

SAASS 632

FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

AY 22
October 4 - 29



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Syllabus approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Donnithorne", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Commandant and Dean

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SAASS 632: Foundations of International Politics

Course description and objectives:

The field of International Relations is primarily concerned with explaining actors' behavior in the international arena. Within the field, the ways in which it does so vary considerably, depending on which theoretical tradition is leveraged to do the explaining. Grand theories of international relations—realism, liberalism, and constructivism—possess both significant differences from one another and remarkable similarities. It is helpful to think about these different theoretical traditions as in dialogue with one another, having developed largely in response to dissatisfaction with one another's explanatory power, utility, or coherence. In this sense, we can think about the evolution of International Relations theory as a story that reflects both what happened in the field itself and which interprets the practice of international relations in the real world over time.

Each theoretical tradition brings unique insights to understanding the practice of international relations for strategists. Rather than align our investigation with any singular theoretical tradition, it is useful to think of each theory as a different frame for viewing the international environment and explaining the variation it presents. Although distinct from one another, all of these theoretical traditions have in common their interest in highlighting explanatory variables—the factors that are hypothesized to cause certain behavioral outcomes, like conflict, cooperation, and everything in between—for us to consider as strategists. Since strategy is a hypothesis itself, to the degree that strategy can account for causal relations in advance, it might better anticipate, and therefore account for, consequential behaviors and outcomes. In plain language: International Relations theory helps us anticipate and account for how actors might behave and reflect this in our strategy *ex ante*.

The study of coercion is conceptually related to the study of international relations in that it explores the mechanisms that international actors can use to encourage certain behaviors and discourage others. Since the development of nuclear weapons, coercion and its logic has played an evermore prominent role in security strategy and policy, given states' imperative to achieve foreign policy and security goals with a healthy margin left before nuclear weapons employment is considered. But short of nuclear coercion, states actively work to shift and shape behavior in a continual manner, using various tools of coercion right alongside incentives. Considering how effective these tools are, and under what conditions they are best employed, is important for the bets strategists must inevitably place.

In this course, we'll examine International Relations and coercion scholarship to aid our understanding of the factors we should account for in shaping actors' behaviors, and how might we best do that in the pursuit of national advantage as military strategists. The course is organized into two big conceptual blocks: international relations and coercion. In the first block, we will first learn about the historical development of the field of International Relations and its tight relationship to the practice of international relations in the West, and implications for the rest of the world. Next, we canvas the theoretical traditions of realism, liberalism, and constructivism to orient us to the grand theories within the field before diving more deeply into them. Our exploration of realism includes not just offensive realism but also Chinese realism, hegemonic stability theory, and neoclassical realism. We also investigate regionalism as a mid-level theory, as it applies to China, and China's historical relationships before turning to the study of coercion.

The second block of the course is primarily concerned with the concept and scholarship of coercion, in its conventional, unconventional, and nuclear manifestations. We begin with the seminal work of Thomas Schelling, who first examined coercion in the context of game theory and nuclear deterrence. Schelling's work kicks off a reconceptualization of bargaining using the threat of violence as the "diplomacy of violence." From this foundational work we move gradually outward in our study of military coercion, examining the conditions under which military coercion succeeds, and then broadening out to consider the entire spectrum of coercion's tools and mechanisms. Finally, we interrogate the concept of nuclear coercion and whether the nuclear revolution has been revolutionary for international relations before ending the course with nuclear strategy for regional powers.

A theme threaded through the course is that of strategic competition, which we investigate primarily with respect to China. International Relations scholarship is already rooted in concerns about great powers' behavior over and above all other actors because of the scope and the consequences of their actions, whether cooperative or competitive. But the course also explores strategic competition with China by getting the Chinese perspective on the world through the work of Shiping Tang and Xuetong Yan, two Chinese International Relations scholars with different worldviews, through its use of economic coercion, and through the study of its regional relations in historical perspective.

Lastly, this course has made an explicit effort to pursue not only theoretical pluralism but also race, gender, and cultural diversity, as reflected in works drawing from non-Western, female, and minority scholars. These different points of view are important to cultivating the strategic empathy we need to achieve enduring national advantage.

