PSC 566: International Relations Field Seminar I

Prof. Bethany Lacina
Monday, 12:30–3:15

Goals of the field seminars

This is the first of two international relations field seminars for graduate students. This course covers the history of the field and introduces the nature of the contemporary discipline. The second field seminar covers substantive debates in the study of specific topics. This pair of courses has three goals:

1. To introduce the large academic literature on international politics, preparing for the synthesis and analysis required for a dissertation prospectus.

2. To introduce students to research problems that animate current work in the field, so they can see and evaluate examples of ongoing research in addition to commenting on classic works.

3. To practice digesting a theoretical argument, drawing out empirical implications, analyzing relevant evidence, and identifying directions for future research.

Outline of this course

Is international relations the study of topics in global affairs—e.g., interstate war, nuclear weapons, or climate change? Or is international relations the study of international systems, which are different from other forms of politics thanks to ostensibly unique forces such as anarchy or sovereignty? The post-WWII discipline of international relations was devoted to the second proposition: international systems need specialized political theories. Those specialized theories would shed light on most problems in global affairs, creating a necessary distinction between the international and the domestic versions of seemingly similar phenomena like trade or war.

By the late 1990s, this "systems approach" to IR was in decline thanks to critiques from rational choice, the rise of quantitative empirical analysis, and interpretivist challenges. By the 2010s, IR scholars were writing obituaries for the systems approach to IR; this juncture is also known as the "decline of IR theory," the "rise of eclecticism," or the end of the "paradigm wars."

In political science today, the term "international relations" is shorthand for the study of any outcomes that are important in global affairs. Students writing IR dissertations must be conversant with many literatures that are not part of international relations. For instance, a dissertation on international environmental treaties will probably have to engage with the study of public opinion and social movements, theories of public goods, and domestic political economy. On the other hand, this dissertation will probably not make more than a passing mention of canonical IR concepts such as great power competition or systemic polarity. Thus, research on international systems per se is anemic even as the actual international system appears to be changing rapidly.

This course traces how IR arrived at this juncture. The syllabus moves back and forth between describing the post-WWII international system as an empirical phenomenon and the contemporaneous history of IR as a discipline.

Instructor

Bethany Lacina
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Office hours: Email me to set up a time

Course Requirements

1. Students must attend every class. A student who misses class must get in touch with me within 24 hours of the start of the missed class period and then complete a make-up assignment.

2. Reading for the week must be completed by all students before class. I will get in touch with you outside of class if I have concerns about your preparation for class or participation.

3. There will be weekly writing assignments, which will be a combination of questions relating to the reading and independent data collection.

   Each week's paper will be due by email to me by 9:00am on the day that the class meets. Short papers received after the deadline but before the start of class will receive half credit. Papers not handed in by the start of class will receive a zero.

4. Over the course of the semester, students will conduct an independent research project focused on a 19th century state. The final assignment for the class is a ten page memorandum applying this research to examine an IR theory concerning war, international economic cooperation, or alliance behavior.

   The final assignment is due by 5pm on December 15. If turned in late, it will be marked down by one letter grade per 24 hours. Assignments not received by 5pm on December 22nd will receive a zero.

Grading and deadlines

Grading will be as follows: 1/4 class participation, 1/2 the average of the short papers, and 1/4 final.

Readings

- Most of the journal articles and book chapters in the syllabus are available through links below.

- Readings marked with a dagger (†) are available as electronic books from the Rochester library.
- You should purchase the following books:

    1. Charles R. Butcher and Ryan D. Griffiths. 2025. *Before Colonization: Non-Western States and Systems in the Nineteenth Century*. Columbia University Press.
    2. Andrew Phillips. 2011. *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders.* Cambridge University Press.
    3. Robert Powell. 1999. *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.
    4. Hendrik Spruyt. 2020. *The World Imagined: Collective Beliefs and Political Order in the Sinocentric, Islamic and Southeast Asian International Societies.* Cambridge University Press.
    5. Kenneth N. Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. This book has had multiple printings. They are all the same text as the first edition.

Academic honesty

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. The College Board on Academic Honesty provides further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

In this course the following additional requirements are in effect: You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. All written work must properly format quotations, use citations, and include a bibliography where necessary. Cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Honesty Board.

Class schedule

1. Aug 25 – Introduction to the course

Sept 1 – Labor Day, no class meeting

2. Sept 8 – What is an international system and what traits does it have?

Kenneth N. Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley. Chapter 3.

