Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to 1) general theoretical debates and issues in the IR subfield, and 2) contemporary research in international relations. To that end the course will take a broad approach, covering canonical works that address big theoretical issues as well as more recent research that addresses specific questions about international politics. Broad topics examined include IR paradigms (“isms”), international institutions, international conflict, and the role of domestic politics in international relations. The course is focused on scholarly research more than current events or policy formulation, and is designed primarily for Ph.D. students preparing to take comprehensive exams in international relations.

Grades/Assignments

Grades are based upon class discussion, weekly response papers, and two critical literature reviews. Your final grade will be determined as follows:
Class Discussion: 30%
Weekly Response Papers (12): 30%
Critical Literature Reviews (2): 40%

Class Discussion

Students are expected to read the assigned material and be ready to discuss it in class.

Weekly Response Papers

Weekly response papers are 3-5 page papers that offer a summary and evaluation of the week’s readings. You may focus on as many or as few readings as you like, but you must offer a summary and evaluation of the author’s argument and evidence. The questions above will be useful for this purpose. Weekly responses must be submitted every week except the
two weeks you choose to submit your critical review essays (see below). Weekly responses are due by 5 p.m. on Wednesday. Consider the following questions when reading:

- What research question is the author trying to answer?
- What is the author’s argument?
- How does the argument fit with the rest of the literature?
- Is the argument logically consistent?
- If the author makes a causal argument, is it plausible?
- Does the evidence support the author's theoretical claims?
- Does the author operationalize concepts appropriately?
- Is the method of analysis appropriate?
- Does the argument have implications that are unexamined?
- Does the study tell us something new and interesting?

Each week everyone will submit to me via email 5-10 discussion questions. Discussion questions must be sent one day prior to the meeting. The purpose of the questions is to facilitate a discussion, so broad, open-ended questions are encouraged.

**Critical Review Essay**

These are 6-10 page, more well-developed versions of your weekly response papers. For critical review essays you must address all of the readings for the week, and you should keep the summarizing to a minimum. Instead of summarizing, a critical review essay should present a well-reasoned critique of the literature on a topic, explain how different pieces of research on a topic relate to each other, and offer *suggestions on how research in this area could be improved*. As a general rule, no more than 50% of the essay should consist of summaries of the readings. You must turn in two critical review essays papers by the end of the semester. You may turn in your response essays at the end of any week (by 5 p.m. on Friday), but your first essay must be submitted by February 17th. If you plan on submitting a critical review essay rather than a weekly response please inform me at the beginning of the week.
Books

We will be reading selections from the following books. I have noted where a copy will be made available on the course website.


Course format

*No one is required to attend class.* Students may access and complete all components of this course online. Students who choose to come to class must wear a face covering at all times and remain at least 6 feet away from everyone else at all times. See the “Covid-19 Information for Students” section at the end of the syllabus.

Course Website

Can be accessed through [www.elc.uga.edu](http://www.elc.uga.edu). You will need to check this site regularly for posted readings.

Syllabus Change Policy

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.
Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.

University Honor Code/Academic Honesty Policy

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Reading Schedule

Overview

The course begins with a discussion of how theories of international politics should be constructed and evaluated. This reflects larger debates in philosophy of science concerning how knowledge claims more generally should be evaluated. We will then examine the “paradigms” or “isms” that dominated the subfield until (roughly) the 1990s, i.e. Realism, Neo-Liberalism, and Constructivism. We will then spend a week reading and discussing work that criticizes and questions the usefulness of these approaches. The second part of the course focuses on international institutions, covering general issues of design and enforcement in addition to theoretical and empirical research that examines particular institutions, including military alliances, the UN Security Council, the Geneva Conventions, the WTO, and the IMF. The third part of the course examines scholarly work on international conflict, paying attention in particular to strategic models of conflict, which have come to dominate research on international war in the last 20 or so years. The following week covers canonical empirical studies of conflict, as well as studies that speak directly to the various theoretical explanations for conflict covered in preceding weeks. The fourth part of the course focuses on the role of domestic politics in international relations. We will spend one week reading authors who make the general case for incorporating domestic politics into explanations of international behavior, and one week on research that addresses the role of domestic politics in conflict behavior specifically. We end the course by examining two under-studied topics: the role of gender in IR, and psychological approaches to decision making and foreign policy.
1 Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

January 13: Introduction and Course Overview

No reading.

January 20: How Should We Study International Politics?


January 27: Systemic Theories


Keohane, *Neorealism and Its Critics* chaps 2-5.


Feb 3: Problems of Cooperation in International Politics


February 10: International Norms and Constructivism


February 17: Bridging Subfields – Beyond Anarchy and Isms


Wagner, *War and the State*, chaps 1 and 3.

Lake and Powell, *Strategic Choice in International Relations*, chaps 1 and 2.

2 International Institutions

February 24: Institutional Design and Compliance


March 3: Theories of Security and Trade Institutions


March 10: No class

March 17: Empirical Studies of International Institutions


3 International Conflict

March 24: Strategic Theories of Conflict


March 31: Empirical Studies of Conflict


4 Domestic Politics and International Relations

April 7: Incorporating Domestic Politics into Theory


April 14: Domestic Politics and International Conflict


5 Other Important Things to Consider

April 21: Gender and International Relations


**April 28: Psychological Approaches to Decision Making**


**COVID-19 Information for Students**

**Face Coverings**

The University of Georgia (along with all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions) requires all faculty, staff, students and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use is in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at [https://drc.uga.edu/](https://drc.uga.edu/).
DawgCheck

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck on the UGA app or website whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies.

What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed?

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test?

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162.

UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive?

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is required to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.