Expectations: The material in this course is, at once, *exciting and challenging*. For some, it will be a relief from the details of history, and for others, it will be frustrating in its reductionism. Your focus should be placed on understanding the theories presented, interrogating their rigor and evidence, and assessing their value to you as a military strategist. The exposure you get to this field is sufficient to provide a basic understanding of the grand theoretical traditions within it, useful theories and frameworks for consideration as strategists, and some classical and contemporary perspectives on the drivers of and mechanisms for international behavior. The course will offer the frames of reference you need to reach back and conduct further inquiry when you confront a tangible strategy problem and need to know more. It will not, however, make you an expert.

As military professionals, you have likely already embedded the practice of keeping up with newsworthy events in your routine. If not, please start! *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *National Review*, *The New Republic* or *Foreign Affairs* are reputable sources for journalism. Journals such as *International Security*, *International Organization*, or *International Studies Quarterly* represent the latest research in the field of International Relations. Lastly, get in the habit of visiting the websites of institutions and organizations like the UN, NATO, WTO, ASEAN, EU, UNASUR, Amnesty International, and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Rather than patent subscription to a particular theoretical tradition or theory, your teaching team invites you to consider the range of frameworks, assumptions, and propositions presented in this course as different ways in which you might help filter out the noise of international competition and conflict and interpret actors' behavior in the world. Challenge yourself to try

on these different ‘suits’ and see what they offer you as military strategists, professionals and thinkers. The questions listed in the syllabus each day should help you evaluate these different perspectives but are not exhaustive and may not be discussed verbatim within each individual seminar. The further readings listed in this syllabus are intended to offer an assortment of perspectives related to the book or subject of the day for further or future reference and are *not* required reading.

Course Assignment: You will write an original 2,500 word paper that makes a clear and supported argument *addressing the paper prompt*. The paper will be written in Times New Roman font, size 12, with one-inch margins on all sides, and double-spaced. Footnotes or endnotes are allowed and do not count against the word limit, but they should consist primarily of references and not include substantial explanatory text. Reference citations should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style. **The paper is due to your professor by 1500L on Friday, 29 Oct.**

Paper Prompt: The paper prompt will be issued by seminar instructors on 15 October.

Grading: Your final grade will be based on seminar participation (40%) and the written assignment (60%). If you are in doubt as to how you measure up in seminar participation, speak with your professor.

Readings: The following is the list of books used for the course:

Blackwill, Robert D. and Jennifer M. Harris. *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Acharya, Amitav and Barry Buzan. *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Gilpin, Robert. *War and Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge, 1981.

Greenhill, Kelly and Peter Krause, eds. *The Power to Hurt in International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

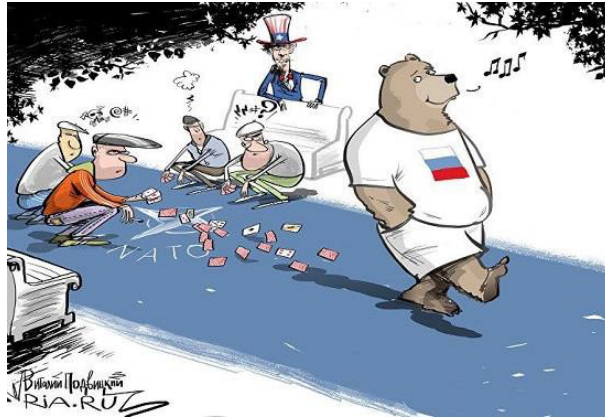
Ikenberry, G. John. *Liberal Leviathan. The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Jackson, Steven F. *China’s Regional Relations in Comparative Perspective: From Harmonious Neighbors to Strategic Partners*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Lieber, Keir A. and Daryl G. Press. *The Myth of Nuclear Revolution: Power Politics in the Atomic Age*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2020.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: WW Norton, 2001.

- Milner, Helen and Dustin Tingley. *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Narang, Vipin. *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era. Regional Powers and International Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Pape, Robert. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Schelling, Thomas. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966.
- Tang, Shiping. *The Social Evolution of International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Tannenwald, Nina. *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Yan, Xuotong. *Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.



