

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**  
**Department of Political Science**

Political Science 41501  
Foundations of Realism  
Winter 2016  
Instructor: John Mearsheimer

**Course Description:** The aim of this course is to explore some of the core concepts and theoretical ideas that underpin realist thinking. Given the richness of the realist tradition and the limits of the quarter system, many important issues cannot be addressed in any detail in this seminar.

**Course Requirements:** Every student is expected to do all the reading, attend every seminar, and participate in the discussion. The grade will be based on classroom participation (25%), and one 15-page paper (75%) due at the end of the course.

I will provide students with a list of paper topics from which they can choose one. The paper will be due in my office (Pick 416A) no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday of exam week – March 16. Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. The paper must be no longer than 15 pages of text, double-spaced, have at least 1-inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font.

**Readings and Books:** The following books – all in paper – are available at the Seminary Coop.

Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton University Press version)  
Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (Penguin)  
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin Classics)  
John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton)  
Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge)  
Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (Viking)  
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago)  
Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw Hill)

All articles, unpublished papers, and book chapters with \*\* next to them are on Chalk.

**Course Outline:**

**1. January 6 (Wednesday): Organizational Meeting**

**2. January 13 (Wednesday): The Underlying Logic of Realism**

-- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Parts I and II.

**3. January 20 (Wednesday): The Essence of Politics**

-- Clausewitz, *On War*, "Two Notes by the Author," Books One and Eight.

-- Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (NY: Knopf, 1973), chapters 1-3. \*\*

-- Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, entire book.

#### **4. January 27 (Wednesday): Structural Realism**

-- Charles Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2010), chapter 3. \*\*

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, chapter 3.

-- Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapters 4-6.

#### **5. February 3 (Wednesday): Sovereignty and Anarchy**

A. Claire Cutler, "Critical Reflections on the Westphalian Assumptions of International Law and Sovereignty: A Crisis of Legitimacy," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 2001), pp. 133-50. \*\*

Luke Glanville, "The Myth of 'Traditional' Sovereignty," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (March 2013), pp. 79-90. \*\*

F.H. Hinsley, "The Concept of Sovereignty and the Relations between States," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (December 1967), pp. 242-52. \*\*

Stephen D. Krasner, "Abiding Sovereignty," *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (July 2001), pp. 229-51. \*\*

-- Joseph M. Parent, *Uniting States: Voluntary Union in World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapters 2-9. \*\*

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425. \*\*

Alexander Wendt, "Why a World State is Inevitable," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 491-542. \*\*

"World Government," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, July 2, 2012 update, a copy of which can be found here: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/world-government/>

#### **6. February 10 (Wednesday): The Rational Actor Assumption**

-- Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, entire book.

-- Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (March, 1980), pp. 1145-79. \*\*

-- Rose McDermott, "The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (December 2004), pp. 691-706. \*\*

-- John Mearsheimer, "Reckless States and Realism," *International Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (June

2009), pp. 241-56. \*\*

-- Arthur A. Stein, "The Limits of Strategic Choice: Constrained Rationality and Incomplete Information," in David A. Lake and Robert Powell, eds., *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 197-228.\*\*

### **7. February 17 (Wednesday): Signaling Intentions and Fostering Trust**

-- Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Fall 1997), pp. 114-55. \*\*

-- Sebastian Rosato, "The Inscrutability of Great Power Intentions," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Winter 2014/15), pp. 48-88. \*\*

-- Jack Snyder and Erica D. Borghard, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No. 3 (August 2011), pp. 437-56. \*\*

### **8. February 24 (Wednesday): Power and Polarity**

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, chapters 3-4.

-- Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*, entire book.

-- Waltz, *Theory*, chapter 8.

### **9. March 2 (Wednesday): Strategies**

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, chapters 5 and 8.

-- Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Fall 2015), pp. 51-86.

-- Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 1963), chapters 1 and 4. \*\*

-- Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1988), chapter 5. \*\*

### **10. March 9 (Wednesday): Human Nature and Realism**

-- Steven Pinker, *Better Angels of Our Nature*, entire book.