

INR 3603: THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Spring 2025, MWF 1:55 PM - 2:45 PM

@ MCCA 1142 (Matherly Hall)

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Office hours: TBD (will be decided first day to see what days/times work for everyone!)

*Or by appointment

Course Description and Required Texts

What are theories of International Relations? What, and to whom, do they address? In what historical contexts did they arise? In this course, we will carefully read six books written by major scholars of international relations, each who share the assumption that the varied interactions among states and nonstate actors in the global arena are vital elements of the world system. But they differ from each other in the conceptual perspectives they use to analyze global politics, such as the meanings and practices of “power,” “security,” and “cooperation.”

The primary objective of this course is to appreciate the ways in which the variety of perspectives we will read and discuss shape different understandings of “international relations,” and their implications for studying global politics today. The six books and scholars vary from one another not only in theoretical perspective, but also in their analytical lenses. Some of the analyses consist primarily of abstract reasoning about global politics, while others are empirical in their orientation, ranging from archival and textual analysis, through historical case studies– to feminist and critical analyses applied to both abstract and empirical reasoning. The secondary objective of the course is to familiarize yourself with some of the ways in which social scientists establish their claims to knowledge of their subject matter. Finally, a third objective is to reflect on the particular historical contexts and dynamics of global politics within which these scholars wrote, and to consider the ways in which their theories are still applicable today.

Please purchase the following required books:

- Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*. [Any edition is fine]
- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. [Updated edition, published in 2014]

- Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. [Any edition is fine]
- Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*.
- Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*.
- J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*.

Please let me know if you need any assistance accessing these books. An e-book version of Waltz's book is accessible via the UF Libraries portal online (to access the libraries remotely, make sure to activate your VPN). Copies of the other five books are available to check out at UF Library West.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on (a) two "thought pieces;" (b) three short "reaction pieces;" and (c) class attendance.

Thought Pieces: 4-6 page (double spaced) take-home essay assignment (2 total essays). For each essay assignment, you will be challenged to demonstrate a firm grasp of the 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, I may provide you with an official policy statement such as from NATO Heads of State and Government and ask you how one (or more) of the theorists we read would react to it. The first thought piece assignment will be posted on Canvas on **March 3 at 12pm and will be due on March 14 at 12 pm**. The second assignment will be posted on **April 21 at 12 pm, and will be due on May 1 at 5 pm**. These dates are indicated in red font on the class weekly schedule below. Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 3 points (that is, 3 percent of the maximum total score for the class) per 24 hours.

Short Reaction Pieces: Three times during the semester you will be required to respond briefly to a prompt and/or short article /video interview related to the reading materials assigned that week. The reaction pieces should be 2-3 pages each (double spaced). The prompts and additional resources needed will typically be posted on Canvas before class at 12 pm, and the assignment will be due four to five days later at 12 pm. The relevant dates are indicated in red font on the course schedule. Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 0.5 points per 24 hours.

Class attendance: Class attendance is of utmost importance. 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 (ten points) of the total grade for the class will be based on attendance. I will randomly take attendance ten times during the semester.

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

- Thought piece #1 20% (20 points)
- Thought piece #2 25% (25 points)
- 3 Reaction pieces 45% (45 points/15 points each)
- Attendance 10% (10 points)

For each assignment 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 points or higher = A; 90–92.9 = A-; 87–89.9 = B+; 83–86.9 = B; 80–82.9 = B-; 77–79.9 = C+; 73–76.9 = C; 70–72.9 = C-; 67–69.9 = D+; 63–66.9 = D; 60–62.9 = D-; <60 = E.

Other Matters/Policies

Individual extra-credit work is not allowed.

