

**PROSEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
**PSCI 506**  
**Fall 2020**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to introduce students to the major theoretical trends and scholarly traditions that define, organize, and drive International Relations. The overall aim of the course is to enable students to broaden their understanding of world politics by using International Relations paradigms as an analytical tool. The course starts with a discussion on the mainstream theories of International Relations. We will then focus on empirical studies which will give us the opportunity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each theory in understanding real world issues.

**FORMAT OF THE COURSE**

This is a fully online class. You're required to follow the announcements and course requirements on D2L on a regular and timely basis. Study guides, lecture notes and PowerPoints can be found on D2L.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will become familiar with International Relations paradigms, theories, and concepts.
- Students will be able to compare and critically analyze and evaluate theories/approaches.
- Students will develop critical and analytical skills in applying theoretical approaches to understand and explain international issues and world events.
- Students will form their own research agendas in International Relations and will practice academic honesty in their writing assignments.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company. 2001. ISBN: 9780393076240

Trita Parsi. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. Yale University Press. 2008. ISBN: 9780300143119

Thomas J. Christensen. *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*. W. W. Norton & Company. 2016. ISBN: 9780393352993

Leszek Buszynski. *Negotiating with North Korea*. Routledge. 2015. ISBN: 9781138643369

Other readings will be available on D2L.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Weekly Reflections:** Students are required to write weekly reflections (about 500-750 words) that critically engage each week's seminar question. The seminar question for each week can be found on D2L. Weekly reflections should not be summaries. Instead, they should make a clear argument that responds to the seminar question based on the readings. You may compare and contrast the readings, critique the readings, offer fruitful alternative approaches, suggest new research questions that emerge from the readings, connect readings to current events, etc. Whatever style you follow, the requirement is to provide a well thought out response to the seminar question. These reflections are due **every Sunday, 11.55 pm**.

**Book Reviews:** Students are required to write 3 book reviews based on the books by Parsi, Christensen and Buszynski. The purpose of book reviews is to give students the opportunity to analyze how the theoretical approaches we learn in class inform and explain inter-state relations in the global arena. Book reviews are expected to be approximately 5-7 pages or 1500-2000 words in length. The due date for each review can be found on the course schedule. A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for book reviews is available on D2L.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be in take home format and will be posted on D2L on **December 11** and will be due **December 15, 11.55 pm**. It will be composed of essay questions based on topics covered throughout the semester.

**Format Requirements:** All assignments must be double-spaced, typed and written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. Sources for each assignment must include books, academic articles and news pieces. All sources must be cited properly and listed in a bibliography or in footnotes/endnotes format. Regarding citations, you may use any academically accepted format.

## **GRADING**

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Weekly Reflections	20%
Book Reviews	45% (15% each)
Final Exam	35%
Total	100%

## **GRADE SCALE**

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 =F

## **MAKE-UP POLICY**

Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. Please request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

## **CIVILITY AND RESPECT**

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions during class discussions. Any behavior that disrupts the class or impedes other student's ability to fully engage with the course will not be tolerated.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult me during my office hours.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas

A&M University-Commerce Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148 [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

## **TAMUC'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

**Texas Senate Bill-11** (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 August 24-30**

#### Introduction to the Field and Debates

Steve Walt, "One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* 110 (Spring 1998), 29- 46.

Kenneth Waltz, "Evaluating Theories," *The American Political Science Review* 91 no. 4, (December, 1997), 913-917.

Daniel Malinak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson and Michael Tierney, "International Relations in the U.S. Academy" *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (2011), 437- 64.

### **Week 2 August 31-September 6**

Realism & Neorealism *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* Ch 1-3

### **Week 3 September 7-13**

Realism and Neorealism *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* Ch 4-7

#### **Week 4 September 14-20**

Realism and Neorealism *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* Ch 8-10

#### **Week 5 September 21-27**

##### Liberalism

Helen Milner, "The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations Theory: A Critique,"  
Review of International Studies 17(1) (January 1991), 67-85.

Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and  
Institutions," World Politics 38(1) (October 1985), 226-254.

Duncan Snidal, "Relative Gains and the Pattern of International Cooperation," The American  
Political Science Review 85(3) (September 1991), 701-726

Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation," International Organization 42(3)  
(Summer 1988), 485-507

Robert Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," International  
Security 20 (1) (Summer 1995), 39-41

#### **Week 6 September 28-October 4**

##### Constructivism

Alexander Wendt. 1987. The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory.  
International Organization 41: 335-370.

Alexander Wendt. 1992. Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power  
Politics. International Organization 46: 31-425.

#### **Week 7 October 5-11**

US, Iran & Israel *Treacherous Alliance* Ch 1-7

#### **Week 8 October 12-18**

US, Iran & Israel *Treacherous Alliance* Ch 8-14

#### **Week 9 October 19-25**

US, Iran & Israel *Treacherous Alliance* Ch 15-20

#### **Week 10 October 26-November 1**

US-China Relations *The China Challenge* Intro & Ch 1-3

**1<sup>st</sup> Book Review due October 30, 11.55 pm**

**Week 11 November 2-8**

US-China Relations *The China Challenge* Intro & Ch 4-6

**Week 12 November 9-15**

US-China Relations *The China Challenge* Intro & Ch 7-8 & Epilogue

**Week 13 November 16-22**

The North Korean Nuclear Issue *Negotiating with North Korea* Intro & Ch 1-4

**2<sup>nd</sup> Book Review due November 20, 11.55 pm**

**Week 14 November 23-29**

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 15 November 30-December 6**

The North Korean Nuclear Issue *Negotiating with North Korea* Ch 5-7 & Conclusion

**Week 16 December 7-13**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Book Review due December 11, 11.55 pm**

**Final Exam due December 15, 11.55 pm**