

INR 2002 International Politics

Spring 2006, MWF, 8:00-9:00 a.m., 51/152

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Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and (most) Fridays, 12:00-5:00 p.m.

(It is best if you make an appointment ahead of time by calling 474-2337.)

Most of the earth's surface is divided into political entities, called states, composed of a certain extent of populated territory and a government which attempts, with various degrees of success, to regulate or control what happens inside their domain. States recognize each other as having sovereignty. Sovereignty means that no state is subordinate to a higher authority. In practice this means that states are controlled by whatever government happens to exercise power at any given time, be it a democracy or a dictatorship.

Sovereignty means that, politically speaking, the globe is in anarchy, i.e., lacking an overarching authority or government. The only constraints on any single state's behavior are international law (a set of rules embodied in written agreements or treaties) and widely (though far from unanimously) shared principles of humanity. The enforcement of such principles on non-complying states, however, depends on some other state or alliance of states being willing to use military force to hold the miscreant accountable. For example, the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a violation of international law. It took a coalition of nations under the leadership of the United States and sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council to expel Iraq's armies from Kuwait the following year, enabling the latter to recover its sovereignty.

Though in anarchy, most states are at peace with their neighbors most of the time. They may have disputes in which one or the other or both threaten to use force or may even use it in a limited way, but most of the time these conflicts are settled without war. Occasionally, though, conflicts do escalate, sometimes to truly frightful levels. In the 20th century alone, wars directly or indirectly caused untold destruction and the premature death of tens of millions of people. Peace, on the other hand, makes possible economic growth and the progress of civilization. If we could understand the causes of war and what it takes to preserve peace, then, based on this knowledge, presumably we could take action that would make war less likely and peace more so. Like the physician who uses the findings of medical research, itself rooted in biology and chemistry, to help his patient combat disease and lead healthier lives, it would be ideal if we could apply whatever knowledge we acquire about war and peace for the benefit of humanity.

In this course, we will ask questions such as, What factors are associated with peaceful as well as warlike relations among states? Under what conditions do governments decide to go to war? Under what conditions are the deadliest wars fought? What accounts for the very long periods of peace between wars? Is there anything that can be done to promote peace or is war, like death and taxes, something that is inevitable?

In seeking answers to these questions, we will look to **theory, history, and contemporary observations** about international relations. A theory is a coherent explanation, founded on reasonable or plausible premises, of what directly or indirectly we are able to observe about the world. That is, at least in principle, a theory has to be testable against facts, subject to verification or refutation by observations culled from history or contemporary events

There are several competing theories of international relations, each supported by a body of evidence. We will call them “paradigms.” In this course, we will focus on the two principal paradigms of international relations. They go by the name of realism and liberalism (or institutionalism). Actually, I prefer Hobbesian and Kantian, respectively, after the names of philosophers identified with them. Thomas Hobbes was a 17th century English philosopher. In *The Leviathan*, he painted a grim picture of what he called the “state of nature,” or the anarchical condition in which man lived before the establishment of government. He described natural anarchy as a state of war of “every man against every man,” in which the life of man, bogged down in a constant struggle for power and security, was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Noting that there is no authority above the sovereign state, and ultimately no guarantee of any state’s security save its own power or that of its allies, Hobbesians view international relations in ways that are parallel to those of human beings in the state of nature. It is all about power. According to this view, only a balance of power preserves peace among states. In this course, the Hobbesian view is represented by Professor John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, author of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*

Immanuel Kant, considered one of the greatest philosophers of the modern era, lived in 18th century Prussia (which went on, through conquest and war, to unify Germany). In his essay on “Perpetual Peace,” Kant envisioned that a combination of republican government (roughly equivalent to what today we call democracy), international trade, and international organizations would do away or reduce drastically the incidence of war between nations. In this vision, international politics need not be a perennial state of war. Cooperation and trade carried out according to principles of law and justice, and International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) composed of democratically governed states, possibly leading up to a world-wide federation, constitute a formula for international peace. Although not neglecting the role of power in international relations, in the Kantian paradigm the only durable peace is a peace founded on agreement. Representing the Kantian view in this course is Professor Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins University, author of *The Ideas that Conquered the World. Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century*.

The principal learning outcomes anticipated from this course are the following:

- (1) At the end of the course students should have a good understanding of
 - (a) the elements that make up possible answers to the questions about war and peace posed by Hobbesians and Kantians alike;
 - (b) the evidence which each side marshals on behalf of its position;

(c) the general thrust of policy prescriptions the United States government may be able to deduce from each model in the making of American foreign policy.

(2) In the process of attaining this understanding, students will acquire or sharpen reading, research, analytical, and communication skills.

Requirements. There will be two exams. The exams will be "objective," a list of multiple-choice and true-or-false questions, administered on-line.

A take-home written assignment constitutes a third factor. This consists in one essay of 5-6 pages (typewritten, double-spaced, in Times New Roman #12 or equivalent font), exclusive of title page, tables or figures, and references, on one of the texts. Half of the class will write an essay on one of the texts and the other half on the other text. If your last name begins with any letter between A and I, you will be responsible for writing an essay on Mearsheimer's book. If your name starts with any letter between J and Z, you will do an essay on Mandelbaum's book. The due dates for these essays are specified in the reading schedule. A format for the essay will be posted on the e-learning page in due course. Suffice it to say here that the essay will summarize and evaluate one or more reviews of the specified text.

