



University of Toronto  
Department of Political Science

Psychology and  
International Relations  
POL 466H1/2207H1F

**Professor Todd Hall**

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Office hours by appointment

## COURSE STATEMENT

International politics, at base, involves human beings interacting with other human beings. A key assumption of this course is that human actors within international relations make meaningful choices and engage in consequential behaviors that are not fully determined by external structures. Accepting this assumption means accepting that we need a theory of the human mind responsible for such choices and behaviors in order to explain observable outcomes in international politics.

This course looks at the ways in which scholars in the field of international relations have drawn upon the field of psychology as a means to enhance their theories of the human actor within international relations. Some have sought to amend rationalist models of belief formation and decision making by introducing psychological insights into the effects of biases, learning, and heuristics. Others have even challenged the very conception of human rationality by citing recent advances in neuroscience. But all share the idea that a better understanding of how the human mind works can benefit the study of international relations.

The goal of this course is to provide you with a survey of the various ways psychology has been imported into the field of international relations to challenge or improve existing models of international actors. You will be asked to critically analyze the contributions that scholars of international relations have made in enhancing our understandings of the mental processes at work behind what we see on the international stage.

*The instructor would like to thank Jon Mercer, Steven Bernstein, and Victor Falkenheim for inspiring various elements of this syllabus.*

## Course Evaluation Schedule

Type	Percentage	Details
Weekly Response Papers	4% per paper, 40% total	Due in hard copy at the end of each class, weeks 2-11.
Participation and Attendance	20%	
Final Paper	40%	

### Weekly Response Papers:

You are required to write a one page response to the readings each week. You are asked to give your thoughts about the arguments presented in the readings; this should involve creative and critical engagement. For instance, you can discuss the readings in terms of their benefits, pitfalls, implications, applications, or possibilities for improvement. **DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE READINGS. DO NOT TELL ME HOW YOU “FEEL” ABOUT THE READINGS.** Response papers will be graded according to 10-point format. Ten points means that the response paper shows significant thought and insight. Seven points means that the response paper shows thought, but is lacking sufficient engagement with the readings. Five points represents the bare minimum satisfaction of the requirements. Failure to hand in a response paper will result in a zero grade. You will have the chance to redo one response paper for which you have received a grade of more than five points. This “redo” must be submitted before the last class.

### Seminar Attendance and Participation:

*Seminar attendance is mandatory.* Half of your participation grade is simply for showing up on time. Attendance is graded on a 2 point scale; you lose half a point per half hour late, with the first half point deducted for coming in after class has started. The other half of your grade depends on your active participation in and contribution to classroom discussion.

### Final Paper:

This class requires that you write a ten page paper. The paper should build on the readings to make a recommendation to an international leader or government. It can be a specific policy recommendation or deal with broader issues of policy formation and institutional structure. More detailed requirements will be given to you as the assignment date approaches.

## Required Readings

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There are no readings required for purchase. Readings available electronically through the University of Toronto website are designated with **EL**. Finally, readings that will be made available through Blackboard are designated with **BB**.

## Conditions of Participation

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*By registering for this course, you are agreeing to abide by the following conditions. These conditions may appear strict, but they are meant to ensure that this course fulfills its goals. If this seems to be very contractual, that is intentional. This syllabus constitutes an agreement between the instructor and the students about their respective rights and responsibilities pertaining to the course.*

\*Seminar attendance is mandatory. The only way that you can be excused is by reason of documented religious holiday, health problem, or personal emergency. Documentation of religious holidays must be submitted to me within the first two weeks of the course. Documentation of health problems or personal emergencies must be submitted to me within one week of the missed seminar unless extenuating circumstances exist. Excused absences will have the attendance and participation grade for that day dropped from their final total. Response papers will still need to be submitted within one week of the excused period. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a grade of “0” for the day.

\*We will be using Blackboard to manage this course. This syllabus and other important information about the course, including the assignments and updated readings, will be posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to log on to the Blackboard website and obtain the posted information. All students must have a U of T email address to do so. You can log onto the Blackboard site at: [portal.utoronto.ca](http://portal.utoronto.ca). For detailed instructions, see the appendix to this outline.

\*Classes begin promptly at ten minutes after. Lateness will affect your participation grade. Breaks will occur at the discretion of the instructor. In cases where there is a significant amount of material to cover, we may need to forsake the break period.

\*To ensure academic freedom of expression and the limitation of content to intended audiences, audio or video recording is not permitted without the express written permission of the instructor. If you have reason to need audio recording, you must discuss this with me.

\*Use of cell phones, gaming devices, or computers for non-related web-surfing or chatting during class is not permitted. This behavior is disruptive; you will be asked to leave the class.

\*Office hours are by arrangement with the instructor. You may email me to schedule a time to meet.

\*Readings are required and expected to be completed by the time of the seminar. The instructor reserves the right to change readings during the course, as there may be newly released publications or developments that warrant such action. In such cases, you will be notified both by Blackboard and in class the week prior.

\*You are also welcome to email the instructor regarding questions or issues pertaining to the course. I will attempt to answer emails sent on weekdays within 24 hours. Emails sent after business hours on Fridays will be treated as having arrived on Monday at 8AM. In other words, do not expect immediate responses, particularly late at night or on weekends. Be aware, email sent to our utoronto addresses is property of the university and can be made public should the university deem this necessary or appropriate.

\*PAPERS WILL BE HANDED IN VIA TURNITIN (see below) AS WELL AS IN HARD COPY. The late penalty is two points (out of forty) per day. After seven days no further late papers will be accepted. The ONLY way to avoid a lateness penalty is to provide proof of a severe medical or other emergency in the form of a signed medical note, etc. that explains why you are unable to complete the assignment on time. You should make a reasonable effort to contact the instructor as soon as the problem arises. Please be advised that it is at the professor's discretion to decide on the legitimacy of the reason for an extension request and whether to accept the late assignment. Multiple assignments due at the same time or exams in other courses do not constitute legitimate reasons for waiving the late penalty. Should you have concerns about submitting your work to TURNITIN, please discuss this with the instructor during the first weeks of class to arrange an alternative.

\*Late papers should be submitted on TURNITIN AND a hard copy handed in to the Political Science office, where they will be date-stamped. We will not accept assignments handed in under the professor's office door, in mailboxes, by email or fax. ***Always keep an extra copy of your assignments that you can email to us on short notice. Also keep a copy of your rough notes.***

\****THE FINAL GRADES IN THIS COURSE ARE FINAL.*** The grades are not arbitrary; they reflect our assessment of your work as a demonstration of your progress towards the goals of this class. If you need to maintain a certain average, or get a specific minimum grade in

this class, make sure that the quality of your work warrants this grade. