

GREAT POWER POLITICS

POL487/POL2206

SPRING 2024

Professor C. Norrlöf

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Course hours: Wednesday, 15-17

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course critically examines great power politics, how dominant nations shape and influence the global order, peace, and conflict dynamics. Structured around three main themes, we explore the impact of great powers on order, the mechanisms and outcomes of warfare and peace, and the competitive tactics great powers exercise in the security and economic spheres as well as their inter-relation. Emerging conflicts, both internal and external, as well as the complex interdependence of geopolitics and economic relations underscore the relevance of these themes. We survey dominance relations and its relationship with the international order, assessing the resilience and future trajectory of the liberal international order. A key focus is on the strategic interplay between economic and security objectives in great power politics, challenging existing theories of hierarchy and the inevitability of conflict. The course is designed to integrate current global affairs, enabling students to apply theoretical frameworks to real-world scenarios and policy considerations. Completing this course will equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the essential theories, analytical concepts and empirical patterns in the study of Great Powers, offering opportunities to excel in the study of International Relations and International Political Economy.

***** Requirements *****

Prerequisites: POL208Y

***** Grading scheme and due dates *****

Term Test February 28, 2024 (15%)

Seminar paper March 20, 2024 (30%)

Final Test March 20, 2024 (35%)

Class participation (20%)

*** *Term tests* ***

There are two term tests for this course, accounting for a total of 50% of your grade. The term tests contain multiple choice questions.

*** *Seminar paper* ***

This assignment offers students the opportunity to develop creative, analytical and research skills by applying concepts, theories and evidence discussed in the course towards understanding a specific question. Each student will demonstrate their ability to produce original academic writing. The seminar paper is due March 20, 2024.

Students may write on any topic relevant to this class covered by the broad headings—great powers and order-making; great powers, war and peace; great power competition. The term paper must include a research question, an argument, a literature review (including evidence of this course by engaging with at least 3 articles from the syllabus) and an empirical section analyzing facts in support of your argument.

Late assignment policy: Barring medical emergencies (with medical certificates), grades of late assignments submitted after the due date will be level decreased (an A will be awarded an A-, an A- will be awarded B+ etc) for every day the paper is late. Assignments submitted after the last day of class will not be accepted unless I grant an exception in writing.

*** *Class participation* ***

Your presence and participation in this class will make learning more enjoyable for everyone in the room and more enduring for you. Come prepared to class, ready to engage in conversations about the readings. Your grade will be based on the quality of your participation. As a complement to class lectures, there may be impromptu exercises to be prepared in class, in groups, for discussion with the entire class. These exercises are open-ended and intended to help students work actively with the material for this course to improve retention of course content.

*** *Course material* ***

All readings on the syllabus are required readings. All of the material is available [here](#). For greater convenience, I have provided direct links to some articles and also uploaded some material for this course over [Quercus](#). If you cannot access the links, try using this [tool](#). If you are still having problems with the links, all resources can be found over the portal to the university library system. You are ultimately responsible for sourcing material for this course.

On the pages that follow, you will find the [course outline](#). Be sure to check announcements and Quercus for possible changes or updates to this syllabus. By taking this course, you are responsible for observing all updates and information provided during class and over the Quercus website.

*** Course slides ***

Whenever possible, I make power point slides available for this course. However, all slides shown during lecture may not be available over Quercus because of the dynamic nature of some segments. Moreover, the slides are no substitute for all content covered in class. If you miss class, be sure to get notes from a classmate.

*** *Plagiarism & academic integrity* ***

By taking this course, you agree, on your honour, that all coursework including written assignments and tests is your own work and not someone else's work. It is your responsibility to ensure your work is consistent with university guidelines. Academic dishonesty is defined and regulated in the [University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#)

*** *Copyright and privacy rules* ***

For instructor copyright and student privacy reasons, it is [prohibited](#) for students to record any portion of a lecture or share any course material

*** *Academic conduct* ***

Students must come to class prepared to engage and treat everyone in the course with respect and dignity.

*** *Medical exemptions* ***

Documentation is required for exemptions to this syllabus which regulates student assignments and tests. Kindly use the University's online absence declaration and report your circumstances to me. Maintaining mental health can be challenging in trying times. If you require assistance, please feel free to contact me and, or, contact the university's [Health & Wellness Center](#)

*** *Accessibility* ***

If you require accommodation for a disability, make contact with [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of the term and inform me of your situation.

*** Course outline ***

1. JANUARY 10: Introduction

******* GREAT POWERS & ORDER-MAKING**

2. JANUARY 17: Empires, Hegemons and Great Powers

[1] KINDLEBERGER, C. P. (1981): "[Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy](#)," *International Studies Quarterly*, 25, 242-254

[2] LUNDESTAD, G. (1986): "[Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952](#)," *Journal of Peace Research*, 23, 263-277

[3] MAIER, C. S. (2006): *Among Empires*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Prologue. (QUERCUS)

[4] NEXON, D., AND T. WRIGHT (2007): "[What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate](#)," *American Political Science Review*, 101, 253-271

[5] ZARAKOL, A. (2022): *Before the West*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Ch. 2 (QUERCUS)

3. JANUARY 24: Anarchy, Hierarchy & Order

[1] DONNELLY, J. (2006): "[Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy](#)," *European Journal of International Relations*, 12, 139-170