The final element of the course consists of class preparation and contribution, or P&C for short, to be described presently. All components are weighted equally, at 25% of the final course grade each. There may be opportunities to earn extra points to make up for shortfalls in the exams. Whether you take advantage of these opportunities is, of course, entirely up to you.

As to the P&C portion of the course, *you are expected to attend class and to have read the assignment, bringing a one-page summary done in your own words on one typewritten page or its equivalent in long hand, and being ready to read it aloud when called upon by the instructor. Also counting under P&C are e-learning assignments.* Start your summary with a dense sentence that lays out the theme developed in the chapter. Don't leave any doubt in the reader's mind as to what this chapter is all about. Then, in the rest of the page, expand on that sentence, giving the details of the argument and evidence presented in the assignment. (For what, exactly, it is that you should summarize of an essay, a book chapter, or a book review, [see](#) "Tips for Studying" on the UWF Department of Government website.) If you are absent, this will be recorded. If you are called upon to answer a question or read your summary and it turns out that you are unprepared, this will also be recorded, although this fact will count less against you in the final grade than if you simply fail to show up for class. (In other words, absences are penalized more than showing up unprepared.) If, on the other hand, you are always prepared when I call on you and volunteer answers to questions or pose interesting questions or make comments relevant to the reading or lecture, and post quality comments on the e-learning page (when requested), you will not only get an excellent grade in P&C but, additionally, will get help from me, if needed, in the final grade, which could make the difference between say, a C+ and a B- or a B+ and an A-. Thus, in effect, class participation will be weighted a little more the higher its quality. If you miss either three class sessions in a row or six in total, this will call into question your commitment to the course and the instructor will suggest that you consider

withdrawing before it is too late. You will get no help from me when the final grade is computed.

Texts. As previously noted, the texts for the course are Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* and Mandelbaum, *The Ideas that Conquered the World. Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century*. Both are available for purchase in the bookstore. Additional readings are posted on the e-learning page. A first draft of the reading schedule through the first segment of the course is shown below. I reserve the right to revise the syllabus with proper notice. It is up to you to be alert for any revisions to the syllabus announced in class or posted on the e-learning page.

It goes without saying, but it bears repeating anyway, that anyone enrolled in this course makes a commitment to act with integrity. As the home page of the Department of Government puts it, this means "conducting ourselves honorably, conspicuously refraining from lying or cheating about our work. There can be no phony excuses for failing to complete an assignment, no turning in another's work as one's own, no plagiarism."

Regarding the last-named offense, here is UWF's plagiarism policy: "The UWF Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct, states: 'Plagiarism. The act of representing the ideas, words, creations or work of another as one's own.' Plagiarism combines theft with fraud, and the penalty is correspondingly severe: failure for the assignment and, in some cases, for the entire course. At the instructor's discretion, she/he may recommend that the student be suspended from the university. Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas." (For additional information on plagiarism, go the UWF's home page, click on keyword search, and enter "plagiarism policy" (in quotation marks), which allows you to download a word document several pages long.) Plagiarism will be penalized with an "F" for the course.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

(The schedule, shown through February 15th only,
is subject to revision at instructor's discretion.)

Monday, January 9th

Introduction to the course.

Wednesday, January 11th

Mearsheimer, "Preface."

Realists vs. Idealists or Hobbesians vs. Kantians. Four items included in the ARTICLES OF INTEREST module on the course e-learning page.

Friday, January 13th

Mearsheimer, Chapter One, "Introduction"

Monday, January 16th

Martin Luther King Day. NO CLASS.

Wednesday, January 18th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Two, "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power"

Friday, January 20th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Three, "Wealth and Power."

Monday, January 23rd

Mearsheimer, Chapter Four, "The Primacy of Land Power," pp. 83-110.

Wednesday, January 25th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Four, "The Primacy of Land Power," pp. 110-end.

Friday, January 27th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Five, "Strategies for Survival."

Monday, January 30th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Six, "Great Powers in Action," pp. 168-202.

Wednesday, February 1st

Mearsheimer, Chapter Six, "Great Powers in Action," pp. 202-end of chapter.

Friday, February 3rd

Mearsheimer, Chapter Seven, "The Offshore Balancers."

Monday, February 6th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Eight, "Balancing vs. Buck-Passing," pp. 267-304

Wednesday, February 8th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Eight, "Balancing vs. Buck-Passing," pp.305-end of chapter.

Friday, February 10th

Mearsheimer, Chapter Nine, "The Causes of Great Power War."

Monday, February 13th

Mearsheimer, Chapter 10, "Great Power Politics in the Twenty-First Century."

Wednesday, February 15th-Wednesday, February 22nd

NO CLASS. Read reviews of John Mearsheimer's book (TBA) and prepare for the exam.

Everyone is assigned to read the reviews, questions about which will appear in the exam. But as noted earlier, if your name begins with any letter between A and I, you will turn in an essay that summarizes and evaluates one or more of these reviews (this will be specified in due course). The essay is due in the drop box no later than noon on Wednesday, February 22nd. No late essays will be accepted.

Friday, February 24th

EXAM I, administered on line between 7:55 and 8:55 a.m. You will have no more than 40-50 minutes to take the exam, depending on how many questions are asked.