Course Description and Objectives

While we often hear of a divide between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, it could be argued that theory is always, already a part of our thinking about international relations. Theories are the ‘lenses’ or ‘frames’ that we use in order to consider, evaluate and critique a problem or issue in world politics. Thus, theory involves assumptions or arguments about epistemology (how we can ‘know’, and the basis of our judgments), ontology (what ‘exists’ in the world, and in what form), and methodology (the ‘tools’ we use to study a problem or issue). Our lenses or ‘frames’ can bring things into focus, but they can also ‘filter out’ other things. In this sense, theory ‘makes’ or constitutes world politics. For this reason, it could be argued that, rather than being distinct from ‘real’ politics, theory is intensely political.

This course provides an overview and exploration of some important debates and approaches in contemporary IR theory. The focus is on critical theory – theory that rejects the hard separation of ‘facts’ and ‘values’ and recognizes the fundamental connection between ‘knowledge’ and ‘power’. Rather than investigating a different theory every week, it approaches international relations theory thematically and comparatively. This means that each seminar will be organized around a key concept, theme or practice which will be examined from a variety of different (and sometimes across) perspectives including both mainstream and critical approaches.

The aim of this course is expose students to key texts and cutting-edge work in critical International Relations theory. Students will develop critical thinking skills through their reading, interpretation, comparison and critical evaluation of these theories. Students should emerge from this course with a new appreciation of the centrality of theory, and the importance of critique, in world politics.
Class Structure:
With the exception of the first and last class, all classes will proceed (more or less) according to the following format:

- 50 minutes: introductory discussion of key issues and questions for each week
- 10 minutes: Break
- 50 minutes: Small group discussion: During this period students will work in small groups to discuss questions/issues/problems of the day, or to workshop/share written work. Students should be prepared to share the outcomes of their discussions with the rest of the class.
- 10 minutes: Break
- 50 minutes: Full group discussion.

Requirements and Assessment:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay Proposal (due October 7)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory-Practice Blog Post (due October 28)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay Draft (due November 18)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback (due Nov 25)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Essay (due December 6)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Presentation (Dec 2 and 6)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**Total:** 100%

Weekly Attendance and Participation: *This is a seminar course and relies on the active participation of students. For this reason, participation counts for a large portion of your grade.* Attendance at weekly seminars is mandatory. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance at these meetings throughout the term, as well as the quality and quantity of your participation in discussions. Students are expected to have completed the required reading before the seminar and to arrive prepared to discuss that week’s material. In addition to your general contributions to seminar discussions, students will be expected to lead off seminar discussions by posing one or two questions about the readings that highlight different aspects of the seminar themes for that week. Up to eight students may be selected at random each week to provide lead-off questions, which means that you may expect to be called upon to do this at least twice and possibly three times during the term. To earn an ‘A’ grade for participation, you must have perfect or near perfect attendance, and have made regular, informed contributions to the discussion. If you must miss a seminar for a legitimate reason, please inform me as soon as possible (preferably before the seminar). **Unless required for special accommodations, the use of electronic devices in class is strongly discouraged. This is not because I have a problem with electronic devices, but because I am seeking to foster attentive, respectful listening. Please see me if you have a special reason why you need to use your phone/laptop in class.**
Research Essay Proposal (due October 7): All students will complete a proposal for their final research essay. The proposal must include the following:

i) Working Title  
ii) Research Question  
iii) Working argument/thesis statement  
iv) Outline of the 3 key sections of your paper (one short paragraph per section).
v) Annotated (two or three sentences) bibliography (at least 5 scholarly sources).