Class Schedule – Topics and Readings

BLOCK 1: Modern International Relations and IR Theory

4 Oct – International Relations in Global Historical Context: Historical Sociology

Readings (1): Acharya and Buzan, *The Making of Global International Relations*

Acharya and Buzan introduce us to the practice of international relations and to the discipline of International Relations from the 19th century onwards. This text operates on three levels. First, it is a commentary about Western centrism in International Relations as a historically contingent phenomenon. In other words, IR theory would look different if the last two hundred years had featured different great powers at the center of global affairs. In this way, it provides an important context for our exploration of International Relations theory in the course, most of which is Western theory. Second, the text makes a specific argument about how these lopsided global relations over the past two hundred years came about and its consequences for the practice and study of international relations. Third, the text invites an understanding of how theory is born and its relationship to practice and power that can inform our consumption of subsequent works.

Questions to consider: Does it matter if Western theory dominates the field of IR? Why or why not? In what ways does or should this understanding inform our reading in the course? How are theory and practice related? Why should military strategists consider this relationship? What kind of global transformation has taken place since the birth of IR as a field, and how has it changed the practice of international relations? How should the practice of international relations and the study of IR account for these changes moving forward? How has power transformed in the international system? What impacts have globalization and modernization wielded on the international stage? Why is the notion of core and periphery relations important?

Further Reading:

Buzan, Barry and George Lawson. *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity, and the Making of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Dougherty, James and Robert Pfaltzgraff, Jr. *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. New York: Longman, 2001.

5 Oct – Realism: Contemporary Offensive Realism

Readings (1): Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*

Mearsheimer pens *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* to fill a void in realist writing that robustly explained the theory and logic of offensive realism. Mearsheimer sets his work off against the foundations of western International Relations found in the writing of E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz, keying in on the important distinctions of offensive realism. Primarily, these distinctions are found in the degree of power states seek and the reasons they seek maximal power. For defensive realists, power sufficiency is the best strategy to preserve the balance of power and contend with the anarchic character of the international system. But for Mearsheimer, the difficulties presented by making accurate relative power assessments and the uncertainties of future power create an imperative for states to seek maximal power, unendingly. In other words, states not only *do* but *should* pursue power so much greater than their regional neighbors that they achieve hegemony. Only then will states have the resources and attention needed to examine rising powers in the rest of the world and try to upset their ascent. Mearsheimer is candid about the likelihood of great power conflict between China and the United States and offers the best strategies the United States might pursue.

Questions to consider: What is realism? What do the realist theories have in common? What does Mearsheimer's theory seek to explain? How well does it do this? Is the role realism ascribes to the international system an accurate one? How does Mearsheimer conceptualize power and is it compelling? If Mearsheimer is right about the mandatory pursuit of maximal power, then why don't we see more, or even steady, international conflict? Where does this theory fall apart? Are Mearsheimer's recommendations about U.S. strategy for China helpful? How likely is it that political leaders view the world through a realist lens? Do Mearsheimer's predictions necessarily flow from his underlying assumptions? Must concerns over survival mandate aggressive state behavior? What strategies stem from the tenets of Offensive Realism?

Further Reading:

Carr, E.H. *The Thirty Years' Crisis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001(1981).

Craig, Campbell. *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Drezner, Dan. "The Realist Tradition in American Public Opinion," *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no.1 (March 2008): 51-70.

Pew Research Center, "[In a Politically Polarized Era, Sharp Divides in Both Partisan Coalitions.](#)" December, 2019.

Waltz, Kenneth. *Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954.

Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1979.

7 Oct – Liberalism: Neoliberal Institutionalism

Readings (1): Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*

Neoliberal institutionalism is the contemporary expression of liberal political thought and hinges on the pivotal role that institutions play in enabling cooperative international behavior. Ikenberry focuses on economic interactions, international institutions, and the relationships among the great powers. Ikenberry argues that, since World War II, the international order has not reflected balance-of-power politics, but instead a rule-based order that is dominated by a powerful state or underwritten by agreed-upon rules. In particular, Ikenberry argues that the liberal international order we know today was erected by the United States and its allies post-World War II, but has morphed over time from a liberal to more an imperial order that has created a crisis of legitimacy for the United States. Ikenberry unpacks different types and mechanisms of international order and strategies of rule to help us conceptualize the varieties we might observe in the international system. Finally, Ikenberry presents potential paths away from the current, crisis-bound American liberal hegemonic order.