Deadline extensions may be granted under special circumstances; if you anticipate such circumstances, please do not hesitate to ask for an extension. But you must do so prior to the deadline; retroactive extensions will not be granted.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies posted at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. More information about in-class recording is available at <http://aa.ufl.edu/policies/in-class-recording/>

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Class/Reading Schedule

January 13 Introduction and Course overview

I. REALIST PERSPECTIVES

January 15 Waltz, chaps. 1—2 (pp. 1–41)

January 17 Waltz, chaps. 3 (pp. 42–79)

January 20 No Class (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

January 22 Waltz, chapter 4 (80–123)
Reaction piece #1 posted on Canvas at 12 pm

January 24 Waltz, chapter 5 (124–158)

January 27 Waltz, chapter 6 (159–186)

January 29 Waltz, chapter 7 (187–223)
Reaction piece #1 due at 12 pm

January 31 Waltz, chapter 8 (223–238)
In Class: *Conversations with History: Kenneth Waltz*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9eV5gPIZg>

February 3 Mearsheimer, prefaces & chapter 1 'Introduction'

Jane Rosenzweig, "The Whistle-Blower Knows How to Write," New York Times, Sept. 27, 2019, at
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/opinion/whistleblower-complaint.html>

February 5 Mearsheimer, chapter 2 'Anarchy and the Struggle for Power'

February 7 Mearsheimer, chapter 3 'Wealth and Power'

February 10 Mearsheimer, chapter 4 'The Primacy of Land Power'

February 12 Mearsheimer, chapter 5 'Strategies for Survival'

Reaction piece #2 posted on Canvas at 12 pm

- February 14 Mearsheimer, chapter 7 'The Offshore Balancers'
- February 17 Mearsheimer, chapter 8 'Balancing versus Buck-Passing'
- February 19 Mearsheimer, chapter 9 'The Causes of Great Power War'
"Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer"
<https://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/31Interview%20with%20John%20J.%20Mearsheimer.pdf>
Reaction piece #2 due on Canvas at 12 pm

- February 21 Keohane, Preface & chaps. 1-2 (pp. 5-30)

II. A LIBERAL-INSTITUTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

- February 24 Keohane, chapters 3-4 (pp. 31-64)
- February 26 Keohane, chapter 5 (pp. 65-84)
- February 28 Keohane, chapter 6 (pp. 85-109)
- March 3 Keohane, chapter 7 (pp. 110-134)
Thought piece assignment #1 posted on Canvas at 12 pm
- March 5 NO CLASS (ISA 2025 Annual Conference – Chicago)
Reading assignment: Keohane, chapter 8 (135-181)
- March 7 NO CLASS (ISA 2025 Annual Conference – Chicago)
Reading assignment: Keohane, chapter 9 (182-216)
- March 10 Keohane, chapters 10-11 (217-259)
Reflecting on Keohane and a Liberal Perspective:
"Discord in Global Politics: An Interview with Professor Robert Keohane"
<https://harvardpolitics.com/interview-with-professor-robert-keohane/>

III. A CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

- March 12 Finnemore, chapter 1 (1-33)

March 14	Finnemore, chapter 2 (34–68) Thought piece assignment #1 due on Canvas at 12 pm
March 17	NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK!)
March 19	NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK!)
March 21	NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK!)
March 24	Finnemore, chapter 3 (69–88)
March 26	Finnemore, chapter 4 (89–127)

IV. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES OF GLOBAL POLITICS

March 28	Finnemore, chapter 5 (128–149)
March 31	Tickner, Preface- chap. 1 (ix – 26)
April 2	Tickner, chap. 2 (27 – 66)
April 4	Tickner, chap. 3 (67 – 96)
April 7	Tickner, chap. 4—5 (97 – 144) Reaction piece #3 posted on Canvas at 12 pm In Class: “J. Ann Tickner on how gender impacts politics & international relations,” <i>Academic Influence</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUmt90ZXQ-A

V. A CRITICAL-REFLEXIVE PERSPECTIVE: COLOR LINES AND INTERSECTIONS IN IR

April 9	Vitalis, Preface and Introduction (i–24)
April 11	Vitalis, chaps. 1—2 (25–54)
April 14	Vitalis, chaps. 3—4 (55–84) Reaction piece #3 due at 12 pm
April 16	Vitalis, chaps. 5—6 (85–120)
April 18	Vitalis, chaps. 7—8 (121–157)

April 21 Vitalis, chapter 9 – Conclusion (157–181)
Thought piece assignment #2 posted on Canvas at 12 pm

April 23 Wrapping up the semester

May 1 Thought piece assignment #2 due on Canvas at 12 pm
