This course will provide students with an opportunity to develop an advanced understanding of a range of theories of global politics. We will begin by reading many of the classic texts of International Relations theory in order to grapple with a range of theoretical traditions, including both traditional and critical theories of international relations. Here, we will pose the questions: ‘what is IR theory for?’ ‘what does IR theory explain, or fail to explain?’ and ‘which theories best explain our world today?’ In the second half of the course, we will put these theories to the test by juxtaposing the approach of various theories to some of the ‘big questions’ in the discipline, namely: war and peace; security; and inequality. We will end by considering the cutting edge of the field today, focusing on newly released books in global politics, giving students the opportunity to develop a focused and in-depth analysis of a text that is hot off the press.

**Assessment:**

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<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Discussion Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses (2)</td>
<td>30% (15% for each Reading Response)</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Book Presentation</td>
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**Assignments**

Participation is a very important component of your final grade (20%), and is an opportunity for you to be rewarded for consistently coming to class prepared to discuss the readings in depth. Participation grades are awarded on the basis of: 1. Attendance; 2. Coming to class prepared with your readings done, and engaging in the class in ways that demonstrate your careful reading of the assigned texts; 3. Collegiality: showing respect for your fellow students even when you might disagree, and actively working to make sure that everyone in the course has an opportunity to be heard; and 4. Coming to class prepared every week with one discussion question to spark discussion of the readings amongst your fellow students.
Reading Responses (30%) should be 800 words. These Reading Responses will give you an opportunity to respond to the readings for a given week. Your goal should be to move beyond a summary of the readings, in order to provide response and analysis, comparing the various readings for the week. Ask yourself: what theoretical perspectives does each of the authors represent? How do their arguments differ? What assumptions does each author make, and how might these be compared? You are invited to focus your responses on either a single issue, or a broad theme: the point is to present your analysis of the readings.

***Reading Responses are due at the beginning of the class in which we will be discussing the readings that you are responding to. Late assignments will not be accepted.***

Book Review (30%): during the third section of the course, we will be focused on reading entire books in the field of international relations/global politics theory. Each student will select a recently published book (a list will be provided in class, though students may also propose a book for approval by the Professor – but the book must have been published in the last year). No two students will read the same book. You will write a 1200 word Review of the book due on April 27th. The aim is to produce a publishable book review for potential submission to an academic journal. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to read and engage with an entire book (whereas course readings are articles or chapters), and also to get students to think of themselves as professionals who can produce publishable writing.

*In your book review, you must compare your book to course materials (readings, lectures, discussions).

Presentation: You will also be required to tell your fellow students about the book you select through a presentation. You are invited to be as creative as you like in your presentation style. The presentation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Note: Readings will be posted on Blackboard – the only book you will need to purchase is the book you select for your book review. Please have all of the readings done on or before class so that you are prepared for class!

- Students with disabilities who require accommodation should work with the Office of Disability Services (973-353-5300). Also please let me know whether you require any accommodation, and we can work together with the Office of Disability Services to ensure that your needs are met.

- Students should also be aware of the services of The Writing Centre. The Writing Center offers writing tutoring and writing workshops.
All students are required to be familiar with, and adhere to, the University’s Academic Integrity Policy (see also the University’s Academic Integrity site). Students who commit plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Integrity Facilitator, and may be subject to sanction. Sometimes students commit plagiarism ‘by mistake’ because they are unaware of what constitutes academic integrity – but it is your responsibility to be fully familiar with the University’s policy on academic integrity.

SECTION I: THEORIZING GLOBAL POLITICS

Jan 20  Introduction: Positivist and Post-positivist Theory

Jan 27  What is International Relations Theory? and, What is it For?


Robert Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory.” Millennium, 10(2): pp.126-135. (excerpt- read only to page 135)


Feb 3  Traditional Theories: Liberalism and Realism


Feb 10  Theories of Global Inequality - Marxism and Feminism


V.I. Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (excerpt).


Feb 17  Post-Colonialism and Post-Structuralism


Michel Foucault, two excerpts: “Objective” (read pp. 88-91) and “Right of Death and Power over Life,” (read pp. 135-140), both in The History of Sexuality. Vintage Books.

SECTION II: THEMES OF GLOBAL POLITICS

Feb 24  

War and Peace


Mar 2  

What is Security?


