Theories of International Relations

Winter semester 2023/24

6 ECTS

Mondays 12:30-13:50, room C122

Moodle: <https://dl1.cuni.cz/course/view.php?id=15633>

# Lecturers

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Office hours (A.K.): Mondays, 10:30-12:30 <https://konzultace.fsv.cuni.cz/>

# Course description

The course introduces the students to major contemporary ways of theorizing world politics. Each theory is examined in a nexus with a specific empirical phenomenon to stimulate the student’s analytical facilities.

# Aims of the course

The students will get a grasp of the ongoing IR theoretical debates and learn to apply the theories and concepts to some of the most important issues of international politics and security. They will also improve their reading, writing and argumentation skills as they work on assignments and participate in class debate.

# Structure of the course and readings

## **Session 1. Intro session. Rules and requirements. Warm-up discussion**

Please, read the syllabus.

## **Sessions 2. War, hegemony, power transitions: offensive realism and beyond**

* Mearsheimer, J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton&Company, 2001: 1-54, 138-167, 267-272, 288-304.
* Interview: Crouching Tiger: John Mearsheimer on Strangling China & the Inevitability of War. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXSkY4QKDlA>

## **Session 3. Nuclear arms and deterrence: strategic realism and game theory**

* Quackenbush S.L. *Understanding General Deterrence. Theory and Application.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: 1-20 (Chapter 1)
* Thomas Schelling. The art of commitment. In: Schelling T.C. *Arms and Influence.* Yale University Press, 2008: 35-92
* Coleman D.G. & J.M. Siracusa. Real-World Nuclear Deterrence: The Making of International Strategy. Praeger Security International, 2006: 19-43 (Chapter 2), 45-53 (Chapter 3), 55-72 (Chapter 4).
* Yes, Prime Minister. Season 1, Episode 1. The Grand Design.[[1]](#footnote-1)

+ Recommended movie: *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0057012/ [Optional]

## **Session 4. Domestic politics and foreign policies: neoclassical realism**

* Schweller, R.L. *Unanswered Threats. Political Constraints on the Balance of Power.* Princeton University Press, 2008: 1-21, 69-84, 103-130

## **Session 5. International institutions and regimes: liberalism and rational choice theory**

* Keohane, R.O. (1998) International institutions: can interdependence work? In: Keohane R.O. (ed.). *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*. Routledge, 2002: 27-38
* Keohane, R.O. (1990) International liberalism reconsidered. In: Keohane R.O. (ed.). *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*. Routledge, 2002: 39-62
* Keohane, R.O. *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton University Press, 1984: 65-109 (Chapter 5-6)

## **Session 6. Theorizing regional integration. Neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, post-functionalism**

* Schimmelfennig, F. Regional Integration Theory. *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2018
* Braun, M. 2019. Postfunctionalism, Identity and the Visegrad Group. *Journal of Common Market Studies.* https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12994

## **Session 7. Non-governmental organizations and international humanitarian aid: neo-institutionalist organizational theory**

* March J.G. & J.P. Olsen. (1998) The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders. *International Organization*, 52: 4, 943-969
* Heyse, L. (2013) Tragic Choices in Humanitarian Aid: A Framework of Organizational Determinants of NGO Decision Making. *Voluntas*, 24:68–92
* Ossewaarde R. et al. (2008). Dynamics of NGO legitimacy: how organizing betrays core missions of NGOs. *Public Administration and Development*, 28: 42-53

## **Session 8. Norms, ideas, identities: social constructivism**

* Wendt, A. 1992.Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*. International Organization 46 (2): 391-425.*
* Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. *International* *Organization* 52 (4): 887-917.
* Ringmar, E. *Identity, interest and action. A cultural explanation of Sweden's intervention in the Thirty Years War.* Cambridge University Press, 1996: 1-16, 66-83,

