Introduction to International Relations (790:102:12)

Fall 2016

(Note: This syllabus is *TENTATIVE* and subject to change.)

Instructor: Ju Yeon (Julia) Park (park.juyeon85@gmail.com)
Office Hours: Thursday 5:00-6:00, or by appointment

Class time and location: T/Th 7:40-9:00pm
Murray Hall, Room 211

Course Description
This course intends to help students build their ability to think strategically and rationally when they interpret international political phenomena. In the journey to this aim, we will go over various theoretical perspectives to study international relations and discuss what are the logical short-comings of each approach and how we can improve the theoretical arguments to best describe the real world. As one solution, the course will highlight how domestic political conditions shape international political sphere by restricting national leaders’ foreign policy options to choose from. With this in mind, we will explore why states go to a war, why we see less wars these days, why and how states cooperate through international institutions, why they sometimes fail to do so, how the international society can deal with a rising threat of terrorism, and whether the global trend of democratization can bring world peace. Game-theoretic concepts will be introduced in the earlier part of the course and used frequently as a tool to solve such puzzles.

Course Objectives
By the end of the semester you should be able to:
- Describe major historical events that served as a pathway to build the international system today
- Explain and evaluate various theories for international relations by comparing their assumptions, arguments, and evidence
- Apply theories, game-theoretic methods, and concepts about human and social behavior to real-world international politics
- Critically analyze causes and consequences of contemporary international political events

Course Expectations
Class participation (10%): Your attendance and participation are necessary at every meeting. Attendance will be checked during or at the beginning of the class at random weeks. Each time the student misses an attendance check, 2 points will be deducted. Any legitimate excuses (e.g. family or religious affairs) will be taken into consideration only when you consult with the instructor at least two weeks ahead AND with officially documented proof.

Homework (30%): There will be two assignments (15% for each). Each assignment is due at the beginning of the class and should be submitted in two formats: 1) a hardcopy and 2) a pdf file submitted to the sakai’s class website. (Do not email your homework to the instructor.)

The first homework may ask you to evaluate assumptions and arguments of various international theories based on how well each explains historical evidence in international politics, and you will be asked to solve
game-theoretic problems that are related to issues on international war.

The second homework will ask you to 1) choose a news article about an on-going international event from major newspaper outlets that are available online, 2) summarize the story in one paragraph (less than 130 words) in your own words, 3) and write a single-spaced one-page long policy memo that explains potential causes and consequences using concepts learned in the class and evaluates which of the theories of international relations explains the phenomenon best and why other theories relatively don’t. More detailed description about the format of this homework will be explained in the week 11.

Exams (60%): There will be a midterm and a final exam. Both will be in-class exams. Final exam will be cumulative with more weight on the materials taught after the midterm. The exams will comprise a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. (Note: Make up exams will be permitted only under the gravest of circumstances with appropriate documentation. Personal travel plans are not a legitimate reason for requesting to take an exam at a different time.)

In addition, any disruptive behavior (e.g. sleeping, talking outside of regular discussion, using cell phones, and insulting other people in the class, etc.) during the class will cost you a full letter grade down for each time detected. You can use laptops but they should be used only for course-related activities (e.g. taking notes) but not for internet surfing.

Other issues

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Students must do all their work within the boundaries of acceptable academic norms. See the Academic Integrity page of the Rutgers website regarding college policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty - http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/

Students found guilty of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include reduction of grade, a failure in the course, suspension or expulsion. This includes homework assignments – if they are copied from another student, severe penalties may be applied.

Late Assignments: Students will lose 20% of the total points of the given assignment for submitting it late per day. For example, if the assignment was submitted 24-48 hours after the due, there will be 40% deduction in points.

Textbooks: The following books are recommended for your reading list:

Other Readings: In some weeks, there may be additional readings from other sources. I will give notice in advance and upload pdf copies to the class website.

Changes: There may be adjustments in the scheduling of homework or reading assignments. Any changes will be announced in class and/or through email in advance.
Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sep 6, 8) – Introduction to various theoretical perspectives in IR
  - Readings: BDM, Introduction (p.1-34)

Week 2 (Sep 13, 15) – Evaluating Arguments about International Politics
  - Readings: BDM, Ch1.

Week 3 (Sep 20, 22) – The Strategic Perspective: When Foreign Policy Collides with Domestic Politics
  - Readings: BDM, Ch2.

Week 4 (Sep 27, 29) – Tools for Analyzing International Affairs
  - Readings: BDM, Ch3.

Week 5 (Oct 4, 6) – Introduction to Game Theory
  - Readings: BDM, Ch4.
  - Homework 1 distributed on Oct. 6

Week 6 (Oct 11, 13) – Why War? The Big Picture
  - Readings: BDM, Ch5.
  - **Homework 1 due on Oct. 13**

Week 7 (Oct 18, 20) – Domestic Theories of War
  - Readings: BDM, Ch6.

Week 8 (Oct 25) – **Midterm**
  - (Oct 27) – How International Organizations Work or Don’t Work
    - Readings: BDM, Ch7.

Week 9 (Nov 1) – How International Organizations Work or Don’t Work (continued)
  - Readings: BDM, Ch7
    - (Nov 3) – Global Warming: Designing a Solution
      - Readings: BDM, Ch8.

Week 10 (Nov 8) – Human Rights, International Law, Norms
  - Reading: BDM, Ch9.
    - (Nov 10) – Free Trade or Fair: The Domestic Politics of Tariffs
      - Reading: BDM, Ch10.

Week 11 (Nov 15, 17) – Globalization: International Winners and Losers
  - Readings: BDM, Ch11.
  - Homework 2 distributed on Nov. 15

Week 12 (Nov 22) – Foreign Aid, Poverty, and Revolution
  - Readings: BDM, Ch12.
  - **Homework 2 due**
(Nov 24) – Thanksgiving Day (No Class)

Week 13 (Nov 29) – Foreign Aid, Poverty, and Revolution (continued)
  • Readings: BDM, Ch12.

(Dec 1) – Can Terrorism Be Rational?
  • Readings: BDM, Ch13.

Week 14 (Dec 6, 8) – A Democratic World Order: Peace without Democratization
  • Readings: BDM, Ch14.

Week 15 (Dec 13) – **Final Exam**