Question to consider: What motivates Ikenberry's book? Is Ikenberry's account an accurate characterization of the historical period he draws upon? Is the American-built and -led order durable? What are the primary risks and challenges to this order and its associated institutions? Can other institutions replace the 'liberal' ones established by the US and its allies? What is the relationship between power and authority, and why does it matter for Ikenberry? Are power and rules complementary? What are the implications of western humanitarian norms for sovereignty? How might Mearsheimer respond to Ikenberry's argument? How would Acharya and Buzan frame Ikenberry's theory?

Further Reading:

Deudney, Daniel and G. John Ikenberry. "[Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War](#)," with. *Survival*, 59.4 (August/September 2017): 7-26.

Doyle, Michael. *Ways of War and Peace*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.

Keohane, Robert O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

--. [America, China, and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies and Global Visions](#). New York: Palgrave, 2015.

--. "[Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia](#)," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol XX, Issue XX (2015): 1-35.

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.

8 Oct – Constructivism

Readings (1): Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo*

Nina Tannenwald argues that a nuclear “taboo” explains the nonuse of nuclear weapons since World War II, not only in historical contexts where nuclear deterrence wasn’t operative, but also in the sense that it has reduced the probability that nuclear weapons were and will be considered for use. This “taboo” arose as both a regulative and constitutive norm that constrained actor behavior to employ what is otherwise a militarily useful weapon. Tannenwald’s constructivist position stands in stark contrast to the realist explanation that deterrence—and really the material capabilities that underlie it—can claim exclusive credit for the nonuse of nuclear weapons in the post-war period. Constructivism hypothesizes that interests are really based on ideas and therefore are co-constituted and intersubjectively defined by actor identities, norms, and rules.

Questions to consider: Are realist and constructivist explanations about nuclear nonuse mutually exclusive? Might realist logic be operative in some contexts and constructivists logics in others? What evidence does Tannenwald use to support her claims, and is it compelling? What evidence could overturn her claims? Of what value is Tannenwald’s work to us as military strategists? Tannenwald’s book is just the first part of our foray into deterrence and considering nuclear weapons as instruments of statecraft.

Further Reading:

Abdullah, Sannia. “[Pakistan and the Evolving Debate on the Nuclear Taboo.](#)” *South Asian Voices*. Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, April 27, 2021.

Raymond, Mark. *Social Practices of Rule-Making in World Politics*. New York: Oxford, 2019.

Sethi, Manpreet. “[The Nuclear Taboo & South Asia: Reviewing Nina Tannenwald’s “23 Years of Nonuse.”](#)” *South Asian Voices*. Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, April 21, 2021.

Tannenwald, Nina. “[23 Years of Nonuse: Does the Nuclear Taboo Constrain India and Pakistan?](#)” Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, February 22, 2021.

--. “How Strong is the Nuclear Taboo Today?” *Washington Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (September 2018): 89-109.

Wendt, Alexander. “Anarchy is What States Make of It.” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425.

--. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

11 Oct – Federal Holiday

12 Oct – Non-Western Theory: Social Evolutionary Theory

Readings (1): Tang, *The Social Evolution of International Politics*

In our first exposure to a non-Western International Relations theory, Shiping Tang presents an evolutionary approach to explaining international relations. Tang is a Fudan Distinguished Professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Fudan University, China and holds a master's degree in International Relations from University of California, Berkeley. The text grapples with potential explanations for dramatically different interpretations of international politics across the field. Tang argues that contemporary International Relations theory is historically contingent, explaining only a historical epoch and not the range of interstate or interhuman relations over time. Instead, he presents his own social evolution paradigm, which draws from anthropology, biology, and international relations and contends that the international system has evolved from one of a “paradise” to an offensive realist world to a defensive realist world and then to a rule-based order. Tang critically engages with all of the grand theories of International Relations and provides solutions to the great debates within and between them.

Key questions to consider: Does Tang's work evolve our understanding of international relations in the macro-historical sense? How different is it from contemporary Western International Relations theory? Why is this difference important to us as strategists? Is it useful to have theories that sweep across vastly different historical periods? Does this suggest that the nature of interstate relations is fixed, or evolves? Do you see more continuity or more change in the international system over time? What does his cross-cultural perspective offer? How is Tang's work distinct from the Western International Relations theories you've encountered?

