

International Relations (POL 12D)

Summer II 2019 T Th 11-2

John Porten

john.porten@gmail.com

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the study of international relations. International relations is a sub-field in the study of politics that focuses mostly on outcomes that arise from the legal relationships states make between themselves.

The field of international relations further breaks down between studies focused on security outcomes and studies focused on economic and, increasingly, social outcomes. This class will focus primarily on security outcomes, with major units on international conflict (in which we explore the determinants of international war and peace) and civil conflict (in which we briefly explore questions related to war and peace within countries). In the final week, we consider when and whether states cooperate on issues of trade, human rights, and the environment.

Why study international relations? Relatively few of you will end up working for the Council on Foreign Relations, after all.

Because international relations focuses so squarely on, well, the relationships between nations, it allows a keen focus on a crucial question: what explains the variation in the level of cooperation in a world without laws or police. Focusing on this question affords three major opportunities for students of politics, and to well-rounded professionals generally.

The first encourages you to consider the observable implications of scientific theories about behavior. Say that you suspect a certain rule change will alter behavior in a certain way. How can you test to be sure?

The second encourages you to consider how theories of behavior are generated. International relations theories often simplify the world by making assumptions about which actors control outcomes in the international arena and what those actors want. Change the assumptions and you change the theory. Notice that you then have two theories to test!

Finally, employing these two skills encourages students of international relations to think creatively about how to create cooperation in places where it is lacking by thinking critically about how parties behave to achieve their interests. What rules or incentives can you change to align the interests you'd like? Dedicated students may even test their intuitions scientifically by measuring the amount of cooperation before and after they implement their clever plan.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be on your way to understanding:

- 1) How to consider social behavior as a game in which players change the strategy they follow to meet their goals to adjust to rule changes.
- 2) How to identify and question the assumptions implicit in theories of social behavior.
- 3) How to evaluate theories that explain variation in cooperation between states, and how to apply that method of evaluation to other theories
- 4) The circumstances under which state actors maintain peaceable relations or cooperate on achieving desirable economic and social outcomes.

Assessment and Grades

Due to the size of the class and the shortened summer quarter, the course grade will be comprised entirely of a midterm exam (40%) and a final exam (50%). Each exam will consist of a number of short essays that ask you to define and contextualize key terms, or to discuss a drug cartel's best strategy under certain rules. They will be posted to TED for the time listed below. you may log in at any time during that range to take the exam.

What's that? $40 + 50 = 90$? The remaining 10% will come from whichever exam score is higher. If your midterm is higher the exams will be weighted 50/50, if the final is higher, they will be weighted 40/60.

Course Policies

Academic Dishonesty.

Don't cheat. Especially: don't plagiarize. Following UCSD's Academic Honesty guidelines, plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course. Plagiarism is completely unnecessary, by the way. It is very possible to demonstrate an A level understanding of course material while citing every single sentence on all your exams.

Harassment

Harassment is absolutely not tolerated. Anyone who makes another student in class feel intimidated or unwelcome will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by Mesa's code of conduct.

Late Work

Exams are offered on-line and the exam link will stay open for three days. Given this flexibility, I expect you to finish the exams by the deadline. Barring a catastrophic, multi-day emergency, I will not consider late work.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities in the course.

Required Texts

All readings listed below are posted to the course dropbox, a link to which is available in the Announcements section of the course TED site. Any supplemental readings will be emailed or distributed in class.

Schedule of the Class and Reading Assignments

Unit 1: Method and Assumptions in International Relations

August 6: Method and Assumptions in International Relations

Readings

Drezner, D. (2015). *Theories of International Politics ... and Zombies*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11.

Discussion Questions

How do social scientists attempt to measure changes in variables of interest? By what logic can they hope to prove causation? What are the problems with applying these standards to trans-national crime?

What are the things people are hoping to maximize when they make decisions? Realism, political economy, and political sociology all make different assumptions about what motivates people. What does each school emphasize? What are institutions and how do they mold the choices individuals make? What are systems and how do they constrain the actions that individuals make?

August 8: Power Transitions and Paranoid States

Readings

Stoessinger, J. (2007). *Why Nations Go to War*. Walworth Publishing. Chapter 1.

Organski, A. (1968). "The Power Transition", in *World Politics*, 2nd ed., 338-376.

Gilpin, R. (1981). *War and Change in World Politics*. Chapters 1 and 3.

Discussion Questions

Who makes the decision to go to war in Stoessinger's view? Is there an agent with a choice in Organski or Gilpin's reading? How similar are Organski and Gilpin's assumptions? What are the differences in their theories, and how might we tell who is right?

August 13: Give the People What They Want

Readings

Lake, D. (1992). "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War" *American Political Science Review* 24-37. (this is a difficult reading, give it time and don't be frustrated if it is confusing)

Doyle, M. (1986). "Liberalism and World Politics". *American Political Science Review* 1151-1169.

