Course Description and Objectives:

This course offers a graduate-level introduction to theories of international politics. The class explores a variety of debates and findings in the subfield of international relations. Coverage does not include every issue and approach, but it addresses the core problems and perspectives animating mainstream IR in the United States today. Students can expect to develop a sufficient understanding of the subfield to prepare for further study and specialization, while advancing their knowledge of the substantive issues under consideration.

The course is divided into two parts, though a sustained focus on theories, concepts, and central debates extends throughout the semester. After an introduction to the broader debates and basic epistemological questions, we begin with a critical examination of the leading theoretical paradigms in IR. The remainder of the course is devoted to contemporary applications in various areas of international security and political economy, weighted heavily toward the former. While no explicit policymaking component is offered, students are encouraged to draw connections between the course material and ongoing policy debates in world affairs.

Requirements and Grading:

You are expected to carefully read all assigned material. Beyond that, you are required to attend classes regularly and to participate actively in class discussions. More than three absences will gravely affect your grade. Participation counts for 20% of your grade. You also are required to write four short papers 1500-1700 words each. These short take-home assignments ask you to explain a historical or current IR event or problem with reference to the theories presented in class and in the course readings. Each paper counts for 20% of your grade.

Readings:
There are a few books and many articles required for this course. The following books are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore. Aside from the books listed above, most of the articles are accessible through the Bobst Library Electronic Journals or in a course packet available for purchase. Also, all readings are placed in the Bobst Library Reserve.


**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1: INTRODUCTION TO CLASS AND TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:**


**Recommended:**


Woodrow Wilson, "The World Must Be Made Safe for Democracy" (Address to Congress Asking for Declaration of War, April 2, 1917.

### 1. APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**Week 2: THE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS PROBLEM IN IR THEORY**


**Recommended:**


**Week 3: CLASSICAL REALISM**


**Recommended:**


**Week 4: NEOREALISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**


**Recommended:**

Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* Volume 51, Number 1, October 1998: 144-172.

Week 5: LIBERALISM AND NEO-LIBERALISM: INTERDEPENDENCE, REGIMES, & INSTITUTIONS


Recommended:


**Week 6: CONSTRUCTIVISM, INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW**


**Recommended:**


II. ISSUES AND PROCESSES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Week 7: ALLIANCES AND THE BALANCE OF POWER


Recommended:


On balancing in the current international system read the entire issue of International Security Volume 30, Number 1, Summer 2005.


Glenn H. Snyder, Alliance Politics, Ithaca; Cornell, 1997


Glenn H. Snyder, Alliance Politics, Ithaca; Cornell, 1997


Week 8: CAUSES OF WAR AND PEACE... AND HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY


Recommended:
Andrew Krepinevich, “From Cavalry to Computer.” *The National Interest*, Number 37, Fall 1994: 30-42.
R.D. Williams, “Is the West's Reliance on Technology the Panacea for Future Conflict or its Achilles' Heel?” *Defense Studies* Volume 1, Number 2, Summer 2001

**Week 9: THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS**


Recommended:

Benjamin R. Barber, Jihad Vs. McWorld New York: Ballantine, 1996

Week 10: PERSPECTIVES ON DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY


Jack Snyder, Myths of Empire, Ithaca: Cornell, 1991. chapters 1, 2, 3, 8. Skim the rest.


Recommended:


**Week 11: NUCLEAR STRATEGY, DETERRENCE, AND PROLIFERATION**


Recommended:


**Week 12: TERRORISM, FAILED STATES AND ASYMMETRIC WARFARE**


**Recommended:**
Week 13: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY


Recommended:


Week 14: NON-STATE ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS


Recommended:


