Debates on International Peace Interventions: Constructivists, Critical Theorists, Post-Structuralists, Feminists, and their Critics  
POLS G8823

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Graduate seminar, Spring 2013
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Wednesdays, 4:10 – 6 p.m.
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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m. (occasionally Tuesdays, 4:30-6:30 p.m.).  
You can schedule an appointment during my office hours at:  
https://www.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUZkV0ZpUHIvU2NsfGRlZmF1bHR8OTE3Y2U5ZDZjOWViYT1iNzUxYjExZjdiY2E0ZjkwOTY. Walk-ins are of course welcome – on a first come, first served basis. However, I give priority to people who have scheduled an appointment, so you are better off scheduling an appointment if you do not want to wait.

Substance of the Course

International peace interventions have multiplied since the end of the Cold War, with United Nations operations, non-governmental agencies, diplomatic missions, and regional organizations becoming increasingly numerous and influential. Similarly, in international relations, the body of literature on international peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, development, humanitarian aid, and democratization has also grown. This literature tackles several major questions: Why do so many international interventions fail to bring about peace? Why do others succeed? What are the most useful frameworks for analyzing international interventions?

In international relations literature, the dominant approach – which is both positivist and rationalist – overwhelmingly emphasizes that vested interests and material constraints determine peace intervention strategies and account for their successes and failures. In contrast, a relatively new international relations approach focuses on the influence of beliefs, cultures, discourse, frames, habitus, identity, ideology, norms, representations, symbols, and worldviews on international peace interventions. Although the authors who work with these concepts belong to a diverse set of theoretical schools, they all reject the dominant positivist epistemology and/or the dominant rational choice methodology.

This seminar uses the literature on recent peace interventions as a lens for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of constructivist, critical, post-structuralist, and feminist approaches to international relations. The course has two goals. First, to develop participants’ knowledge of the most salient international peace interventions in recent years, and the reasons for their successes or failures. Second, to provide participants with the intellectual tools to understand, evaluate, analyze, and possibly employ non-positivist and non-rational choice approaches to international relations.
Throughout the course, participants will acquire a broad understanding of the concepts, theoretical traditions, and debates surrounding international interventions and non-positivist and non-rational choice approaches to international relations. The course will also introduce participants to new issues in the field, such as the practice turn in the social sciences and the micro-foundations of peace settlements. Readings for this course are drawn from a variety of disciplines (political science, anthropology, sociology, and others), and they include both theoretical works and case studies of recent interventions.

The course is open to all graduate students and has no pre-requisites. Familiarity with international relations theories (notably through the IR field survey course) is helpful but not required. The first part of the course will ensure that all participants have the bases necessary to perform well this semester.

**Grading and Requirements**

1. **Readings:** Assignments are on the attached list. I expect you to read all of the required readings before each session, and to come to class prepared to discuss them in an informed and thoughtful fashion. Reading load averages 230 pages per week.
   The “recommended readings” sections are meant to provide you with a preliminary bibliography in case you want to study a specific topic in greater depth.
   - All the articles are available for free through Columbia databases.
   - The required books are available at the Columbia Bookstore. They are also on reserve at Lehman library (in the SIPA building), under course number POLS G 8823.

   The success of this class will depend on the quality of student participation, so I have crafted a series of incentives and assignments to ensure that participation will be of the highest quality. The main incentive is that 60% of your grade is directly based on how thoughtfully you do the readings for the course, and the remaining 40% is partly based on that as well.

2. **Class participation (20% of the final grade):** The class participation grade will be based on participation in the discussion during each session (15% of the final grade); and 2- the oral presentation and the discussion during the session brainstorming students’ papers (5% of the final grade; see last page of this syllabus).

   Please inform me beforehand if you expect to miss particular class meetings because of a religious holiday that forbids work, an illness, or a family emergency. Please plan to submit a one page additional review of the readings for each session you miss, in addition to the four reviews assigned throughout the course. This extra review will make up for missed participation and will count towards your participation grade.

3. **One oral presentation, on February 6 (10% of the final grade):** Sign up on January 30th; email me a typed script of the presentation & put a hard copy in the glass folder on the door of my office by noon on February 4; post it on Courseworks after the session.

4. **Three reviews of the readings (each worth 10% of the final grade, so in total 30% of the final grade):** Each review should be a maximum of two pages single-spaced. The reviews should briefly summarize the argument, critically assess it, and raise questions for class discussion.
They should be posted on the class website by noon on Monday and a typed, hard copy should be put in the glass folder on the door of my office by noon on Monday. No late review will be accepted.

5. A research paper (40% of the final grade): maximum of 15 - 20 pages double-spaced (please use Times 12 or an equivalent font, and normal margins). Ancillary material due throughout the term: paper topic due on Feb. 14 (5% of the final grade); paper abstract and one-page outline due on March 14 (5% of the final grade); final paper due on May 2 (30% of the final grade). Please submit both electronic copies and hard copies of these various assignments.