Discussion Questions

Who are the agents who have choices about war and peace in these theories? How does this assumption of agency differ from those in the last set of readings? How do each of the theories discussed in the readings alter the assumptions of what the agents want? How do these changes in assumptions alter observable patterns in war and peace?

August 15: Anarchy is a State of Mind CLASS ONLINE!!!

Readings

van Evra, S. (1984). "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War." *International Security*.

Huntington, S. (1993). The clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22-49.

Discussion Questions

What are the major assumptions made by this lecture's theorists? What policy recommendations can we make to increase the change of peace based on these theories? What would our previous week's articles have to say about the effectiveness of these policies?

What empirical predictions can we derive from Huntington's theory? Why is the "clash of civilizations" theory so attractive and influential among armchair political scientists?

August 20: Modern Competition with China

Readings

Chong, J. and Hall, T. (2014). “The Lessons of 1914 for East Asia Today.” *International Security*.

Layne, C. (1993). “The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise” *International Security* 5-51.

Brooks, S. and W. Wohlforth (2015). “The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in the Twenty-First Century”. *International Security* 7-53.

Discussion Questions

What are the dangers of straightforward comparisons between World War 1 and today? In what ways are our situations comparable?

How do Brooks and Wohlforth measure hegemony differently from Layne? How do these two papers reach such different conclusions on the same question?

August 22: Modern Nuclear Security

Readings

Poundstone, W. (1992). “The Game of Chicken.” *Prisoner’s Dilemma*. Anchor Books.

Mearshimer, J. (1993). “The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent.” *Foreign Affairs*.

Miller, S. (1993). “The Case Against a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent.” *Foreign Affairs*.

Economist (2019). “Breaking the nuclear deal ratchets up the conflict between Iran and America.” *The Economist*. June 28, 2019.

Economist (2019). “Blame Russian cheating, not America, for killing the INF treaty.” *The Economist*. February 9, 2019.

Discussion Questions

Do nukes promote peace? What assumptions does Mearshimer make? How does Miller respond to these assumptions? What other factors need to be in place for a “balance of terror” peace to function? How does the logic of “balance of terror” change the game of chicken? The problem of asymmetrical information? Is there still a credible commitment problem?

August 27: Who Fights? State and Community-Level Explanations for Civil Conflict

MIDTERM EXAM!! CLASS ONLINE!!

Readings

Collier, Paul and Hoeffler, Anke. (1998). "One economic causes of civil war." *Oxford Economic Papers*.

—— (2013). "The Free Rider Problem." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Hardin, G. (1968). "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*.

Kuran, T. (1991). "Now Out of Never: the Element of Surprise in the Eastern European Revolutions of 1989." *World Politics*.

Discussion Questions

What critique do Collier and Hoeffler level against the argument that ancient hatreds cause civil war? Why do resources cause conflict? If resources cause conflict, why do conflicts always seem to be about identity?

August 29: Who Fights? Community and Individual-Level Explanations of Civil Conflict

CLASS ONLINE!!

Readings

Petersen, R. (2001). *Resistance and Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Humphreys, M., and Weinstein, J. (2008). "Who Fights? the Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* (don't sweat the math or the charts)

Berman, E. (2009). *Radical, Religious, and Violent: the New Economics of Terrorism*. MIT Press. Chapters 2 and 3.

Discussion Questions

What is the challenge for predicting revolution? How do individuals decide whether to revolt, according to Kuran? What dilemma does a potential revolutionary face? How can they solve it? Can we, as outsiders, ever hope to observe evidence of this?

How are Berman's assumptions about fighters different from Humphreys and Weinstien's? How do the rebel groups from H&W solve the problem of rebel commitment differently than Berman's rebels?

September 3: Trade Wars and Limits on Bargaining

Reading

Akerloff, G. (1970). "The Market for Lemons." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Abdalla, K. (2008). "The Principal-Agent Problem". *Jargon Alert*.

Putnam, R. D. (1988). "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games." *International Organization*, 42(3), 427-460.

Gourevitch, P. (1977). "International Trade, Domestic Coalitions, and Liberty". *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 8 (2) 281-313.

Discussion Questions

How do savvy world leaders use their democratic publics as leverage in international negotiations? What role does information gathering play? Does Gourevitch's explanation of tariff barriers match with Putnam's theory? Why or why not?

September 5: Making the World a Better Place? Human Rights and the Environment

Reading

Hafner-Burton, E. M. (2013). *Making human rights a reality*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Young, O. R. (1989). "The politics of international regime formation: managing natural resources and the environment." *International Organization*, 43(3), 349-375.

Discussion Questions

Who are the most important actors in each theory? Is there a two-level game being played? If so, is the lower-level game with a democratic public? Or someone else?