Further Reading:

Tang, Shiping. *On Social Evolution: Phenomenon and Paradigm*. New York, Routledge, 2020.

--. *A General Theory of Institutional Change*. New York, Routledge, 2017.

--. [“Social Evolution of International Politics: From Mearsheimer to Jervis.”](#) *European Journal of International Relations* 16 (2010): 31-55.

--. *A Theory of Security Strategy for Our Time: Defensive Realism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

--, Evan Braden Montgomery. “Uncertainty and Reassurance in International Politics.” *International Security* 32, no. 1 (2007): 193–200.

14 Oct – Non-Western Theory: Chinese Realism

Readings (1): Yan, *Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers*

Xuetong Yan is a distinguished professor and dean of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University, holds a doctorate in International Relations from University of California at Berkeley, and is a Chinese Communist Party member. Drawing from ancient Chinese thought on international relations, *Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers* explains the puzzle of rising states successfully ascending in the face of a daunting and dominating state. In stark contrast to Western neorealism and classical realism, Yan argues that state political leadership capability is what shifts international influence in a way that enables the rising state to switch positions with the dominant state. Yan does not, however, break with the fundamental core of Western realism, which claims that national interests are objective and defined by a state's material capability, instead arguing that moral realism informs determinations of *how to* (i.e. "strategy preferences") achieve those national interests. By using levels of analysis of a political leader (i.e. individual, governmental, or international) and "universal" codes of conduct, Yan is able to evaluate the morality of state decisions and examine the implications thereof for international influence and power.

Questions to consider: How easy is it to evaluate morality on a global level at any given time? Is Yan's concept of universal morality persuasive? How do power and capability differ according to Yan, and is this distinction useful? Does morality belong in theories of international relations? What insights does Yan's theory offer us for understanding international relations and relating it to strategy? What are potential implications of Yan's theory for Chinese and American foreign policy?

Further reading:

Brooks, S. G. and W.C. Wohlforth, "The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in the 21st Century: China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position," *International Security* 40, No. 3 (Winter 2015-16): 7-53.

Mahbubani, Kishore. *Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy*. New York: Public Affairs, 2020.

Nye, Joseph. *Do Morals Matter: Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

Pei, Minxin. "China's coming upheaval: Competition, the coronavirus and the weakness of Xi Jinping." *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 3 (2020): 82-95.

Wohlforth, William C. et al. "Moral Authority and Status in International Relations: Good States and the Social Dimension of Status Seeking." *Review of International Studies* 44, no. 3 (2018): 526-46.

Yan, Xuetong. *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

--. "[The Sources of Chinese Conduct](#)." *Project Syndicate*. March 28, 2011.

15 Oct – Realism: Hegemonic Stability Theory

Readings (1): Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (skip epilogue)

Gilpin views the world of international relations through the lens of sociological and economic theory, which suggest both domestic and international systemic factors impose differential costs on states. The costs of international governance for the most powerful state create a burden over time that leads to its own decline, while rising powers benefit from the hegemon's provision of public goods, technology diffusion, and their own limited economic commitments. These differential rates of growth for states (i.e. high for rising states, stagnant or negative for hegemon) create a disequilibrium in the system that the hegemon seeks to resolve through war. This pattern of hegemonic war over time is what Gilpin views as the primary mechanism for change in the international system recurrently over time.

Questions to consider: How does Gilpin's explanation of power transitions differ from that of Yan? Are there compatible elements of their theories? How do we know which theory to leverage at a given moment in time? Does this theory resonate strongly at present, based on your view of the world? What strategies stem from hegemonic stability theory? What are the limitations of Gilpin's theory? Was Gilpin's assessment of the United States as overstretched and unable to "govern" the system as it had in the past accurate in 1981? How are Gilpin's use of norms and institutions different from that of Tannenwald?

Further reading:

Ikenberry, G. John. *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

--, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth. "[Unipolarity, State Behavior and Systemic Consequences.](#)" *World Politics* 61: 1 (January 2009): 1-27.

Midlarsky Manus, ed. *The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Milner, Helen V. "[The Enduring Legacy of Robert Gilpin: How He Predicted Today's Great Power Rivalry.](#)" *Foreign Affairs*, August 15, 2018.