Mar 9  

Securitization and De-Securitization (Constructivism Case Study)


Mar 16  

SPRING RECESS – No Class
Mar 23  Global Mobility: Inequality in the Movement of People and Goods


Mar 30  Global Inequality and Development


SECTION III: THE CUTTING EDGE OF GLOBAL POLITICS THEORY - READING NEW WORKS

Apr 6  Book Review and Presentation Preparation

Apr 13  Book Presentations

Apr 20  Book Presentations

Apr 27  ***Book reviews due***
Appendix A: Notes on reading critically and strategically

The readings in this course may often be demanding and challenging – and you are expected to do all of the readings every week. It therefore makes sense that students will want to read both critically and strategically.

Reading critically does not mean that you are necessarily ‘critical’ in the sense of disagreeing or finding fault with everything that you read. What it does mean is that you are using your analytical skills to assess what you read: focusing in on what arguments the author makes, how they make them both in terms of the structure of the argument and in terms of the methods they use, what perspective they take or theory they adhere to, as well as any assumptions the author makes. When reading several texts by different authors the task is to compare the authors along these lines (argument, structure, method, theory/perspective, assumptions). Reading critically can also help you to read strategically more effectively.

Reading strategically does not mean that you take a guess at which readings will be most important and disregard the others (a formula for failure if ever there was one!), but rather that you read some parts of the assigned readings very closely, while reading other sections more quickly. Focus in on the elements of critical reading (argument, structure, method, theory/perspective, assumptions). For this course, it’s also helpful to think of what themes are most relevant, in order to ‘perk-up’ whenever they are addressed in your readings. In order to help you in reading strategically, here is a list of 9 themes we will focus on (though if students find other themes worth addressing throughout the term, we will happily do so – the list is not exhaustive, it is just a solid starting point).

According to each author:

1. Who are the important actors
   - Which actors do they ignore or leave out of the picture?

2. What is the nature of the international/global system
   - Is it anarchic? Is it cooperative? Is it unequal in terms of race, class, gender? Is it primarily economic- or militarily-oriented? What does the world look like, from the author’s perspective?

3. What methods are used or advocated
   - How does the author study their topic?
   - Does the author say something explicit about the methods? Or, are their methods implicit (unstated)? What can you glean about their methods by reading their arguments?

4. What is the purpose of theory
   - What are the aims of the author?
   - Is the author providing theory for the purposes of aiding statecraft? (i.e. providing advice to foreign policy-makers?) or do they have other aims?
• Should global politics theory aim to change the world, or just observe it?
• Can theory change the world?
• Who is the author writing for?

5. What is the view of history

• Is global politics marked by many unchanging, constant or fundamental features? Or, is it marked by significant change throughout history?
• Is history marked by ruptures or continuities?
• Why does the author see history in this way?

6. How is power conceptualized

• Is power something that is possessed? If so, then by whom: states, leaders, the masculine gender, imperial powers?
• Or, is power ‘productive’ without being possessed?
• How does the author’s perception of power influence what they study: i.e. the object of their analysis?

7. How are war and peace defined or approached

• Is peace merely the absence of war, or is it something qualitatively more/different?
• How are definitions of war and peace approached differently depending on the author’s perspective?
• How does the author define security? Or, do they eschew any effort to definitively define security in favor of approaches that question our ability to define words like war, peace and security?

8. What is the view of human nature

• Does the author believe that there is such a thing as ‘human nature’ or do they explicitly or implicitly deny the use of basing global politics theory on ideas about ‘human nature’?
• If the author makes arguments or assumption about the nature of human nature, then where do these arguments/assumptions lead them in their writings?

9. What is their view of inequality?

• Is the concept of ‘inequality’ a useful tool for the author?
• Is the author concerned primarily with inequality in terms of: state power, gender, race, class, first world versus third world, military might, or other forms of inequality?
• How does their approach to inequality (if any) alter or inform their arguments or assumptions?
Appendix B: List of books for Book Reviews/Presentations

The following is a list of books published in the last year or two, from which you will select a book to purchase and write your Book Review and Presentation on. No two students will read the same book. Selections will be made, in class, on Jan 27th.

The cost of each book varies widely: from under $50, to over $150, so it is worth researching not only the contents of these books, but also their prices, before making your selection, depending on your budget. Please come to class prepared with a few selections, so that you have back-up choices in the event that you don’t get your first choice. Here are some examples:


