The objective of this course is to introduce you to the major theories of international relations. We will examine why international actors behave the way they do and ask which theoretical frameworks are best equipped to account for conflict and cooperation in the international environment.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to interpret, critique and apply the “levels of analysis” debate central to the study of international politics. This particular learning objective is in service of the Master’s Degree program overall objectives of 1) teaching international problem solving/analytic skills, by which graduates should be able to apply qualitative and quantitative methodologies and problem solving skills; 2) effective written communication skills.

Assessment Methods:

This learning objective will be assessed independent of the other course grades during the semester.

1) In week two of the semester, as an in-class exercise, students will be asked to write one paragraph reflecting on the following question: Given your current understanding of international relations theory, what does the “levels of analysis” debate entail and how useful is it to our understanding of international politics?
During the final week of classes students, in an in-class exercise, once again, will be tasked with a writing assignment reflecting on the following levels-of-analysis exercise: International relations scholars, for decades, have engaged in the “levels of analysis” debate, arguing about how many levels of analysis can be observed in the international environment, whether one should study them in a particular order, and whether it is imperative to always study all levels of analysis. Focusing on World War II, give examples of hypotheses that address the outbreak of this particular war using each level of analysis. Discuss whether any level is superior to help us understand this particular case and whether your finding is generalizable to other puzzles in international politics.

Course Requirements:

This course is taught as a seminar and thus requires active class participation. Each student will have to do all of the assigned readings (indicated by an asterisk on the syllabus) for each class and participate fully in class discussions. [Additional readings are included for students with a special interest in a particular area.] It is a good idea to write and bring to class a short summary and several written questions about each reading.

Please purchase the following texts.

Required Texts:


In addition to the books listed above there will be readings that can be accessed on Canvas (C).

Each student will give 1 formal presentation of a week's readings in class. This presentation will lay out the authors' arguments, explain their strengths and weaknesses, and will serve as a takeoff point for further analysis by the rest of the class.

Each student will also write two review essays (no more than 5 pages double-spaced each), assessing and critiquing two of the course readings. (The readings must be from
different weeks and the essays have to be handed in at the beginning of the class period during which the respective readings are to be discussed). Please note that your task is not to write a book review. Rather, the objective of your essay is to come up with your own original thesis (reacting to the argument in the work under review).

Your course grade will be as follows:

Course participation  25%
Class presentation  25%
First Essay  25%
Second Essay  25%

Honor Code:

The Georgia Tech Honor Code is available online:  
http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9. If caught cheating, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code.

Students with Disabilities:

Georgia Tech is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities through the ADAPTS program (http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/). Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate his/her educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is located in Smithgall Student Services Building, phone 404-894-2564 or TDD only 404-894-1664.

READINGS:

I. Introduction (August 19)

-syllabus; autobiographies; how to make sense of your readings?
-assign presentation topics

II. Theories and Methods (August 26)


* J. David Singer: "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," in Ikenberry, ed., pp. 67-80. (C)


-Marion J. Levy: "'Does It Matter If He’s Naked?’ Bawled the Child,” in Contending Approaches to International Relations, eds. Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau, pp. 87-106. Especially pp. 92-106.


(September 2) Labor Day (no Class)

III. Neorealism (September 9)


IV. Polarity and the Balance of Power (September 16)

* Ernst Haas: "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept or Propaganda?" *World Politics* 5 (1953), pp. 442-477. (C)


V. Alliances: Balancing and Bandwagoning (September 23)


VI. Hegemony and Beyond (September 30)


VII. International Cooperation (October 7) 1st paper due!!


Oct. 14 FALL RECESS (no class)

VIII. Regimes (October 21)

* Peter M. Haas: "Do Regimes Matter? Epistemic Communities and Mediterranean Pollution Control," *International Organization* 43/3 (Summer 1989), pp. 377-403. (C)


IX. Constructivism (October 28)


[https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ac01/6040ac8ee05b79528ef6e561101a518127b5.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ac01/6040ac8ee05b79528ef6e561101a518127b5.pdf)


X. Personality and Perception (November 4)

* Saul Friedlander and Raymond Cohen: “The Personality Correlates of Belligerence in International Conflict,” *Comparative Politics* 7 (January 1975), pp. 155-186. (C)

* Michael Roskin: "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting Generational Paradigms of Foreign Policy,” in Ikenberry, pp.351-371. (C)
XI. Bureaucratic Politics (November 11)


-XII. Ideas in International Politics and the Responsibility to Protect (November 18)


* Alex Bellamy and Mark Beeson: “The Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia: Can ASEAN Reconcile Humanitarianism and Sovereignty”? *Asian Security*, 6, no. 3 (2010), pp. 262-279. (C)

XIII. Non-Western IR Theory? (November 25) 2nd paper due!!!


* Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, “Conclusion: On the possibility of a non-Western IR theory in Asia,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* Volume 7 (2007): 427-38. (C)

- find an article by a non-Western scholar that gives a non-Western perspective of international relations; bring a copy of the article and write a brief synopsis that can be shared with your classmates.

XIV. (December 2) Wrap-up

Nunn Film and discussion