



# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

**Autumn Semester 2010**

**Professor Chris Reus-Smit**

**Thursdays, 11:00 a.m., Room 2 (Badia Fiesolana)  
(first session: 7 October, 2010)**

This course introduces students to international relations theory. It is designed to provide students with an understanding of the major traditions of thought in the field, with a 'tool kit' of concepts that they can apply when seeking to understand world politics, and with a 'road map' for navigating their way through the enormous and complex literature on international relations.

## **The central theme of the course**

The central theme of this course is the importance of seeing international relations theory as a 'practical discourse'. When the discipline of international relations first emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a field explicitly dedicated to bringing about international change, to fostering peace in particular. As the trust deeds of the first professorship in the field stated, the new discipline was envisaged as 'Political Science in its application to International Relations with special reference to the best means of promoting peace between nations'. Underlying this vision is the idea that international relations scholars should be engaged in both explaining how the world works and in imagining how it ought to work. To foster peace one needs to know not only how international relations operates and how it might be changed, but also what constitutes peace. Practical reform demands both empirical and normative understanding. For this reason, E. H. Carr wrote that international relations must be 'the science not only of what is, but of what ought to be'.

How one brings together empirical analysis and normative reflection has been a central point of contention among international relations scholars. Some have seen marrying the two as a core task of the discipline, a view held by early classical realists, such as Carr, and also by contemporary 'critical' theorists. For much of the post-1945 period, though, the field has been dominated by scholars who have decried this project, who have tried to limit international relations theory to the explanation of empirical phenomena. International relations has been presented as a 'positive' science, quite separate from the discipline of philosophy, whose domain it is to speculate about how the world ought to be. This attempted separation of empirical analysis from normative reflection has never been successful, though. As soon as scholars make recommendations about how the representatives of states ought to act, they enter the realm of practical discourse, and this inevitably demands empirical and normative reflection.

## **The structure of the course**

The course begins by considering the nature and purpose of theory in the study of international relations, followed by a discussion of the central theme—the status of international relations theory as a practical discourse, and the resulting tension between explanation and normative reflection that permeates all international relations theory. The remainder of the course is divided into six sections. Section One focuses on classical writings, particularly on the realist and liberal theories of the inter-war period (1919–1939). Section Two examines those theories which sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to purge international relations theory of normative reflection, to confine it solely to the explanation of empirical phenomena. Section Three looks at the parallel development of purely normative theories of international relations, particularly the cosmopolitanism and the ‘morality of states’ views. Section Four considers two early traditions which sought, in various ways, to fuse normative and empirical inquiry: notably Marxism and the ‘English School’. Section Five examines the advent of critical theories of international relations, theories that have more recently confronted the difficult task of wedding empirical and normative theory. The final section of the course discusses the nature of contemporary debate in international relations theory, including the rise of constructivist theory, the ‘new English School’, the rise of neoclassical realism, and the ‘new liberalism’.

## **Seminar Program**

1. CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON THEORY
2. CLASSICAL REALISM AND LIBERALISM
3. STRUCTURAL REALISM
4. LIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM
5. COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE MORALITY OF STATES
6. THE ENGLISH SCHOOL
7. CRITICAL THEORY & POSTMODERNISM
8. FEMINISM
9. CONSTRUCTIVISM
10. NEOCLASSICAL REALISM, NEW LIBERALISM, AND THE RETURN OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

## **Recommended Text**

Many of the required readings in this seminar series are drawn from *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. I would like to encourage seminar participants to purchase a copy. Now that it's available in paperback, it can be obtained for a good price through Amazon UK.

## **Seminar Requirements**

Students who wish to take this seminar for credit must meet Department attendance requirements and complete a research paper (5,000 words) that should be submitted no later than 14 January 2011. Students who wish to audit the seminar need approval from Professor Reus-Smit and they are expected to meet normal attendance requirements, complete all required readings, and participate actively in seminar discussions.

## SEMINAR READINGS

Student discussion will be a crucial element of this seminar. It is essential that all students prepare for the seminar by doing the required reading each week.

### Week 1      **CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON THEORY**

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), pp.1-59.

Robert W Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', in Robert Keohane (ed), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp.204-254.

Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, 'Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 109-130.

Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 'Between Utopia and Reality: The Practical Discourses of International Relations,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3-40.

