

ANGLO-AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
School of International Relations and Diplomacy

IRS500 Theories of International Relations

Course Description

This is a survey of contemporary IR theory. It presents Realism and Liberalism as the traditional approaches to modern international relations, explains their origins and characteristics, and discusses their applications. Subsequently it introduces a variety of alternative approaches formulated under the rubric of critical international theory. Examples include the Frankfurt School, feminism, postcolonialism, constructivism, postmodernism, narrative theory, and the aesthetic turn. What is traditional IR theory in the first place? Why has it been so influential? What are its limits and biases? What is critical international theory? How is it different from traditional theory? Guided by questions such as these and careful to treat all ideas in their proper historical context, the course offers a unique opportunity to gain a nuanced understanding of the full landscape of IR theory today, including the purposes, agenda, methodology, and broader epistemological assumptions animating the competing perspectives. Students will learn to identify, compare, and contrast different theoretical frameworks and use them to interpret any international phenomenon from multiple angles. This will provide them with a much more balanced understanding of both the theory and practice of international relations.

Location and Schedule

This course meets Fridays 11:15 a.m.-2 p.m., room 3.26.

Instructor

Milan Babík, D.Phil., Lecturer in IR and Diplomacy (milan.babik@aauni.edu)
Office Hours: Fridays 2-3 p.m. or by appointment

Reading Materials

Required course readings include books, articles, and other material. Everything is available on our NEO/MyLearning course site.

Requirements and Assessment

Your final grade will be based on your performance in the following categories:

a) Attendance & Participation (15%)

This refers to your regular attendance, which is mandatory, and to your involvement in discussion, which is expected. Attendance will be taken at the beginning and end of each class, and absences will only be excused in exceptional circumstances (severe illness, family emergency). You must notify me in advance, secure my permission, and arrange to make up any missed work. See Appendix I for further details.

b) Reading Summaries (20%)

You are required to submit 4 reading summaries. Each summary is to be 2-3 pages long, single-spaced, in 12pt. font Times New Roman, and with 1-inch margins. Eligible topics are marked with an asterisk (*). You are expected to

cover all readings assigned under the topic in question. Summaries must be coherent, accurate, concise, and in your own words. You may submit more than 4 of them, in which case only the best 4 will count. Each summary is due at the beginning of the session for which the readings have been assigned. Please submit them in hard copy. Late submissions are not accepted, and plagiarism and/or the use of generative AI are strictly prohibited. See Appendix II for further details.

c) Examination (20%)

This comprehensive examination will take place in class on Friday, November 13, starting at 11:30 a.m. You will complete it by hand and have 90 minutes available. Exam booklets will be provided.

d) Term Paper (25%)

This paper is to be 15-16 pages long (A4, including footnotes, excluding cover and bibliography), double-spaced, in 12pt. font Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins, and with footnotes and bibliography in the [Chicago citation style](#). Topics will be posted in early September. The paper is due in class on Friday, November 6, and the revised (final) draft is due in class on Friday, December 11. All submissions must be in hard copy, and the revised draft also has to be submitted digitally via Turnitin/NEO. Late submissions are not accepted, and plagiarism and/or the use of generative AI are strictly prohibited. Again, refer to Appendix II.

e) Presentation (20%)

You will choose an important representative or critic of traditional IR theory and introduce him or her to your classmates. Depending on class enrollment, you will work alone or in a pair/group. The presentation must be 40-45 minutes long and accompanied by a handout. It is strongly recommended but not required that you also employ audio-visual props (PowerPoint, Prezi, YouTube clips, etc.). Please see Appendix III for further details.

Course Outline

I. Traditional Theory

Sept. 4 Welcome and Introduction: Origins of Modern IR Theory

THE GREAT WAR AND THE BIRTH OF ACADEMIC IR

- Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (Vintage, 1996), chap. 1.
- Michael Howard, *The First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2002), chap. 2.
- Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 1 (Scribner's, 1923), chap. 1.
- John Keegan, "Firepower and the Culture of Universal Service," in *idem, A History of Warfare* (Pimlico, 1993), 359-366.

Sept. 11 The Great Debate between Realism and Liberal Internationalism

WILSONIAN LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

- Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the Senate" (Jan. 22, 1917), in Arthur S. Link et al., eds. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*

- (Princeton University Press, 1966-) [henceforth *PWW*], vol. 40;
 “War Message to Congress” (April 2, 1917), *PWW* vol. 41.
- Woodrow Wilson, “[Fourteen Points](#)” (1918).
 - [Covenant of the League of Nations](#) (1919)

THE REALIST CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL UTOPIANISM*

- E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939* (Palgrave, 2016 [1939/1948], Preface and chaps. 1-5.
- Hans J. Morgenthau, “Science of Peace: A Rationalist Utopia,” *Social Research* 42, no. 1 (1975): 20-34.

