THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
(A.K.A. THE CORE)

Professor Ronald R. Krebs  Class: Monday, 12:25 pm – 2:20 pm,
1233 Social Sciences Building  Location: 1450 Social Sciences
rkrebs@umn.edu  Office Hours: Thursday, 10 am – 12 pm,
tel.: 612-624-4356 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
As its title suggests, this course is an introduction to contemporary theories, debates, and major scholarly traditions in international relations (IR). As the "core" course offered in this field, the intention is to provide a general, but not elementary, overview. It is intended primarily for graduate students in the Department of Political Science, though others are welcome to attend, with the instructor’s permission. While it is impossible to cover the enormous IR literature comprehensively in a one-semester survey, the class will introduce students to many of the central theories, authors, and debates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
The class format will place a premium on discussion. It is expected that everyone will come prepared to discuss the assigned materials in an informed and critical manner.

1. Readings and Participation.
   a. Read everything every week. This is not a course for the faint of heart! The literature in IR is huge, and it grows daily. I’ve tried to separate the wheat from the chaff, but even so, the reading load in this class is heavy. Students are expected to come to seminar prepared to discuss the required readings for that week. A large portion of your grade is based on class participation: if you fail to do the readings or fail to speak up in class, you will do poorly. Moreover, students are strongly encouraged to start with “internal” critiques of the readings for each week (i.e., analyses that take the readings seriously and operate within their approach to theory) before moving on to “external” critiques.
   b. Lead class discussion three times.
      • Discussion leaders should prepare a brief memo with at least five discussion questions based on the reading. Discussion memos should be distributed by email by 10 am, Monday morning.
      • Discussion leaders will also be expected to kick off class with 5-7 minutes of prepared commentary addressing one or more of the questions he or she has proposed.
      • Seminar members will be asked at the beginning of the term to commit to leading discussion on given weeks.
   c. Class participation and memos will account for 20% of your grade.

2. Three Short Essays (< 5 pp.; double-spaced; 12-point font; min. 1 inch margins).
   The essays should critically examine a hypothesis, theory, question, concept, or controversy contained in the readings for each week. The essay may address only a subset of the readings, but it should not simply summarize the assigned texts. A copy of the essay must be e-mailed to me as an attachment (.doc or .pdf) by 8 am on the Monday of the relevant class meeting. The three essays will be graded and will, combined, account for 30% of your total grade.
   NB: The length/style requirements will be strictly enforced.
3. **In-class final.**
   This final is meant to simulate Part I (the theory question) of the IR prelims. All the basic rules of the preliminary exam will be followed: students will write on one out of two questions (which will *not* be made available in advance); the exam will be taken in the Political Science computer lab; students will have 2 ½ hours to write their answer; students may bring paper notes into the exam (but not electronic files). Previous prelims, on file with the department, may prove useful in giving students a sense of the kinds of questions that I will ask. The final will be held during exam week; the exact date will be determined by consensus. The in-class final exam will account for 50% of your total grade.

4. **Optional: Final Paper** (15-20 double spaced pages)
   This option is *only* for graduate students who are *not* in the Political Science Department. These students are welcome to take the in-class final instead, if they so choose. The paper may take any number of forms, but it must engage creatively with several schools of thought in international relations. One option would be to “test” two or three major theories by examining one or more empirical cases. Students who wish to pursue this option must submit a 1 p. paper proposal to the instructor by the end of the eighth class meeting (October 27); students are encouraged to meet with the instructor before that date to discuss preliminary ideas. Only papers based on approved proposals will be accepted. The final paper will account for 50% of your total grade.

   **Note:** Short essays submitted late (after 8 am on Monday) will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per hour. Memos distributed late (after 10 am on Monday) will be accepted, but their tardiness will factor into the class participation grade. Incompletes will not be given for this course unless there is a documented emergency.

**Grading**
- Class Participation (incl. 3 presentations and memos) 20%
- Short Essays (3) 30%
- In-class Final (or Optional Final Paper) 50%

**Readings**
No books have been ordered for purchase at the University bookstore. The following books are recommended for purchase (because we are reading sufficient amounts), but purchase is not required. All the books below are on reserve at Wilson Library. Copies of those books followed by a ♠ have been placed in the 8401 drawer in the 12th floor lounge. Other readings may be found in the “rkrebs_8401” folder on the Shared drive.

- Walter Carlsnaes et al., eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (Sage, 2002).