Organski, A. F. K. *World Politics*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958.

Tammen, Ronald et al. *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*. New York: Chatham House, 2000.

Wohlforth, William C. "[Gilpinian Realism and International Relations.](#)" *International Relations* 25/4 (December 2011): 499-511.

18 Oct – Realism: Neoliberal Institutionalism

Readings (1): Milner and Tingley, *Sailing the Water's Edge*

Milner and Tingley present a theory about the foreign policy-making process in the United States to explain the selection of certain policy instruments over others. The authors argue that the President's power is often constrained in various ways, leaving him with few realistic foreign policy instruments. Why? Presidential power varies according to the policy instrument, based on domestic political preferences. Domestic politics significantly impact the choice of foreign policy instrument based on the material and ideational preferences of domestic actors, rather than just the international geopolitical context or situation. The authors challenge major realist conclusions about the scope of presidential power in foreign policy and give insights into when and how domestic politics potentially shape international behavior.

Questions to consider: Why do Milner and Tingley think that domestic politics generates a bias in policy toward military instruments of power? Is the assessment of that bias a fair one? How do the authors scope their theory? In other words, what's left out of their theory? How does Milner and Tingley's argument change the way we think about military strategy? Does this theory challenge realist theories we've read in the course, or complement them?

Further reading:

Lobell, Steven E., Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro. *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Meernik, James, and Elizabeth Oldmixon. "The President, the Senate, and the Costs of Internationalism." *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol 4, Issue 2 (2008): 187–206.

Murphy, Ann Marie. "[Great Power Rivalries, Domestic Politics and Southeast Asian Foreign Policy: Exploring the Linkages.](#)" *Asian Security*, Vol 13, Issue 3 (2017): 165-182.

Narizny, Kevin. "[Neoclassical Realism and Its Critics.](#)" *International Security* 43, no. 2 (2018): 199-203.

Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Schweller, Randall. "Opposite but Compatible Nationalisms: A Neoclassical Realist Approach to the Future of US–China Relations." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Volume 11, Issue 1 (Spring 2018): 23–48.

19 Oct – Mid-level Theory: Regionalism

Readings (1): Jackson, *China's Regional Relations in Comparative Perspective*

Steven Jackson asks the theoretical question, what prompts regional hegemons to change their behavior toward their neighbors over time? Jackson then asks this question as it applies to China, from the Qing dynasty forward, in order to both test his theory and determine if China's contemporary behavior is as provocative as it is frequently characterized. Jackson offers a framework for evaluating regional relationships in comparative perspective, using six historical regional hegemons and patterning their behavior over time. Jackson argues that regional hegemons vary their behavior between inactive, active, and hyperactive phases on the basis of internal, regional, and extra-regional drivers. Jackson finds that China, in particular, has moved between these phases over time, driven by various factors, but exhibits behaviors altogether not dissimilar with historical hegemons.

Questions to consider: How distinct is Jackson's regional approach to international relations as compared with the grand theories of Mearsheimer and Ikenberry? Is regionalism a useful framework for thinking about strategic competition? How persuasive is Jackson's framework? Is Jackson's conceptualization and operationalization of the term "hegemon" useful? Should China's behavior be considered comprehensively and comparatively, considering all key aspects of their foreign policy and relative to other historical regional hegemons? What's missing from Jackson's approach to understanding China?

Further reading:

Buzan, Barry. "[The Geopolitical Reconstruction of Asia: A Reflection Ten Years on from Regions and Powers](#)", *Politique étrangère*, vol. i, no. 2 (2012): 331-344.

-- and Ole Wæver. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Katzenstein, Peter J. [A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium](#). Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Kelly, Robert E. "[Security Theory in the "New Regionalism"](#)." *International Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2007): 197-229. Accessed August 31, 2021.

Lake David A and Patrick M. Morgan, eds. *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Mahnken, Thomas G. and Dan Blumenthal. *Strategy in Asia: The Past, Present, and Future of Regional Security*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Montgomery, Evan Braden. *In the Hegemon's Shadow: Leading States and the Rise of Regional Powers*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016.