Sept. 18 Varieties of Classical Realism

THE CHRISTIAN REALISM OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR*

- Reinhold Niebuhr, “Augustine’s Political Realism,” in idem, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (Scribner’s, 1953), chap. 9.
- Reinhold Niebuhr, “Two Forms of Utopianism,” in *A Reinhold Niebuhr Reader*, ed. Charles C. Brown (Trinity Press, 1992), 43-45.
- Michael Joseph Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (LSU Press, 1986), chap. 5.

THE CLOSET NIETZSCHEAN: HANS MORGENTHAU

- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (Knopf, 1973), chap. 1.
- Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Louisiana State University Press, 2001), chap. 1-2.

THE DIPLOMATIC THOUGHT OF GEORGE F. KENNAN*

- Louis Menand, “Getting Real: George F. Kennan’s Cold War.” *New Yorker*, November 14, 2011, 76-83.
- “X” [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947): 566-582.

Sept. 25 Liberal Responses

LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM AND DEMOCRATIC PEACE*

- Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986), 1151-1169.
- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *National Interest* 16 (1989), 3-18.
- G. John Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order,” *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (March 2011): 71-87.

INTERDEPENDENCE AND SOFT POWER

- Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th ed. (Longman, 2012), chaps. 1 and 2.

Oct. 2 The Neo-Neo Consensus: Neorealism and Neoliberal Institutionalism

TOWARD A SYSTEMIC THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS*

- Robert O. Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics,” in idem, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (Columbia UP, 1986).

- Kenneth N. Waltz, "Laws and Theories" and "Reductionist and Systemic Theories," in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*.

THE ROLE OF ANARCHY IN DETERMINING STATE BEHAVIOR*

- Kenneth N. Waltz, "Political Structures" and "Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power," in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*.
- John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton, 2001), chap. 1-2.
- Presentation topic selection (in-class).

II. Alternative Approaches

Oct. 9 Critical International Theory

CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL THEORY*

- Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*.
- Mark Hoffman, "Critical Theory and the Inter-Paradigm Debate," *Millennium* 16, no. 2 (1987): 231-249.

MARX, GRAMSCI, AND THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL*

- Robert J. Antonio, "The Origin, Development, and Contemporary Status of Critical Theory," *Sociological Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (1983): 325-351.
- Robert W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *Millennium* 12, no. 2 (1983): 162-75.

THE DISCOURSE OF ANARCHY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

- Richard K. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism," in Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*.

Oct. 16 Gender, Postcolonialism and the Problem of Symbolic Representation

GENDER AND FEMINISM*

- J. Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," *Millennium* 17, no. 3 (1988): 429-440.
- Robert O. Keohane, "International Relations Theory: Contributions of a Feminist Standpoint," *Millennium* 18, no. 2 (1989): 245-253.

THE AESTHETIC TURN*

- Roland Bleiker, "The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory," *Millennium* 30, no. 3 (2001): 509-533.
- Jane Mayer, "Whatever It Takes: The Politics of the Man Behind 24," *The New Yorker* 83, no. 1 (2007): 66-82.
- Derek Johnson, "Neoliberal Politics, Convergence, and the Do-It-Yourself Security of 24," *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 1 (2011): 149-154.

POSTCOLONIALISM

- Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1979), pp. 284-328.

Oct. 23 Narrative Theory, Postmodernism, and Constructivism

NARRATIVE THEORY AND POSTMODERNISM*

- Milan Babik, "Narrative Theory," in idem, *The Poetics of International Politics: Fact and Fiction in Narrative Representations of World Affairs* (Routledge, 2019), chap. 1.

CONSTRUCTIVISM: A VIA MEDIA?*

- Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.
- Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 71-81.
- Presentation topic annotated bibliographies due in class.

Oct. 30 No Class – Midterm Break

Nov. 6 Writing Seminar

- term paper (hard copy) due at the beginning of class
- Presentations 1 & 2 reading assignments due

Nov. 13 Examination (in-class, 11:30 a.m. start)

- Presentations 3 & 4 reading assignments due

III. Presentations

Nov. 20 Presentations 1 & 2

- Presentations 5 & 6 reading assignments due

Nov. 27 Presentations 3 & 4

- Presentations 7 & 8 reading assignments due

Dec. 4 Presentations 5 & 6

Dec. 11 Presentations 7 & 8

- term paper (hard copy and Turnitin submission) due at the beginning of class

Other Notes and Comments

Smartphones or other electronic devices including laptops and tablets are not allowed in the classroom. Please turn them off and stow them away before entering.

Appendix I: Attendance Policy

General

In-person class attendance is mandatory at AAU, and you must attend at least two thirds of sessions in this course. If you do not meet this condition and most of your absences are excused, you will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If you do not meet this condition and most of your absences are unexcused, you will receive a grade of “FW” (Failure to Withdraw).

Late Arrivals/Early Departures

Arriving in class late or leaving class early shall be considered an absence. Attendance will be taken at the beginning and end of each class. It is your responsibility to place your name and signature on the attendance sheet.

Excusing an Absence

Absence can only be excused for valid reasons (severe illness, family emergency, etc.). Should these cause you to miss a class and you would like to be excused, please submit an Absence Excuse Request Form to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Do not forget to supplement the form with documents providing reasons for the absence. Whenever possible, inform me of your absence in advance.