**BACKGROUND READINGS**

The boundary between international relations theory and diplomatic history was once very fine. A good grasp of the history of great power politics remains valuable for students of international politics in general and IR theory in particular. Useful background works include:


**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

* = required reading
§ = highly recommended reading (translation: I would have assigned it if I were not already assigning you too much. But if you have not read it yet, you definitely should before prelims, if not sooner.)

NB: Many of the other recommended readings are valuable as well and are included here for students with strong interests in a given week’s topic. These bibliographic lists are of course not meant to be comprehensive.

**Guide to Journal Abbreviations**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Journal Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>AJPS</td>
<td>American Journal of Political Science</td>
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<td>ARPS</td>
<td>Annual Review of Political Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>APSR</td>
<td>American Political Science Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>EJIL</td>
<td>European Journal of International Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>EJIR</td>
<td>European Journal of International Relations</td>
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<td>FA</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>FP</td>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
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<td>IO</td>
<td>International Organization</td>
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<td>IS</td>
<td>International Security</td>
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<td>ISQ</td>
<td>International Studies Quarterly</td>
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<td>ISR</td>
<td>International Studies Review</td>
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<td>JCR</td>
<td>Journal of Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>JCWS</td>
<td>Journal of Cold War Studies</td>
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<td>PoP</td>
<td>Perspectives on Politics</td>
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<td>RIS</td>
<td>Review of International Studies</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td>Security Studies</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
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September 8
What is IR Theory?


An American Social Science?

What is a (Good) Theory of IR? Or, Can We Do Better Than Potter Stewart?
* Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco, “Clouds, Clocks and the Study of Politics,” *WP* 29:4 (July 1977) 277-291. Can we have a predictive theory of politics? Would we even want one?

What, in the name of God, is International Relations? (with apologies to Henry Kissinger)

Or, the Levels of Analysis: Is there a problem?
The primacy of systemic theorizing.
Why and when the first-image matters.
§ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (Columbia UP, 1954). The “three images.” In many ways a richer statement than Waltz’ later, and more influential, *Theory*.
September 15
Classical Realism
Is there a classical realist tradition? Can one identify its principal elements? If so, how does it relate to power, ethics, the sources of war and peace, the relationship between domestic and international politics? Read Thucydides and Carr and reflect on these questions before you engage with Doyle, Williams, and Lebow.


* Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge UP, 2005) 1-9, 128-137, 145-168 (recommended: all). A re-reading of classical realist thinkers—Hobbes, Rousseau, Morgenthau—as “willful realists” skeptical of the Enlightenment project, focused on the constitution of political order, and articulating a vision of politics as a struggle not only for material power but over fundamental values.

Thucydides as the founding father of constructivism.


§ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (Columbia UP, 1954).


§ Jonathan Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (Yale UP, 2002).

September 22

Structural Realism


Structural Realism: Neo- and Otherwise

R. Harrison Wagner, “What was Bipolarity?” *IO* 47:1 (winter 1993) 77-106.
§ Robert Jervis, “Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma,” *JCWS* 3 (Winter 2001) 36-60. Or, how do we know a security dilemma when we see one in real life?
§ Keith Shimko, “Realism, Neorealism, and American Liberalism,” *Review of Politics* 54 (Spring 1992) 281-301. Structural realism as a peculiarly American form of realism (foreshadowed by earlier readings by Waever and Williams, though the arguments are not identical).
Defensive and Offensive Realism
   Emending, and further complicating, Jervis 1978.
§ Charles L. Glaser, “Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral
§ Randall Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” IS 19:1
   (summer 1994) 72-107.
   Theory,” IS 32:2 (fall 2007) 155-191. Correspondence by Jack Snyder and rebuttal by Lieber in
Dale C. Copeland, The Origins of Major War (Cornell UP, 2000)
Charles L. Glaser, “Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral
   Misperception, chap. 3.
   (winter 2000/2001) 128-161.
Colin Elman, “Extending Offensive Realism: The Louisiana Purchase and America's Rise to Regional

