

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Political Science Department

Political Science 53000

Seminar on Great Power Politics

Winter 2015

Instructor: John Mearsheimer

Course Description: The aim of this course is to explore some of the key questions concerning relations among the great powers.

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 (33%), and two 7-page papers (33% each).

I will provide students with a list of paper topics, from which they can choose two. Both papers will be due in my office (Pick 416A) no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday of exam week – March 17. Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. The papers must be no longer than 7 pages of text, double-spaced, have at least 1-inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font.

Please type your name and the question itself at the top of each paper.

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

John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan* (Princeton)

Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Cornell)

Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton)

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton)

Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (Penguin)

All articles, unpublished papers, and book chapters with ** next to them are on Chalk.

Course Outline:

1. January 7 (Wed): Organizational Meeting

2. January 14 (Wed): Offensive Realism

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, read entire book.

3. January 21 (Wed): Defensive Realism

-- Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167-214. **

-- Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Summer 1995), pp. 660-91. **

-- 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. **

4. January 28 (Wed): International Institutions

-- Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (October, 1985), pp. 226-54. **

-- Keohane, *After Hegemony*, chapters 1-7, 11.

-- George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter Barsoom, "Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation?" *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer 1996), pp. 379-406. **

-- John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95) pp. 5-49. **

5. February 4 (Wed): Bargaining Theory and International Politics

-- James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1995), pp. 379-414. **

-- Jonathan Kirshner, "Rationalist Explanations for War?" *Security Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Autumn 2000), pp. 143-50. **

-- David A. Lake. "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Winter 2010/11), pp. 7- 52. **

-- Dani Reiter, "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2003), pp. 27-43. **

6. February 11 (Wed): Audience Costs

-- James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (September 1994), pp. 577-92. **

-- Alexander B. Downes and Todd S. Sechser, "The Illusion of Democratic Credibility," *International Organization*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (July 2012), pp. 457-89. **

-- Kenneth A. Schultz, "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 4 (December 1998), pp. 829-44. **

-- 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. **

-- Marc Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs: An Historical Analysis," *Security Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 2012), pp. 3-42. **

-- H-Diplo, ISSF Forum No. 3 (2014), "Audience Costs and the Vietnam War," November 7, 2014. **

7. February 18 (Wed): The Nuclear Revolution

-- Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, read entire book.

-- Stephen Van Evera, "A Farewell to Geopolitics," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 11-35. **

-- Kenneth N. Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (September, 1990), pp. 731-745. **

8. February 25 (Wed): Is Great Power War Obsolete

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

-- John Gray, "The Truth about Evil," *The Guardian*, October 21, 2014. **

9. March 4 (Wed): Liberal Imperialism

-- Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, read entire book.

-- Richard K. Betts, "Institutional Imperialism," *National Interest*, No. 113 (May/June 2011), pp. 85-96. **

10. March 11 (Wed): The Causes and Conduct of the Ukraine Crisis

-- Anne Applebaum, "The Myth of Russian Humiliation," *Washington Post*, October 17, 2014. **

-- "Faulty Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 6 (Nov./Dec. 2014), pp. 167-78. **

-- John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014), pp. 77-89. **

-- Vladimi Putin, "Speech to the Valdai Club," October 24, 2014. **

-- Bennett Ramberg, "Why the US has an obligation to help Ukraine defend itself," *Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 2014. **

-- Sten Rynning, "The geography of the Atlantic peace: NATO 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall," *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 6 (2014), pp. 1383-1401. **

-- The following three pieces in the August 2014 Carnegie Forum on "Rebuilding U.S.-Russia Relations" August 2014. **

Tim Frye, "A Tale of Two Narratives."

Mark Kramer, "Why Russia Intervenes."

Daniel Treisman, "Driven by Domestic Politics."