Should you miss a class session during the Add/Drop period due to a change in Registration, the absence will be excused if you submit an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized Add/Drop form.

Make-up Options

If your absence has been excused by the Dean of Students, you are entitled to make up missed exams and assignments provided their nature allows it. Coursework missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up and will be penalized according to the assessment guidelines specified in the syllabus.

You are responsible for contacting me within one week of the date your absence was excused to arrange make-up options.

Appendix II: Policy on AI and Plagiarism

General

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. You are expected to create and submit works of which you are the author. Among other things, this means that you are strictly prohibited from using generative AI such as ChatGPT in any part of this course.

Examples

Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship: textual, verbal, visual, audiovisual, and more. Here are some examples:

- *Verbatim plagiarism*: verbatim use of another's work, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation
- *Paraphrasing plagiarism*: paraphrasing someone else's work, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement of the source
- *Data plagiarism*: use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source
- *False quotation*: publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation
- *Fictitious citation*: quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work
- *Inaccurate citation*: citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified
- *Ghostwriting*: commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own
- *Patchwriting*: using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution
- *Self-plagiarism*: unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past
- *Collaborative plagiarism*: delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output

Penalties and Disciplinary Procedures

The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a failing grade for the assignment and a report to your Dean. In instances of small-scale plagiarism, novice students may receive the benefit of the doubt if it is reasonable to assume that the offence resulted from ignorance rather than intent.

Acts intended to make plagiarism more difficult to detect constitute an aggravating circumstance. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, creation of typos, use of machine translation tools, creation of synonymous text, and more.

Depending on the type and degree of offence, the Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism automatically entails a disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

Appendix III: Presentation Guidelines

Purpose: The goal of the presentation is to broaden and deepen your knowledge of 20th-century IR theory by researching an important thinker from the list below, creating his or her profile, and sharing it with your fellow classmates.

Suggested Structure: You are encouraged to conceptualize the presentation as an IR theory encyclopedia entry and to structure it accordingly. The talk should start with a concise snapshot of your theorist followed by detailed sections on his or her (1) personal background, (2) education and professional/scholarly career, (3) principal intellectual inspirations, (4) main works, (5) key arguments and contributions to international political thought, and (6) legacy and position in the broader landscape of contemporary IR theory. Throughout, strive for a balance of facts and critical interpretation, avoiding the pitfalls of a pure report lacking in subjective assessment, on the one hand, and an opinionated talk uninformed by facts, on the other.

Handout and Readings: As part of your presentation, you are expected to produce a handout including an annotated bibliography of 5 primary and 5 secondary pieces of scholarly literature pertaining to your theorist. You are also responsible for organizing all other aspects of the session including the reading assignment, which must be circulated at least 2 weeks in advance of your talk and consist of 40-50 pages.

Critical Dates and Deadlines

- Oct. 2 Topic assignment: research theorists listed below and identify your top 3 choices. Selection will take place in class via random drawing. If you wish to profile a theorist not on the list, please see me in advance.
- Oct. 23 Annotated bibliography due: submit two separate lists, one of primary sources (works by your theorist), the other of secondary sources (works about your theorist). Each bibliography must follow the Chicago style and be submitted in hard copy. Please make sure to identify, include, and properly annotate the most important works. For hints on how to compile an annotated bibliography, consult librarians at AAU Library.
- Nov. 20 In-class presentations start.

Theorists

Adler, Emanuel	Enloe, Cynthia	Kratochwil, Friedrich
Aron, Raymond	Finnemore, Martha	Kubáľková, Vendulka
Ashley, Richard K.	George, Jim	Lebow, Richard N.
Bain, William	Giddens, Anthony	Linklater, Andrew
Biersteker, Thomas	Gilpin, Robert	Mearsheimer, John J.
Booth, Ken	Habermas, Jürgen	Molloy, Sean
Brown, Chris	Halliday, Fred	Morgenthau, Hans J.
Bull, Hedley	Hassner, Pierre	Niebuhr, Reinhold
Buzan, Barry	Herz, John H.	Nye, Joseph S.
Campbell, David	Hoffmann, Stanley	Onuf, Nicholas G.
Connolly, William E.	Huntington, Samuel	Reus-Smit, Christian
Carr, E.H.	Katzenstein, Peter J.	Rengger, Nicholas
Cox, Robert W.	Kennan, George F.	Risse, Thomas
Der Derian, James	Keohane, Robert O.	Ruggie, John G.
Dunne, Tim	Kissinger, Henry	Said, Edward
Elsthain, Jean Bethke	Krasner, Stephen	Shapiro, Michael J.

Skocpol, Theda
Smith, Steve
Spivak, Gayatri
Sylvester, Christine
Tickner, J. Ann
Waever, Ole
Walker, R.B.J.
Waltz, Kenneth N.
Walt, Stephen M.
Weber, Cynthia
Wendt, Alexander
Wight, Martin
Wolfers, Arnold O.
Zizek, Slavoj

