

## **Theories of International Relations**

IR B6100

Fall 2023

Tuesday 4:50-6:50

NAC 4/126

Nicholas Rush Smith  
nsmith3@ccny.cuny.edu  
773-829-5789

Office Hours

Tuesday 3:30-4:30

NAC 4/143B

Other times by appointment

This course provides an overview of prominent theories of international politics, with a particular focus on explanations for the growth and decline of states. In doing so, this course provides students with analytical tools through which to understand world politics broadly understood. It does so by introducing students to twelve different perspectives on world politics. In other words, it begins by introducing students to different ways of seeing and, therefore, analyzing international affairs. This course assumes that there is no such thing as a neutral analytical perspective and this course enables students to see the benefits and costs of different theoretical schools of international politics by placing them in conversation with one another.

**Learning Outcomes:** The primary goals of this course are for students to be able to assess the benefits and costs of different theories of world politics and to be able to read and critically evaluate academic and journalistic work on contemporary international politics.

**Course Assignments and Evaluation:** The goal of the course is to improve students' abilities to understand the internal logic of different perspectives on world politics, understand how those perspectives shape research findings, and be able to critique work from this perspectival view. As such, the assignments are directed at improving these skills.

### **Take-Home Exam Papers:**

Students will write three take home exam papers consisting of five pages of writing each. Detailed instructions about the exams will follow. In brief, though, students will be provided with an article that examines an important issue in world politics from one or more of the perspectives taught in each section. Students will be expected to argue which perspective the author of the given article takes and how the student came to that conclusion, providing evidence from both the class readings and the exam text.

Exam 1 Due Date: October 17

Exam 2 Due Date: November 14

Exam 3 Due Date: December 12

### **In-class Participation:**

The course is designed as a seminar, hence active, thoughtful, and respectful participation on the part of students is crucial to the success of the class. Students are expected to arrive to class each session having read and thought about the assignments and prepared to discuss them.

**Grading:**

Each paper will count for 30% of the final grade and participation will count for 10% of the final grade.

**Books to Purchase:**

Max Weber. 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Stephen Kalberg. New York: Oxford University Press.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert Tucker (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.

**Accessibility & Campus Resources:** At City College, we strive to make all our classes accessible to every student, regardless of any disability (visible or non-visible; physical, cognitive, emotional, or learning) or any other special circumstances (such as a medical, personal, or housing emergency; family responsibilities; financial difficulties; legal difficulties; or immigration status) that may affect your ability to attend class and complete the coursework. Please speak to me (and your other professors) in office hours or via email early in the semester or as soon as you're aware that you may need accommodations, so that we can work together to make sure that you receive the support you need.

City College offers resources to students in a wide range of circumstances. We want all students to succeed and to take advantage of all the support the college has to offer.

Please let your other professors know if you have registered with the AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services (AAC/SDS) or have any **special needs, learning differences, or medical conditions** that may affect your coursework so that we can make the appropriate accommodations. If you believe you may need an accommodation, please do get in touch with the AAC/SDS. You can reach the AccessAbility office via email ([disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu)) or through their Zoom virtual front desk (<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/116151245>).

If you need a **computer, tablet, or wi-fi**, you can request them through an online form ([https://portal.ccny.cuny.edu/depts/oit/cuny\\_loaner/login.php](https://portal.ccny.cuny.edu/depts/oit/cuny_loaner/login.php)). You can also contact the iMedia Center via email ([imedia@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:imedia@ccny.cuny.edu)) or via their Zoom virtual front desk, Monday-Thursday, 11am-3pm (<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/2126505480>).

If you have any questions or concerns about your **immigration status** or that of your family members, please consult the CCNY Immigration Center for free and confidential advice via phone (212-650-6620) or email ([meetu.dhar@ccny.edu](mailto:meetu.dhar@ccny.edu)).

If, for any reason, you are struggling with **personal issues, anxiety, depression, or stress**, there are a number of resources on campus.

The Student Counseling Center in the Health and Wellness Center provides remote counseling that is free and confidential to students. You can contact them via phone (212-650-8222), email ([counseling@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:counseling@ccny.cuny.edu)), or their Zoom virtual front desk, Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm (<http://ccny.zoom.us/j/2126508222>). They also have links to a number of resources on their website (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/counseling>).

The Colin Powell School offers free, confidential peer mentoring with trained graduate students on issues of stress management and self-care. To sign up, simply send an email ([peernavigationccny@gmail.com](mailto:peernavigationccny@gmail.com)) or sign up online (<https://calendly.com/peernavigation/calendar?month=2020-10>).

If you are dealing with **food insecurity**, please visit Benny's Food Pantry in the Hoffman Lounge on the first floor of the NAC. The pantry is open even during the pandemic. To gain access on weekdays, just make an appointment online (<https://calendly.com/bennysfoodpantry/benny-s-food-pantry-appointment-system?month=2021-08>).

If you are facing an **emergency shortage of funds**, please email Ms. Charlene Darbassie ([cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu)) or Dean Andy Rich ([arich@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:arich@ccny.cuny.edu)) in the Colin Powell School Dean's Office. They will tell you how to apply for an emergency grant. Applying is quick and easy.

If you are experiencing or have experienced **domestic violence or violence that is sex-based, gender-based, or sexuality-based**; or if you are experiencing or have experienced **discrimination because of gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, or other reasons**, please report it to Diana Cuzzo in the Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance, and Diversity via email ([dcuzzo@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:dcuzzo@ccny.cuny.edu)) or phone (212-650-7330). For a confidential discussion of these and related issues, please contact Sophie English via email ([senglish@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:senglish@ccny.cuny.edu)) or phone (212-650-8905).