You have considerable freedom for the paper. Depending on how far you have progressed in your graduate work, you may explore a question or topic in which you are particularly interested; write a review essay or literature review delving into a particular controversy; develop a research design that might be useful for your dissertation proposal; or write an article that might be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. My only requirement for this paper is that the subject should be related to the topics of the course: either international interventions, and/or non-positivist and non-rational choice approaches to international relations. Basically, I need the paper to show me that you have learned something this semester.

You should come see me during office hours sometime in February to discuss your paper topic. This is a mandatory meeting. You are also of course always welcome to come discuss your research during my office hours.

All material must be typed.

Late submissions will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline unless you contact me beforehand to request an extension. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or another crisis situation (please bring any form of documentation available).

Any student who believes a grade was given in error can come discuss the situation during my office hours. You should realize that a change in grade is very unlikely, that you must come prepared to demonstrate why the paper deserves a better grade, and that I reserve the right to lower a grade as well as raise it.

**Use of laptops in the classroom**

The use of laptops in the classroom is allowed only to take notes on the class lectures and discussions. Students are forbidden to use laptops in the classroom to browse the Internet or work on something other than the material discussed in class. Any student who wants to use a computer should give me a written document promising never to use his or her laptop in class for something other than taking notes on class lectures / discussion. Students caught doing otherwise will be given a participation grade of F and will be forbidden to continue to use their laptops during future class sessions.
Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who wish to take this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Disabled students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disabilities Services.

Additional resources for the final paper

The following websites include useful advice for research and writing:
- [http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html](http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html) (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc.)
- [http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm](http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm) (you can find hundreds of useful tips on research and writing)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl) (the sections on “The Writing Process”, “General Academic Writing”, “Research and Citations”, and “Grammar and Mechanics” are especially helpful).

The following websites answer all your questions on intellectual property, citing and documenting sources, avoiding disasters, etc. (And of course feel free to ask me if you have any doubts or questions):
- [http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess](http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess) (the tutorial is fun and useful)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01) (another helpful site on avoiding plagiarism)
- [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources) (detailed information about how and why to cite sources)
Jan. 23 – Introduction

No required readings. Overview of the class.

**PART 1: FOUNDATIONS**

Jan. 30 – The Basics


**Recommended**


Theoretical foundations (this list is far from exhaustive; it is a small sample of various traditions, to get you started):
- Michel Foucault. *Discipline & Punish.*
- Michel Foucault. *History of Sexuality, Volume 1.*
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays.*
- Ludwig Wittgensterin. *Philosophical investigations*

**Feb. 6 – The Classics**

10 minute presentation by each student: Main debates around one of the key books. Main argument, contributions, criticisms, main development, refinements, and spin-off of the argument. A lottery will assign one book from the list below to each student:


Recommended


Feb. 13 – Methods and Techniques


*Guest Speaker: Fadi Dagher, Librarian for Political Science and International Relations. “How to find good bibliographic resources on international peace interventions.”*
Reminder: paper topic due.

Recommended


Epistemology and overall approach
• Thomas Biersteker. “Critical Reflections on Post-Positivism in International Relations” in Exchange on the "Third Debate"
• Jim George. “International Relations and the Search for Thinking Space: Another View of the Third Debate”
• K. J. Holsti. “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Which Are the Fairest Theories of All?” in Exchange on the "Third Debate"

PART II – DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

February 20 – The Social Construction of War, Peace, and the Victims


Recommended


Feb. 27 – Organizational Cultures


**Recommended**


**March 6 – The Practice Turn and the Everyday**


Vincent Pouliot and Rebecca Adler-Nissen. 2012. *Power in Practice: Negotiating the International Intervention in Libya*. Article in progress. (will be distributed two weeks in advance)

Severine Autesserre. 2012. *Peaceland: An Ethnography of International Intervention*. Book manuscript in progress. Introduction and chapters 1, 4, and 5 (will be distributed two week in advance)

**Recommended**


**March 13 – Critical Theorists**


*Remember: paper abstract and one-page outline due*

**Recommended**


**PART III – KEY TOPICS**

**March 27 – Interventions in Perspective**


**Recommended**


**April 3 – No class (Prof at the ISA)**

We will schedule a make-up session during the last week of the semester.

**April 10– The Liberal Peace Debate**


**Recommended**


Special issues of *International Peacekeeping* in 2004 (issue 1) and 2009 (issue 5).
April 17 – Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding


Recommended


April 24 and TBD – Your Topics & Research
These two sessions will be devoted to brainstorming your research papers. To make the experience as useful and as interesting as possible, we will run the class sessions as mock conference panels. I will act as chair, and all participants will be paper presenters in one panel and discussant in another.

Each seminar participant will send his/her draft paper to his/her peer partner by the Friday preceding his/her presentation, copying me on the message (peer partners will be assigned on April 4).

Each participant should prepare 1- a 15 minutes presentation of his or her research paper (topic, puzzle, main argument), 2- a 5 minute constructive criticism of a colleague’s paper.

**May 1- Conclusion**

No readings for this week. Focus on your research papers.

*Remember: final papers due.*