Markus Fischer. 1992. "Feudal Europe, 800-1300: Communal discourse and conflictual practices." *International Organization*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706859

Alexander Wendt. 1992. "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization*. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858

Stephen D. Krasner. 2001. "Organized hypocrisy in nineteenth-century East Asia," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/1.2.173

Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry. 1999. "The nature and sources of liberal international order." *Review of International Studies*. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210599001795

Kyle Beardsley, Howard Liu, Peter J. Mucha, David A. Siegel, and Juan F. Tellez. 2020. "Hierarchy and the Provision of Order in International Politics." *The Journal of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1086/707096

3. Sept 15 – International systems compared

Phillips, Andrew. 2011. *War, Religion and Empire.* Chapters 1-5.

Butcher, Charles R. and Ryan D. Griffiths. 2025. *Before Colonization.* Chapters 1-3, 6.

Spruyt, Hendrik. 2020. *The World Imagined.* Chapters 1-3, 8-9.

4. Sept 22 – Liberal internationalism and the post-WW2 global system

Robert Vitalis. 2005. "Birth of a discipline." In *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations*. David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, eds. SUNY Press. https://www.dropbox.com/s/ilj3pfuv8xtmy6c/Vitalis_Birth_Discipline.pdf?dl=0

Peter Wilson. 2012. "The myth of the first 'great debate'." In *International Relations and the First Great Debate*. Brian Schmidt, ed. Routledge. †

Michael Doyle. 1986. "Liberalism and World Politics." *American Political Science Review*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1960861

Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon. 2020. *Exit from Hegemony: The Unravelling of American Global Order*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 2. †

Spruyt, Hendrik. 2000. "The End of Empire and the Extension of the Westphalian System: The Normative Basis of the Modern State Order." *International Studies Review* 2(2): 65–92. https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.00205

Barnett, Michael, and Martha Finnemore. 2004. *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*. Cornell University Press. Chapters 1, 3, and 6. †

5. Sept 29 – Empirical perspectives on the liberal international order

Randall W. Stone. 2011. *Controlling Institutions: International Organizations and the Global Economy*. Cambridge University Press. †

J. Bradford Jensen, Dennis P. Quinn, and Stephen Weymouth. 2015. "The influence of firm global supply chains and foreign currency undervaluations on US trade disputes." *International Organization*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24758261

Victor D. Cha. 2010. "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia." *International Security*. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2010.34.3.158

Amanda Kennard. 2023. "Who Controls the Past: Far-Sighted Bargaining in International Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science*. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12747

Michael Tomz and Jessica Weeks. 2013. "Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* http://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000488

Mark S. Bell and Kai Quek. 2018. "Authoritarian Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *International Organization* http://doi.org/10.1017/S002081831700042X

6. Oct 6 – Realist critiques of liberal internationalism

Hans Morgenthau. 1948. *Politics among Nations*. 1st ed. Knopf. Selections. https://www.dropbox.com/s/96zpfd1vlofw4pt/Morgenthau_Politics_Among_Nations_3to72and267to308.pdf?dl=0

John J. Herz. 1950. "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* https://www.jstor.org/stable/i308594

John J. Mearsheimer. 1994. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* https://doi.org/10.2307/2539078

Jennifer Welsh. 2003. "'I' is for Ideology: Conservatism in International Affairs", *Global Society* https://www.dropbox.com/s/dxz4wkdqvb9tfwj/Welsh_IisforIdeology.pdf?dl=0

Michael C. Williams. 2013. "In the beginning: The International Relations enlightenment and the ends of International Relations theory." *European Journal of International Relations*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113495477

Oct 13 – Fall break, no class

7. Oct 20 – "Neo"-realism and systemic theories of IR

Kenneth N. Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley. Chapters 4-6, 8.

Stephen D. Krasner. 1976. "State Power and the Structure of International Trade." *World Politics* https://doi.org/10.2307/2009974

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. 1975. "Measuring Systemic Polarity." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* http://doi.org/10.1177/002200277501900201

Stephen M. Walt. 1987. "The Origins of Alliances." Cornell University Press. Chapters 2, 5-8. †

8. Oct 27 – The rationalist critique of realism

James D. Fearon. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903

Robert Powell. 1999. *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Robert Keohane. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 4–6. https://www.dropbox.com/s/skwgaaq9c7lyr69/Keohane_AfterHegemony_Chp4to6.pdf?dl=0

9. Nov 3 – Rational choice analysis of global affairs

James D. Fearon. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* https://www.jstor.org/stable/2944796

Kenneth Schultz. 1998. "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises." *American Political Science Review* https://www.jstor.org/stable/2586306

Crisman-Cox, Casey and Michael Gibilisco. 2018. "Audience Costs and the Dynamics of War and Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* http://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12347