If you are struggling in any of your classes, don't hesitate to get extra **academic support**. Just make an appointment with the Academic Resource Center ([www.ccny.cuny.edu/sssp/tutoring-arc](http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sssp/tutoring-arc)) or email Charlene Darbassie ([cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu)) in the Colin Powell School office of Academic Support Services.

The CCNY Writing Center ([www.ccny.cuny.edu/writing](http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/writing)) offers individualized **writing support** to all students.

To receive information and support about securing **internships** and planning for your **post-college career**, please contact Debbie Cheng ([dcheng@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:dcheng@ccny.cuny.edu)) and Ashif

Hassan ([ahassan@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:ahassan@ccny.cuny.edu)) in the Colin Powell School Dean's Office. Also, take a look at the new Career Handbook that their office has created to help you start thinking about career and professional development (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/colinpowellschool/career-and-professional-development>).

## Course Outline

### Week 1 Introduction (August 29)

No Reading

## SECTION 1: INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Week 2 Historical Narrative (September 5)

Leopold von Ranke. 1973. "On the Character of Historical Science." In *The Theory and Practice of History*. Georg G. Iggers and Konrad von Moltke, Eds. Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

Leopold von Ranke. 1973. "Preface to the Histories of the Latin and Germanic Nations." In *The Theory and Practice of History*. Georg G. Iggers and Konrad von Moltke, Eds. Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

Case: Christopher Clark. 2012. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. New York: Harper Perennial: Introduction, Chapter 7.

### Week 3 Rational Choice (September 12)

Adam Smith. 1776. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Strahan and Cadell: Chapters 1-3.

Mancur Olson. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1-3, 16-22, 33-36, 48-52.

Elinor Ostrom. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 2 [Part].

Case: Mancur Olson. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87 (3): 567-576.

### Week 4 Liberalism (September 19)

John Locke. 1980. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett: Chapters 2 and 5.

Immanuel Kant. 2006. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Amartya Sen, 1999. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3): 3-17.

Case: Jennifer M. Walsh. 2016. "The Responsibility to Protect after Libya and Syria." *Daedalus* 145 (4): 75-87.

### **Week 5 NO CLASS (September 26)**

CUNY Cancellation

### **Week 6 Anarchism (October 3)**

Mikhail Bakunin. 1873. "Statism and Anarchy." In *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*. New York: Vintage.

Anne Norton. 2023. *Wild Democracy: Anarchy, Courage, and Ruling the Law*. New York: Oxford University Press: Chapter 10.

James Scott. 2012. *Two Cheers for Anarchism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 3.

Case: James Scott. 2010. *The Art of Not Being Governed*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 5.

### **Week 7 Analysis Session (October 10)**

David Graeber. 2007. *Debt: The First 5000 Years*. London: Melville House Publishing: Chapter 7.

Anne-Marie Slaughter. 1997. "The Real New World Order." *Foreign Affairs* 76 (5): 183-197.

## **SECTION II: SYSTEM-LEVEL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **Week 8 Realism (October 17)**

#### **EXAM 1 DUE**

Thomas Hobbes. 1991. *Leviathan*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 13.

John J. Meirsheimer. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company: Chapter 2.

Stephen M. Walt. 1985. "Alliance Formation and the Balance of Power." *International Security* 9 (4): 3-43.

Case: Rajan Menon. 2016. *Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*. New York: Oxford University Press: Chapter 2.

### **Week 9 Modernization (October 24)**

Max Weber. 2003. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Stephen Kalberg. New York: Oxford University Press: 67-182.

Case: Eiko Ikegami. 2003. "Shame and the Samurai: Institutions, Trustworthiness, and Autonomy in the Elite Honor Culture." *Social Research* 70 (4): 1351-1378.

### **Week 10 Historical Materialism (October 31)**

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert Tucker (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton: 12-15, 70-105, 143-145, 146-175, 189-193, 203-217.

Case: William Sewell Jr. 2010. "The Emergence of Fashion and the Rise of Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France." *Past and Present* 206: 81-120.

### **Week 11 Historical Institutionalism (November 7)**

Niccolo Machiavelli. 1985. *The Prince*. Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapter 25.

Kathleen Thelen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 369-404.

Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (4): 725-740.

Case: Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon. 2009. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." Working Paper 14783. National Bureau of Economic Research.

## **SECTION 3: CULTURAL AND IDEATIONAL APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **Week 12 Hermeneutics (November 14)**

Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books: 3-30.

Lynn Hunt. 2008. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.: Chapter 1.

Case: Jason De León. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press: Chapter 1.

**DUE: EXAM 2**

### **Week 13 Constructivism (November 21)**

Michel Foucault. 1977. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. D.F. Bouchard, Ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Alexander Wendt. 1992. "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46 (2): 391-425.

Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore. 1999. "The Power, Politics, and Pathologies of International Organizations." *International Organization* 53 (4): 699-732.

Case: Severine Autesserre. 2012. "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences." *African Affairs* 111 (443): 202-222.

### **Week 15 Feminism (November 28)**

Martha Nussbaum. 2000. "Women's Capabilities and Social Justice." *The Journal of Human Development* 1 (2): New York: Cambridge University Press: 219-247.

Judith Butler. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge: 1-34.

Combahee River Collective. 1977. *The Combahee River Collective Statement*.

Case: Jakana L. Thomas and Kanisha D. Bond. 2015. "Women's Participation in Violent Political Organizations." *American Political Science Review* 109 (3): 488-506.

### **Week 16 Post-Colonial Theory (December 5)**

Aimé Césaire. 2001. *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press: Selections.

Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books: Introduction.

Dipesh Chakrabarty. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: Chapter 1.

Case: Adom Getachew. 2019. *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: Chapter 5.

**DUE DECEMBER 12: EXAM 3**