The Neo-Neo Debate (or Synthesis?)
§ Stephen Krasner, ed., International Regimes (Cornell UP, 1983) esp. essays by Krasner (intro and
   conclusion), Stein, Keohane (a concise theoretical statement of ‘neoliberal’ logic regarding how
   international institutions promote cooperation), Jervis (why effective regimes are less likely in
   security), Ruggie (the origins of ‘embedded liberalism’), and Strange (a brilliant critique of
   regime theory in American IR).
Robert O. Keohane, After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy
   (Princeton UP, 1984) chaps. 4, 6. The original statement of neoliberal institutionalism or
   modified structural realism, as it was known (and properly so) early on.
   chaps. 7 (Keohane critique of especially Waltz but also Gilpin), 10 (a wonderful Gilpin essay on
   the nature of political realism), 11 (a defense by Waltz).
David A. Baldwin, ed., Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate (Columbia UP,
   1993) esp. chaps. by Lipson (on cooperation in the economic and security arenas), Grieco (a
   realist critique of Keohane et al.), Milner (a good critique of neorealist conceptions of anarchy),
   Snidal and Powell and Krasner (on relative gains), and then the concluding essays by Keohane
   and Grieco.
§ Helen Milner, “International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses,”
   WP 44 (April 1992) 466-96.
§ Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutionalist Theory,” IS 20:1 (Summer
Robert Powell, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate,” IO
   48:2 (Spring 1994) 313-44.
   269-305.
§ Robert Jervis, “Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate,” IS 24:1
   (Summer 1999) 42-63.

**Structural Realism and the End of the Cold War**

§ William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *IS* 19:3 (Winter 1994/95) 91-129.


**Structural Realism and Global Politics After the Cold War**


September 29
Realism and the Unit Level

Defensive Realism and the Unit Level
* Jack Snyder, Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition (Cornell UP, 1991) chaps. 1-2 [recommended: an empirical chapter of your choice].

Neo- Classical Realism (Offensive Realism and the Unit Level)
Randall Schweller, Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest (Columbia UP, 1998).

Assessing the Turn to Domestic Politics: Voyage of the Damned or Stairway to Heaven?
§ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” WP 51 (October 1998) 144-172.
Colin and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field (MIT Press, 2003).
October 6
The English School


October 13
Liberalism (I)

What is Liberal IR Theory?
Martin Wight, *Four Seminal Thinkers in International Theory* (Oxford UP, 2005) ch. 2-3 (Grotius and Kant).

Institutional Liberalism: Visions of Global Governance


Peter M. Haas, “Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *IO* 46:1 (winter 1992) 1-35. Lead article in special issue on “Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination.”


**Commercial Liberalism: Trade, Investment, and the Origins of War and Peace**


October 20
Liberalism (II): Republican Liberalism (the Democratic Peace)


Overviews

The Democratic Peace: Yes!

*The Democratic/Liberal Peace: The Skeptics Reply*


*Rebuttals by the Believers*


*The Democratic Peace, With a Twist*

Tarak Barkawi and Mark LaFeve, eds., *Democracy, Liberalism, and War* (Lynne Rienner, 2001).

*Do Democracies Have Bigger Muscles? Democracy and Military Effectiveness*

**Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy: Other**
David A. Welch, “The Organizational and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect And Prospect,” *IS* 17 (fall 1992) pp. 112-146.
October 27
Constructivism (I)

Agency and Structure

The Constructivist Worldview
* Richard Price, “Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics,” *IO* 62:2 (spring 2008) 191-220. What empirical constructivist research can contribute to the defense of moral change in world politics as good (what “is” has to say about “ought”).

Alexander Wendt and his Critics
November 3
Constructivism (II): Norms and Identity

Ideas and Norms


Identity

**Ontology, Epistemology, and Method in “Conventional Constructivism”**

Vincent Pouliot, ”‘Sobjectivism’: Toward a Constructivist Methodology,” *ISQ* 51 (June 2007) 359-384.

**Mechanisms: Persuasion, Communicative Action, and Rhetorical Coercion**

Mechanism: Socialization

Legitimacy
“Force and Legitimacy in World Politics,” special issue of *RIS* 31 (December 2005).
November 10
Concepts: Power and Rationality

Power
Power is one of the oldest and most basic concepts of international politics, yet also among the least understood. How has power been conceptualized? How is it most usefully conceptualized (and for what purposes)?

* David Baldwin, “Power and International Relations,” in Walter Carlsnaes et al., eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (Sage, 2002) 177-191. From power as property to power as relation.

* Robert Art, “American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force,” *SS* 5:4 (summer 1996) 7-42. A realist retorts: military resources are the key because force is highly fungible.