Yeo, Andrew. *Asia's Regional Architecture: Alliances and Institutions in the Pacific Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019.

BLOCK 2: Coercion in International Politics

21 Oct – Coercion: The Logic of Military Coercion

Readings (1): Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Chapters 1-4)

Today's reading transitions the course to the topic of coercion, which helps us to answer the question, how can military strategists help achieve advantageous international behavior from other states? Schelling's 1966 work introduces the logic of game theory to international relations through the notion of bargaining. Rather than military action as an *alternative* to bargaining, Schelling reconceptualizes military force employment (and the threat thereof) as the *process* of bargaining. Not only is his insight reflected historically but also in the imperative that nuclear-armed political and military leaders must have as their absolute goal the non-employment of the military nuclear instrument. In other words, the *threat* of nuclear use must suffice, and so the game of bargaining becomes ever-more important in the nuclear context. Schelling deconstructs coercion into its component elements and also discusses the considerations that should be made in the game of coercion.

Questions to consider: How would Clausewitz respond to Schelling's take on military action as a bargaining process? Is the 'power to hurt' more effective than applied military power? What is the relationship of capabilities to coercion? What factors or mechanisms make coercion effective, according to Schelling? What is the relationship between Gilpin's prestige and Schelling's credibility? What role does risk play in deterrence? How does Schelling's suggested incrementalism in the diplomacy of violence impact military strategy? Can coercion contribute to peace and security in the international system? What is the role of rationality in coercion and how can it be exploited in military strategy?

Further reading:

Biddle, Tami Davis. "[Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners.](#)" *Texas National Security Review* 3, issue 2 (Spring 2020): 94-109.

Fitzsimmons, Michael. "[The False Allure of Escalation Dominance.](#)" *War on the Rocks (blog)*. November 16, 2017.

Freedman, Lawrence. *Deterrence*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2004.

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22 Oct – Coercion: Coercion by Air

Readings (1): Pape, *Bombing to Win*

Robert Pape, former SAASS professor, examines under what conditions military coercion is successful. Pape argues that military coercion has historically been successful when force is used to exploit an adversary's military capabilities in particular ways. His theory not only presents a multi-factor explanation for coercion's success, but also presents a typology for airpower strategy that has become a part of our air-minded lexicon. Pape's theory indicates that *military strategy* matters for the outcomes of coercion, in combination with states' military and political vulnerabilities. Pape tests his theory across all cases of strategic air offensives in international disputes in the twentieth century using both quantitative and qualitative methods, ultimately finding that one strategy of coercion is relatively more likely than the others to succeed (under certain conditions).

Questions to consider: How do Pape's ideas build on Schelling's work and how do they challenge it? In Pape's work we again see rational cost-benefit analysis play a central role in his theory, just as in Gilpin. How useful is this kind of analysis of international behavior? What is the relationship between deterrence and coercion, according to Pape? And how different are conventional and nuclear coercion and their associated strategies?

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25 Oct – Coercion: The Spectrum of Modern Coercion

Readings (1): Greenhill and Krause, eds., *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics* (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 10-13)

Greenhill and Krause offer a robust study of coercion, going beyond the use of force to include other ways states can intentionally shape competitors' behavior. We use an edited volume here in an effort to survey the broad range of coercion options available to states, noting that while our previous concerns derived from an interest in nuclear weapons, coercion in the modern era involves the full range of a state's resources to modify the behaviors of others. The authors in the volume are keen to interrogate foundational coercion theory, rooted as it was in the context of nuclear weapons; to examine how coercion theory needs to be modified, if it does; and to identify the range of tools, actors, and mechanisms involved in the game of coercion today.

Questions to consider: Consider the concept of coercion going back to Schelling. What are the various ways coercion is operationalized in the chapters? Are the authors consistent in their understanding of the concept and how they operationalize it? What makes coercion effective? What factors limit the ability of the US to engage in coercion? Is there any correlation you observe between the types of instruments of coercion and the conditions needed for their successful employment and effect? What instruments are left out of their analysis?

Further reading:

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de Wijk, Rob. *The Art of Military Coercion: Why the West's Military Superiority Scarcely Matters*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014.