## **Session 9. Critical perspectives on international security. Securitization theory**

* Buzan B., O. Wæver & J. de Wilde. *Security. A New Framework for Analysis.* Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998: 21-70 (Chapters 2, 3)
* Kazharski, A. & C. Tabosa. New patterns of securitization in Central and Eastern Europe. In: Turcsányi R. Q. & M. Vorotnyuk (eds.) *Theorizing security in the Eastern European Neighborhood: Issues and Approaches.* Stratpol, 2018: 60-81

## **Session 10. Borders, spaces, and regions: post-structuralism and critical geopolitics**

* Tuathail G. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space.* Routledge, 1996: 16-43 https://dl1.cuni.cz/course/view.php?id=15633
* Moisio, S. 2007. Redrawing the map of Europe: Spatial formation of the EU’s Eastern Dimension. *Geography Compas* 1/1: 82-10
* Wolff, L. *Inventing Eastern Europe.* Stanford University Press, 1994: 1-49 (Introduction, Chapter One)

## **Session 11. Reserve session. Revision and discussion**

# Course requirements

The students must read all the required literature listed in the syllabus. Reading is an absolute precondition of meaningful class participation. Students who participate actively in class discussions can be awarded extra credit points.

For five out of nine sessions (**sessions 2-10**) the students are supposed to use the Moodle forum to post a meaningful question or a critical comment on the required readings. Those who are not posting anything for the specific session are expected to react to at least one post made by their classmates in a meaningful way, using the knowledge gained from the required readings and other credible sources. **Nine contributions in total.** What you post should be mainly your own text. The students are not allowed to copy-paste text from internet sources or required readings without quotation marks. Violation of these rules will be treated as plagiarism.

**The use of artificial intelligence platforms to generate contributions is not allowed and will be interpreted as an offense similar to plagiarism.** The students’ contributions will be checked with the help of AI detection software.

The students will complete a midterm test which is based strictly on the required readings assigned for sessions covered before the midterm and will consist of **closed questions** (e.g., multiple choice). The deadline and the time limit are specified in Moodle. The students are responsible for ensuring a stable internet connection during the midterm and for completing the test before the deadline. The test will not be reopened after the deadline has passed.

The final exam has the form of a collective **oral exam in the examination period**. The students receive two questions checking the core topics of the course. Students then have a brief time to prepare their talking points. The two questions are then discussed in the student group, the notes are then shared with the lecturer who facilitates the discussion. The grade is awarded reflecting both the prepared notes and contribution to the discussion (both own points and the ability to respond knowledgeably to the contribution of others).

# Grade composition:

Midterm test – 20%

Contributions Moodle – 40%

Final exam – 40%

## **Evaluation**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| A – excellent | Excellent upper (1) | 100 – 96 |
|  | Excellent lower (2) | 95 - 91  |
| B – very good | Very good upper (1) | 90 – 86 |
|  | Very good lower (2) | 85 – 81 |
| C – good | Good upper (1) | 80 – 76 |
|  | Good lower (2) | 75 – 71 |
| D – satisfactory | Satisfactory upper (1) | 70 – 66 |
|  | Satisfactory lower (2) | 65 – 61 |
| E – sufficient | Sufficient upper (1) | 60 – 56 |
|  | Sufficient lower (2) | 55 – 51 |
| F – fail |  | 50 – 0 |

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## Course rules

The *Code of Study and Examination of Charles University in Prague* provides the general framework of study rules at the university. According to art. 6, par. 17 of this Code, “a student may not take any examination in any subject entered in his study plan more than three times, i.e. he shall have the right to two resit dates; no extraordinary resit date shall be permitted. (…) If a student fails to appear for an examination on the date for which he has enrolled without duly excusing himself, he shall not be marked; the provision of neither this nor of the first sentence shall constitute the right to arrange for a special examination date.”

Any written assignment composed by the student shall be an original piece. The practices of plagiarism, defined by the Dean’s Provision no. 18/2015, are seen as “a major violation of the rules of academic ethics” and “will be penalized in accordance with Disciplinarian Regulations of the faculty.”

1. Available in Moodle. Please, watch at home. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)