

Political Science 272 - Theories of International Relations

Room: Goergen Hall 109

University of Rochester Fall 2018

Instructor: Scott A. Tyson

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Office Hours: Th 12-2

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Office Hours: F 9-11am

Course Description: How do we explain patterns of war and peace? Why do states with common interests often fail to cooperate? This course surveys theories of international relations, focusing on explanations of conflict and cooperation. In particular, it examines the roles of individual choice, strategic interaction, uncertainty, power, domestic politics, and anarchy. Students participate in an internet-based simulation of an international crisis. The course also serves as an introduction to game theory, and students will be expected to solve game theory problems in homework and exams. Students taking this course for writing credit register for PSC 272W and write a substantial research paper in addition to the other course requirements.

Structure of the Course: This course covers theoretical approaches to international politics, and as a consequence, requires students to engage with methodological issues that have energized many debates in international relations. This means that students will read some classics as well as modern social science in the scholarly international politics literature. Since modern political science relies so heavily on game theory, students must learn how to utilize some of the formal tools of game theory throughout the course. In addition, we will also engage with empirical approaches to discuss how many of the various theories that are covered in the class have been, or could be, evaluated.

Because of the reliance on methodological approaches throughout the course, students will be required to submit (about 5) problem sets over the course of the semester. In addition, there will be two exams, a midterm that will take place around the middle of the course close to fall break, and a final exam that will take place during the period scheduled by the university.

For students who are enrolled in 272-W, there will also be an additional paper requirement due at the end of the semester before the finals period. This paper constitutes a 15-20 page that uses primary sources and/or data to make a theoretical argument. Students must submit at least one early draft to me, and another draft to the TA, before the final draft. However, the exact dates for submitting these drafts is not set in stone.

Required Materials: Readings and problem sets will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading for 272: Grading will be assigned based on the following scheme:

Problem Sets (25%)

Midterm Exam (25%)

Final Exam (35%)

Class Participation (15%)

Grading for 272-W: Grading will be assigned based on the following scheme:

Problem Sets (15%)

Midterm Exam (15%)

Final Exam (30%)

Final Paper (25%)

Class Participation (15%)

Schedule:

- Social Science Theories
- Theory & Empirics
- Introduction to Game Theory
- Classics
- War and Peace
- Terrorism & Insurgency
- International Organization

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resources:

1-154 Dewey Hall disability@rochester.edu (585) 275-9049

Academic Integrity: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at:

<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index.html>

Grade Grievances: If you believe a grade you have received is unfair or in error, you will need to do the following:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your TA.
2. Provide an explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair or in error.
3. If you believe your TA's response fails to address your claim of unfairness or error, you may write an appeal to the primary instructor. This appeal must include your original explanation to the TA and a written explanation for what is inadequate in the TA's response.