Coe, Andrew J. and Jane Vaynman. 2020. "Why Arms Control Is So Rare." *American Political Science Review* http://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541900073X

Brett V. Benson and Bradley C. Smith. 2023. *Commitment Problems in Alliance Formation*. *American Journal of Political Science*. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12693

Elena V. McLean and Randall W. Stone. 2012. "The Kyoto Protocol: Two-Level Bargaining and European Integration." *International Studies Quarterly* www.jstor.org/stable/41409825

10. Nov 10 – The "isms" and the decline of systems-level theory

Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* http://www.jstor.org/stable/2703498

Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik. 1999. "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security* http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539248

Brian C. Rathbun. 2010. "Is Anybody Not an (International Relations) Liberal?" *Security Studies* http://doi.org/10.1080/09636410903546558

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink. 2001. "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.391

David A. Lake. 2013. "Theory is dead, long live theory: The end of the Great Debates and the rise of eclecticism in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113494330

W. Kindred Winecoff. 2017. "How Did American International Political Economy Become Reductionist? A Historiography of a Discipline." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* https://www.dropbox.com/s/m3e8ng47gryh7fw/Winecoff2017OREP.pdf?dl=0

11. Nov 17 – Is liberal internationalism over?

Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon. 2020. *Exit from Hegemony: The Unravelling of American Global Order*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 4–6. †

Nicholas Michelsen, Pablo De Orellana, and Filippo Costa Buranelli. 2023. "The reactionary internationale: the rise of the new right and the reconstruction of international society." *International Relations* http://doi.org/10.1177/00471178231186392

Sean Roberts. 2019. "The Eurasian Economic Union: the geopolitics of authoritarian cooperation." *Political Geographies of the Post-Soviet Union*. John O'Loughlin and Ralph S.

Clem, eds. Routledge. https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/glgc4hnp1g8laxn59mu4o/Roberts_EEU.pdf?rlkey=xb6fysrg7vb4um8cs9qpu4ciw&st=qg7lwr3c&dl=0

Jessica Weiss and Jeremy Wallace. 2021. "Domestic Politics, China's Rise, and the Future of the Liberal International Order." *International Organization* https://doi:10.1017/S002081832000048X

Pauselli, Gino, Urdínez, Francisco, and Merke, Frederico. 2023. "Shaping the liberal international order from the inside: A natural experiment on China's influence in the UN human rights council." *Research & Politics* http://doi.org/10.1177/20531680231193513

Edward D. Mansfield and Jon C. W. Pevehouse. Forthcoming. "Nationalism, Regime Type, and Trade Agreements." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027251365162

Nov 24 – Thanksgiving break, no class

12. Dec 1 – International systems as independent variable

Bear F. Braumoeller. 2013. *The Great Powers and the International System: Systemic Theory in Empirical Perspective.* Cambridge University Press. †

Colin Krainin and Thomas Wiseman. 2016. "War and Stability in Dynamic International Systems." *Journal of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1086/686307

Mark David Nieman, Carla Martinez Machain, Olga V. Chyzh, and Sam R. Bell. 2021. "An International Game of Risk: Troop Placement and Major Power Competition." *Journal of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1086/711716

Mark David Nieman and Douglas M. Gibler. 2023. "Peaceful Neighborhoods and Democratic Differences." *Journal of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1086/720647

Artabe, Eugenia, Samantha Chapa, Leah Sparkman, and Patrick E. Shea. 2023. "External Threats, Capacity, and Repression: How the Threat of War Affects Political Development and Physical Integrity Rights." *British Journal of Political Science*. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123422000692

Susan D. Hyde. 2020. "Democracy's backsliding in the international environment." *Science* http://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb2434

13. Dec 8 – International system as dependent variable

Christopher Hemmer and Peter Katzenstein. 2002. "Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism." *International Organization* http://doi.org/10.1162/002081802760199890

Avidit Acharya and Alex Lee. 2018. "Economic Foundations of the Territorial State System." *American Journal of Political Science* https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12379

J.C. Sharman and Ayşe Zarakol. 2023. "Global Slavery in the Making of States and International Orders." *American Political Science Review* http://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423000424

Benjamin Zala. 2017. "Polarity Analysis and Collective Perceptions of Power: The Need for a New Approach." *Journal of Global Security Studies* https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogw025

Christopher Erspamer, Francesca Della Torre, Giulia Massini, Guido Ferilli, Pier Luigi Sacco, and Paolo Massimo Buscema. 2022. "Global world (dis-) order? Analyzing the dynamic evolution of the micro-structure of multipolarism by means of an unsupervised neural network approach." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121351