Government 606: Field Seminar in International Relations

Spring 2009

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This seminar provides an overview of the field of international relations for graduate students. Particular emphasis is placed upon (1) identifying the main points of debate and contrasting research traditions within the field; (2) developing the critical analytical skills necessary to evaluate the contrasting arguments made within the field; (3) grounding individual empirical interests within the context of these broader theoretical and methodological issues.

Students are expected to attend every class, to have done the readings before class, and to participate actively in discussions. The reading load for this class is quite heavy – prepare accordingly. We will also circulate reading lists from recent years, these include additional and supplementary reading that should be helpful in preparing for A-exams.

There are **four** requirements for this class:

1) A take home final examination loosely in the format of the department A-exam for the field of international relations. Students will be given the choice of answering two questions out of three covering the material from this syllabus. The exam should be no more than 20 double spaced pages total.

2) A ten page paper taking the form of a mini version of a “World Politics” style review essay on some of the literature assigned for a particular week. Each student can write on any week they choose (in consultation with us), but regardless of the week chosen the essay is due before Friday, March 6.

3) A ten page paper taking the form of a hypothetical “research prospectus” that sets out a question and a research agenda building on unresolved issues, puzzles or debates suggested by some of the literature. You should discuss your proposed topic with us before the end of March; the paper is due no later than Friday, May 1.

4) Active and thoughtful class participation.

Given the nature of the assignments, it is not appropriate to take an incomplete in this class except as a consequence of extraordinary personal circumstances. Late work will be marked down.
Note that most of the assigned journal articles are available on-line, and there are also hard copies of the major journals in Olin library 405. Additional readings will be placed in a box in 405, and some of the books will be put on reserve in that room as well. A folder in the box for each week will indicate what is where. Readings should not be removed from the room except to make photocopies within the building.

**Week 1 (January 20): Introduction**

Miles Kahler, “Inventing International Relations”, in Michael Doyle and John Ikenberry (eds.), *New Thinking in International Relations*, pp. 20-53


**Week 2 (January 27): Anarchy and Levels of Analysis**


Week 3 (February 3): Realism


Week 4 (February 10): Liberalism


Week 5 (February 17): Constructivism

Rawi Abdelal, “Constructivism as an approach to international political economy”, in Mark Blyth (ed.) Routledge Handbook of International Political Economy (Routledge, forthcoming 2009), pp. 57-71
Week 6 (February 24): Causes of War


Week 7 (March 3): Democratic Peace and Alliances


Week 8 (March 10): Domestic Politics and International Relations

Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level
Week 9 (March 24): Bureaucracy and Psychology

Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics, pp. 217-87.

Week 10 (March 31): Institutions

Robert Keohane, After Hegemony, pp. 49-132.
Week 11 (April 7): Regions


Week 12 (April 14): Transnationalism and Globalization


Week 13 (April 21): Unipolarity


World Politics, *Special Issue: International Relations Theory and the Consequences of Unipolarity* 61:1 (January 2009).

Week 14 (April 28): Discussion of Student Research Proposals