22	Russett, 43–71
October 24	Russett, 72–98 (thought piece 2 due)
October 27	Russett, 99–118
October 29	Russett, 119–138
October 31	Wrap up

1. A CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

November 3	Finnemore, 1–33
November 6	Finnemore, 34–68
November 8	Finnemore, 69–88
November 10	Finnemore, 89–127
November 12	Finnemore, 128–149

1. A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

November 14	Sjoberg, 1-22
November 17	Sjoberg, 23-53
November 19	Sjoberg, 54-84
November 21	Sjoberg, 85-120

VI: HOW BEING A STUDENT OF I.R. CAN SAVE YOU FROM ZOMBIES

December 1 Drezner, 31-71

December 3 Drezner, 81-110 (Thought piece 3 handed out)

December 9 Thought piece 3 due