

Seton Hall University

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Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International
Relations

Fall 2024

DIPL 6000 International Relations Theory

Brian K. Muzás Ph.D.

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International Relations Theory

School of Diplomacy and International Relations
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DIPL 6000

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the major theoretical traditions of international relations and diplomacy. We will begin with a critical investigation of the competing assumptions and concepts that form the heart of various or maybe traditional theoretical approaches to the study of world politics. As a class we will discuss the key actors, processes, and variables highlighted by each theory, and assess their relative strengths and weaknesses. Throughout this investigation, we will consider various theoretical tradeoffs relating to the issues such as levels of analysis, parsimony versus accuracy, and the types of research questions being addressed.

There is an important underlying goal of the course: to provide students with an opportunity to improve their ability to engage in critical analysis. As a result, the course centers on the examination of competing theoretical perspectives. It is expected that students will use this course to develop further three sets of skills: the ability to read complex material both quickly and effectively; the ability to write cogent analysis and include independent thinking; and the ability to speak, drawing on persuasive and reasoned oral arguments.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this semester, students will be able to...

- CLO 1: Identify and explain the major theoretical traditions of international relations and diplomacy.
- CLO 2: Investigate and analyze competing assumptions and concepts from which these theories are derived and which they employ.
- CLO 3: Identify key actors, processes, and variables highlighted by each theory and assess their strengths and weaknesses.
- CLO 4: Evaluate issues related to levels of analysis, parsimony versus accuracy, and the types of research questions addressed by different theoretical traditions.

M.A. Program Student Learning Outcomes

This course aims to meet the following M.A. program student learning outcomes:

- To gain knowledge and understanding of
 - 1) the key concepts, models, theories, and debates involved in the study of contemporary international relations and diplomacy
 - 2) the prevailing global issues concerning religion and race
- To develop skills of
 - 1) analyzing complex situations and synthesizing information
 - 2) communicating effectively in oral and written form.

Instructional Materials

Betts, Richard K. *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on the Causes of War and Peace*, 5th ed. New York and London: Routledge, 2017. (Please use the 5th edition). [Link to purchase on amazon.](#)

Lebow, Richard Ned. *Coercion, Cooperation, and Ethics in International Relations*. New York and London: Routledge, 2007. [Link to purchase on Amazon.](#)

Wagner, R. Harrison. *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007. [Link to purchase on Amazon.](#)

Grading Information

Your final grade for this course will be calculated in a way that showcases your strengths. The breakdown is as follows:

- 10% of your course grade will be earned from your three Synthesis Essay Critiques
- 20% of your course grade will be your lowest-scoring average assignment type (See below)
- 30% of your course grade will be your medium-scoring average assignment type (see below)
- 40% of your course grade will be your highest-scoring average assignment type (See below)

For the 20%, 30%, and 40% grades: I will take the average of each of the three assignment types (12 Journals each worth 10 points, 5 Synthesis essays each worth 10 points, and the Oral Final worth 10 points). The assignment type on which your average score was the highest will be worth 40% of your overall grade. The assignment type on which your average score was the lowest will be worth 20% of your overall grade. The middle-scoring assignment type will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

Assignments:

Synthesis Essays, 10 points each

There are five synthesis essays due at natural breaks throughout the course. Synthesis

essays may take the form of background essays or literature reviews. However, our synthesis essays will take the form of arguments (i.e.: Op-Eds). Synthesis Essays are worth 10 points each. See the instructions and rubric posted in Canvas (on the Assignments and Grading page under Modules) for more details about how to write a successful Op-Ed. As you will see on the rubric, there is a granularity of .25 pt and a floor of 1 pt to equal 10 points total for each essay.

Synthesis Essay Critiques, 10 points each

For each module, you will read one of your peer's synthesis essays and provide feedback on their work. Your critique must include one sentence that expresses appreciation for something your peer did well, as well as a one-sentence suggestion for something you think could be improved upon. Critiques are each worth 10 points. See the instructions and rubric posted in Canvas (on the Assignments and Grading page under Modules) for more details.

Journal Entries, 10 points each

Journal Entries are Due Each Week with the Readings. For Module 1: Betts, submit a three-sentence summary for each chapter. There are multiple chapters per part. For Module 2: Lebow and Module 3: Wagner, submit a three-sentence summary for each chapter AND a three-to-six sentence application of something that you learned from the chapter to a current event or a historical event. Each module's journal is worth 10 points. See the rubric in Canvas (on the Assignments and Grading page under Modules) for more details about how to write a successful Journal Response. As you will see in the rubric, there are 5 criteria and 4 levels of achievement, and thus a half-point granularity to equal 10 points total for the journal.

Oral Final Exam, 20 points

See details in Canvas on the Assignments and Grading page under Modules as well as in the assignments posted in Module 4.

Remarks

Disability Services Statement

It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at DSS@shu.edu.

Policy on Incompletes

Incompletes will be given only in exceptional cases for emergencies. Students wishing to request a grade of Incomplete must provide documentation to support the request to the

professor before the date of the final examination. If the incomplete request is approved, the professor reserves the right to specify the new submission date for all missing coursework. Students who fail to submit the missing course work within this time period will receive a failing grade for all missing coursework and a final grade based on all coursework assigned. Any Incomplete not resolved within one calendar year of receiving the Incomplete or by the time of graduation (whichever comes first) automatically becomes an “FI” (which is equivalent to an F). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have completed all course requirements within the timeframe allotted. Please be aware that Incompletes on your transcript will impact financial aid and academic standing.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration and may result in a lowered or failing grade for the course and up to possible dismissal from the School of Diplomacy. See University and School standards for academic conduct here:

<https://www.shu.edu/documents/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

and <https://www.shu.edu/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>. Resources for academic integrity are on the course Canvas site.

Citation Formats

Papers should utilize one of the Chicago Manual of Style citation formats: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography. The guidelines for these formats are here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

CAPS

As part of our commitment to the health and well-being of all students, Seton Hall University’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers initial assessments, counseling, crisis intervention, consultation, and referral services to the SHU community. The CAPS office is located on the second floor of Mooney Hall, room 27. Appointments can be made in-person or by calling 973-761-9500 during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. In case of a psychological emergency, call CAPS (973-761-9500) at any time to speak to a crisis counselor. For more information, please visit: <https://www.shu.edu/counseling-psychological-services/>.

*** Please note that I may adjust the syllabus during the semester.**