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26 Oct – Coercion: Economic Statecraft

Readings (1): Blackwell and Harris, *War by Other Means*

Filling the gap in Greenhill and Krause, Blackwell and Harris examine the use of economic instruments to accomplish geopolitical objectives. Geoeconomics, they argue, are an overlooked and undervalued tool in the arsenal of coercion. The authors charge that economic statecraft has become a "lost art" in the United States, while heavily leveraged by our great power rivals, and instead supplanted by a near-exclusive focus on the military instrument. They explain that U.S. economists resist the employment of economic instruments for geopolitical purposes because it challenges their assumptions about value-free economic behavior. Both the context of unipolarity following the Cold War and the liberal economic consensus surrounding governmental non-intervention in the market (i.e. laissez-faire liberalism) evolved into a dogmatic resistance to the use of economic instruments as tools of power politics. Nevertheless, the U.S. currently finds itself competing with rising great powers who do not observe the same boundaries between politics and economics and who are vying for influence using economic tools. The authors call for the general primacy of economic instruments in US foreign policy, and the displacement of the military one.

Questions to consider: What is geoeconomics? What is statecraft? Do the authors account for internal politics in their explanation for economic statecraft trends in the United States over time? How would Milner and Tingley respond to this argument about the prevalence of the military instrument in U.S. foreign policy? Are the authors right to advocate generally for the use of one particular type of policy instrument? Are Blackwell and Harris' claims too strong regarding the power of economic statecraft? Tying this discussion to the previous discussions of coercion, does the ability to engage in geoeconomics still rely on the ability to employ force? How might the US better utilize its economic power to coerce or influence others more than it has historically? Are there any reasons such efforts might be limited? If so, what are they? How does the evidence of asymmetric economic relations Steven Jackson provides support or challenge this argument?

Further reading:

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28 Oct – Coercion: Deterrence Theory

Readings (1): Lieber and Press, *The Myth of Nuclear Revolution*

Keir Lieber and Daryl Press explore the paradox of continued power politics in the age of nuclear weapons, challenging the theory of nuclear revolution. More than seven decades into the nuclear age, the authors observe, states are competing with the same intensity and in the same ways as the pre-nuclear era. How can this be if nuclear weapons are such effective deterrents to war? Lieber and Press make the case that creating a nuclear stalemate is not as simple as just having nuclear weapons; that nuclear stalemate is not unidirectional—it is dynamic and requires continued resource commitments over time; and that nuclear stalemate does not signify an end to conventional deterrence requirements (or their potential nuclear response implications).

Questions to consider: How does Lieber and Press' work challenge your thoughts about the distinctness of nuclear weapons? Do their arguments address the key dimensions of current debates about the technologies that enable nuclear weapons employment and that potentially destabilize nuclear deterrence? How much nuclear capability is enough to reliably deter? Is mutually assured destruction really as tenuous as the authors suggest? Is the power of nuclear weapons really in their stalemate-inducing character, rather than their destructive one? Historically, if wars have followed a pattern of extreme destruction, why haven't we seen wars in the post-World War II period as comparatively destructive? Have nuclear weapons played a role and, if so, what role have they played?

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29 Oct – Coercion: Regional Nuclear Strategies

Readings (1): Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era*

Narang is the pioneer in nuclear strategy for regional powers, explaining how states with small nuclear arsenals develop their strategies and why they choose the ones they do. Narang introduces three different types of nuclear postures that states might pursue in their nuclear strategy, which reflect their de facto, rather than doctrinal, operational practices. Narang's conceptualization of nuclear posture considers states' nuclear capabilities, their employment doctrine, and their command-and-control procedures in a framework called Posture Optimization Theory. States choose from one of three nuclear strategies—catalytic, assured retaliation, or asymmetric—based on its security environment, its civil-military relations, and its resource constraints. Narang presents a cross-national quantitative analysis that finds support for his hypothesis.

Questions to consider: What does Narang's theory explain, actually? What postures are available? What differences exist between the various states he considers in his discussion as they relate to nuclear strategy? How does the development of nuclear arsenals among smaller states affect deterrence calculations? How does Narang test his argument? How do regional dynamics affect postures? Are there any lessons regarding the impact of nuclear postures on non-proliferation in the international system? Given the US approach to nuclear weapons, should policymakers expect small states to behave differently than what Narang argues? In which cases? Why?

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