Theory-Practice Blog Post (due October 28): For this assignment you must choose a topic or issue in contemporary world affairs/international politics and provide an analysis of it using ideas and concepts related to IR theory and theories. This is NOT a research essay; you are not required to use scholarly sources to write the post. However, any sources you do use – scholarly books and articles, popular media articles, etc. – must be properly cited and referenced using notes and a bibliography. Blogs should be 1000-1200 words, 12-point font, double-spaced. Topics should be specific contemporary issues (search news outlets for ideas) related to foreign policy; diplomacy; war/conflict; security; IPE (trade, global finance); international development. The blog post will be marked using the following criteria:

a) Choice of topic/issue  
b) Grasp of ideas, concepts and theories  
c) Ability to link theories to practice/issue  
d) Ability to analyze critically and creatively  
e) Ability to construct an argument and sustain it throughout the post  
f) Writing style – fluidity, organization, grammar, syntax, spelling

Research Essay Draft (due November 18): A first draft of the essay is due Week 9. The first draft must include:

- A fully written introduction (at least two paragraphs) with a research question, thesis statement and summary outline of the parts of the essay.
- An opening sentence for each part of the essay, with point form notes describing the remainder of each part.
- A working Bibliography (at least five sources)

Students will be sharing these drafts with their peers in small groups. Students will provide verbal feedback on their classmates’ drafts during class; in addition, each of you will provide written feedback (via CU learn) on one of your classmate’s preliminary drafts.

Final Research Essay (due December 6): All students will write a final research paper on a topic of their choice related to IR theory. Papers can address a theoretical or meta-theoretical debate within the discipline, or a new theoretical ‘turn’ and its existing or potential contribution to IR. Essays can also undertake comparison of theories/theoretical perspectives to analyze an empirical issue in IR. In this case, make sure that your essay deals primarily with IR theory, and that the empirical issue serves only to illustrate your theoretical claims. Papers should be 3750
- 4000 words, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, including notes but excluding bibliography and should be properly referenced (using an in-text parenthetical citation method, such as MLA, APA or Chicago). You should aim to use at least eight scholarly sources for your essay.

The essay will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. Strength and Clarity of Research Question and Thesis Statement
2. Evidence of understanding of IR theories and concepts
3. Ability to apply theories and engage in sophisticated analysis.
4. Organization, Structure, Writing Style
5. Evidence of Research, and Adequate, Correct and Complete referencing of sources.

Presentations (Dec 2 and Dec 6): In addition to their written essays, students are required to present their research in the final two classes. In addition to a well-prepared oral presentation, students are encouraged to prepare a power-point or other visual aid (poster, video) for their presentation. Presentations will be marked according to the following criteria:

a) Preparedness /25
b) Content /25
c) Organization /25
d) Presentation Style /25

Readings: All readings are available through the Carleton University Library’s ARES online reserve system. This can be accessed through the CU learn course page, or through the Library’s website.

Essay Submission: All written work must be submitted by 11pm on the due date via the CULearn portal. Please note: you must also bring a hard copy of your blog post to class on October 28th, and a hard copy of your essay outline to class on November 18th.

Weekly Topics and Readings:

Week 1 September 9
Introduction to the Course
No Readings

Week 2 September 16
Theory and Theories in International Relations


**Week 3 September 23**

**IR theory of what, for whom and where?**


**Week 4 September 30**

**Rethinking Sovereignty and Statehood**


**Week 5 October 7 (research essay proposal due today)**

**Critical Security Theorizing**


October 14 – Thanksgiving, no class

October 21 – Reading Week, no class

Week 6 October 28 (blog post due this week)
Critical Approaches to IPE and Development


Week 7 November 4
Theorizing War and Peace


Week 8 November 11
Theorizing Humanitarianism


Week 9 November 18 (essay first draft due; peer feedback and essay workshop today)
Constructing and ‘Unlearning’ Foreign Policy


**Week 10 November 25**
Aesthetics and the Visual in International Relations theory


**Week 11 December 2**
Research Presentations

**Week 12 December 6 (Essays due today. Last day of classes; classes follow a Monday schedule).**
Research Presentations and End of Term Celebration!

**Academic Accommodations**

**Requests for Academic Accommodation**
You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation**
Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

**Religious obligation**
Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first
two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. [carleton.ca/pmc](http://carleton.ca/pmc)

**Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

**Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. [https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf)

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

**Plagiarism**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
• using another’s data or research findings;
• failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
• handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work
Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Grading
Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
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Approval of final grades
Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
Carleton E-mail Accounts
All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

Carleton Political Science Society
"The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/ and our website https://carletonpss.com/, or stop by our office in Loeb D688!"

Official Course Outline
The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.