**Rationality**  
What is rationality? Individuals do not make decisions in ways that rationality would prescribe, but is the assumption of rationality nevertheless useful for theory-building? What’s choice do we have?  
* Jonathan Mercer, “Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,” *IO* 59 (winter 2005) 77-106. Dispelling three common myths, or why political psychology can stand on its own two feet and why rationality cannot.  
* James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, “Rationalism vs. Constructivism: A Skeptical View,” in Walter Carlsnaes et al., eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (Sage, 2002) 52-72. Contra dogmatism. But is this methodological reading right, or are there fundamental ontological divides? Can we really all just get on with the pragmatic work of building our common IR house?  
November 17
Epistemology: Positivism and Its Critics

General
* review week 1: Hollis & Smith, Waltz, Almond & Genco

Motive and Consciousness
Individuals’ and collectives’ motives are unknowable. How can social scientists deal with this problem? Can we construct useful theoretical accounts without motives? And how does this relate to the common presumption of self-conscious action?
* Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (University of Michigan Press, 2006) 13-45 (chap. 2). Social science without motives?
Recommended: read some of Jackson’s empirical material to see if he pulls it off…
Exchange between Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Colin Wight (reviewing each other’s respective books) in *Cooperation and Conflict* 43:3 (September 2008): 341-364.

General: Recommended
Colin and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field* (MIT Press, 2003).

*Qualitative Research: Varieties of Approaches*
Review Symposium on King, Keohane, and Verba’s *Designing Social Inquiry*, *APSR*, 89:2 (June 1995) 454-481.
§ James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge UP, 2003).

*How to Deal with Counterfactuals*
**November 24**

**Marxist Traditions and [Modernist? Western Marxist?] Critical Theory**


* review Price and Reus-Smit 1998


* Thomas Risse, “‘Let’s Argue!’: Communicative Action in International Relations,” *IO* 54:1 (winter 2000) 1-40. What happens when a critical theorist (Habermas) is appropriated (abducted?) by a conventional constructivist.


{See also readings in above section—*Mechanisms: Persuasion, Communicative Action, and Rhetorical Coercion*—for other ways of engaging with Habermas.}

Mark Rupert and Hazel Smith, eds., *Historical Materialism and Globalization* (Routledge, 2002).


Andrew Linklater, "Class and State in International Relations," in his *Beyond Realism and Marxism* (MacMillan, 1990) 140-172.


Richard Wyn Jones, ed., *Critical Theory and World Politics* (Lynne Rienner, 2001), especially essays by Linklater, Hutchings (especially 80-85, on how neo-Gramscian and normative critical theory differs from postmodern critical work), Brown.

Mark Hoffman, “Critical Theory and the Inter-paradigm Debate,” *Millennium* 16:2 (1987) 213-249. To what substantive theories of IR can or cannot a critical perspective be productively conjoined?


December 1

Post-structuralism, Post-modernism, and Feminism


* J. Ann Tickner, “What Is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions,” *ISQ* 49:1 (March 2005) 1-22. Why feminists have not embraced, and will not embrace, Keohane’s research agenda (see below), but why they still have a lot to say to the field.
* J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (Columbia UP, 2001) 36-63 (chap. 2) [recommended: all].
* R. Charli Carpenter, "Gender Theory in World Politics: Contributions of a Nonfeminist Standpoint?" *ISR* 4 (fall 2002) 153-165. Why one can—and the field should—study gender without a commitment to feminism and to feminist methodologies.

§ John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *IS* 19:3 (winter 1994/95), section on “critical theory”—if only to see how “mainstream” IR scholars misunderstand their Others.
Jim George and David Campbell, “Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations,” *ISQ* 34:3 (1990) 269-293.


Birgit Locher and Elisabeth Prügl, "Feminism and Constructivism: Worlds Apart or Sharing the Middle Ground?" ISQ 45:1 (2001) 111-129.


Craig Murphy, "Seeing Women, Recognizing Gender, and Recasting International Relations," IO 50:3 (summer 1996) 513-538. A review of recent literature on what it means for IR.


Jill Stearns, Gender and International Relations (Rutgers UP, 1998).


December 8
Taking Stock: The Future of IR Theory

Paradigmatic Silences: Occasional Theorizing About IR’s Relative Silences

The Second-Image Reversed
* Ronald R. Krebs, “In the Shadow of War: The Effects of Conflict on Liberal Democracy,” *IO* 63:1 (January 2009). Here’s a second-image reversed question about which there’s almost no literature in political science/IR…

Religion and Secularism

Hierarchy and Empire

Race

Paradigmatic Futures?
Or: Are there any big debates still worth having? Can’t we all just live together in a big tent, and get on with our research?
* review Fearon and Wendt on “rationalism vs. constructivism”
* review Legro and Moravcsik on the loneliness of the paradigmatic realist