[2] TANG, S. (2016): "[Order: A Conceptual Analysis](#)," *Chinese Political Science Review*, 1, 30-46

[3] LUBAN, D. (2020): "[What Is Spontaneous Order?](#)," *American Political Science Review*, 114, 68-80

[4] MEARSHEIMER, J. J. (2019): "[Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order](#)," *International Security*, 43, 7-50

[5] DEUDNEY, D., AND G. J. IKENBERRY (1999): "[The Nature and Sources of International Order](#)," *Review of International Studies*, 25, 179-196

******* GREAT POWERS, WAR & PEACE**

4. JANUARY 31: Great Powers at War

[1] JERVIS, R. (1978): "[Cooperation under the Security Dilemma](#)," *World Politics*, 30, 167-214

[2] LEVY, J. S. (1990/1991): "[Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in July 1914](#)," *International Security*, 15, 151-186

[3] FEARON, J. (1995): "[Rationalist Explanation for War](#)," *International Organization*, 49, 379-414

[4] LIEBER, K. A. (2007): "[The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory](#)," *International Security*, 32, 155-191

5. FEBRUARY 7: The Distribution of Power & Prospects for Peace

[1] MANSFIELD, E. D. (1993): "Concentration, Polarity, and the Distribution of Power," *International Studies Quarterly*, 37, 105-128

[2] WOHLFORTH, W. C. (1999): "[The Stability of a Unipolar World](#)," *International Security*, 24, 5-41

[3] KALYVAS, S. N., AND L. BALCELLS (2010): "[International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict](#)," *American Political Science Review*, 104, 415-429

[4] MONTEIRO, N. P. (2011): "[Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful](#)," *International Security*, 36, 9-40

[5] GLEDITSCH, N. P., S. PINKER, B. A. THAYER, J. S. LEVY, AND W. R. THOMPSON (2013): "[The Forum: The Decline of War](#)," *International Studies Review*, 15, 396-419

******* GREAT POWER COMPETITION**

6. FEBRUARY 14: The Economics-Security Nexus

[1] LUTTWAK, E. N. (1990): "[From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce](#)," *The National Interest*, 17-23.

[2] LIBERMAN, P. (1996): "[Trading with the Enemy: Security and Relative Economic Gains](#)," *International Security*, 21, 147-175

[3] LEONARD, M. (2016): "[Introduction: Connectivity Wars](#)," European Council on Foreign Relations, 13-28

[4] GODDARD, S. E. (2018): "[Embedded Revisionism: Networks, Institutions, and Challenges to World Order](#)," *International Organization*, 72, 763-797

[5] NORRLOF, C., AND W. C. WOHLFORTH (2019): "[Raison De L'hégémonie \(the Hegemon's Interest\): Theory of the Costs and Benefits of Hegemony](#)," *Security Studies*, 28, 422-450

7. FEBRUARY 21: READING WEEK, NO CLASS

8. FEBRUARY 28: TERM TEST I, 15% GRADE

9. MARCH 6: Carrots & Sticks

[1] BALDWIN, D. A. (1971): "[The Power of Positive Sanctions](#)," *World Politics*, 24, 19-38

[2] DASHTI-GIBSON, J., P. DAVIS, AND B. RADCLIFF (1997): "[On the Determinants of the Success of Economic Sanctions: An Empirical Analysis](#)," *American Journal of Political Science*, 41, 608-618

[3] SECHSER, T. S. (2018): "[Reputations and Signaling in Coercive Bargaining](#)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62, 318-345

[4] ZHANG, K. (2019): "[Cautious Bully: Reputation, Resolve, and Beijing's Use of Coercion in the South China Sea](#)," *International Security*, 44, 117-159

[5] NIEMAN, M. D., *et al.* (2020): "[An International Game of Risk: Troop Placement and Major Power Competition](#)," *The Journal of Politics*, 83, 1307-1321

10. MARCH 13: Managing Interdependence

[1] PAPAYOANOU, P. A. (1997): "[Economic Interdependence and the Balance of Power](#)," *International Studies Quarterly*, 41, 113-140

[2] COPELAND, D. C. (1996): "[Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations](#)," *International Security*, 20, 5-41

[3] CRAWFORD, T. W. (2011): "[Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics](#)," *International Security*, 35, 155-189

[4] LIM, D. J., AND Z. COOPER (2015): "[Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia](#)," *Security Studies*, 24, 696-727

[5] MEIJER, H., AND L. SIMÓN (2021): "[Covert Balancing: Great Powers, Secondary States and US Balancing Strategies against China](#)," *International Affairs*, 97, 463-481

11. MARCH 20: << *Term Test*, 35% >>
 << *Term essay due*, 30% >>

12. MARCH 27: Great Power Transition & War

[1] GILPIN, R. (1981): *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, CH. 4

[2] JOHNSTON, A. I. (2003): "[Is China a Status Quo Power?](#)," *International Security*, 27, 5-56

[3] FRIEDBERG, A. L. (2005): "[The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?](#)," *International Security*, 30, 7-45

[4] ROSATO, S. (2015): "[The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers](#)," *International Security*, 39, 48-88

[5] ALLISON, G. (September 24, 2015): "[The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?](#)," Emerson Collective: Washington D.C.

13. APRIL 3: << Annual ISA conference. >>