### Week 2      **CLASSICAL REALISM AND LIBERALISM**

E H Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939 : An Introduction To The Study Of International Relations* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), Chapters 1 and 2. Any edition will do.

Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: McGraw Hill, Sixth Edition), pp. 3-17.

Immanuel Kant, 'To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch', in Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1964), pp.107-144.

Woodrow Wilson, 'The Fourteen Points', in Phil Williams et al, *Classic Readings of International Relations* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), pp.23-6.

### Week 3      **STRUCTURAL REALISM**

Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane (eds), *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.ix-xxix.

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), Chapter 5.

Kenneth Waltz, 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', *International Security* (Vol.25, No.1, Summer 2000), pp.5-41.

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of the Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2003), Chapters 1 and 2.

Jack Donnelly, 'The Ethics of Realism,' Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150-162..

#### **Week 4 LIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM**

Robert O Keohane, 'Neoliberal Institutionalism: A Perspective on World Politics', in *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), Chapter 1.

Robert O Keohane, 'The Demand for International Regimes', in Stephen D Krasner (ed), *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp.141-172.

Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Chapters One and Two.

James Richardson, 'The Ethics of Neoliberal Institutionalism,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 234-255.

#### **Week 5 COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE MORALITY OF STATES**

Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999 Second Edition), pp.127-176.

Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996 Second Edition), 13-87.

Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 2002), Chapters 1 and 2.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp.51-63, 86-108.

Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), Chapters 1 and 2.

#### **Week 6 THE ENGLISH SCHOOL**

Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (London: Macmillan, 1995 Second Edition), pp.23-50, 74-94.

Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), pp.21-45.

John Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.111-128.

Molly Cochran, 'The Ethics of the English School,' in Christian Reus-Smit and

Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.298-316.

## **Week 7 CRITICAL THEORY AND POSTMODERNISM**

Andrew Linklater, 'The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical-Theoretical Point of View,' *Millennium* (Vol.21, No.1, 1992), pp.77-98.

Linklater, Andrew. *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (1998), Introduction and Chapter One.

Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, 'Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies,' *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol.34, 1990), pp.259-268. Also see the authors' concluding essay in this issue of *ISQ*.

Anthony Burke, 'Postmodernism,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.359-377.

Robyn Eckersley, 'The Ethics of Critical Theory,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.346-358.

Peter Lawler, 'The Ethics of Postmodernism,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 378-390.

## **Week 8 FEMINISM**

Ann Tickner, 'Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation', *Millennium* (Vol.17, No.3, Winter 1988), pp.429-440.

Christine Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* (1994), Intro, Chapter 6.

Craig Murphy, 'Seeing Women, Recognizing Gender, Recasting International Relations' *International Organization* (Vol.50, No.3, Summer 1996), pp.513-38.

Jacqui True, 'The Ethics of Feminism,' in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 408-424.

## **Week 9 CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons? Constructivism and Critical International Theory', *European Journal of International Relations* (Vol.4, No.3, 1998), pp.259-294.

Immanuel Adler. 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *The European Journal of International Relations* (Vol.3, No.3, 1997).

Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* (Vol.46, No.2, 1992), pp.391-425

John Gerard Ruggie, 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization* (Vol.47, No.1, 1993), pp.139-174.

Vincent Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities,' *International Organization* (Vol.62, No.2, 2008), pp.257-288.

Richard Price. 'Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics,' *International Organization* (Vol.62, No.2, 2008), pp.191-220.

## **Week 10    NEOCLASSICAL REALISM, NEW LIBERALISM, AND THE RETURN OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL**

William Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', *International Security* (Vol.19, No.3, Winter 1994/95), pp.91-129.

Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, 'Is Anybody Still a Realist?', *International Security* (Vol.24, No.2, Fall 1999), pp.5-55. See the replies from realists and Legro and Moravcsik's response in 'Brother Can You Spare a Paradigm', *International Security* (Vol.25, No.1, Summer 2000), pp.165-193

Andrew Moravcsik, 'Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics', *International Organization* (Vol.51, No.4, Autumn 1997), pp.513-554.

Timothy Dunne. (1995) 'The Social Construction of International Society', *The European Journal of International Relations* , (Vol.1, No.3), pp.367-389.

Richard Little, 'The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations', *The European Journal of International Relations* (Vol.6, No.3, September 2000), pp.395-422.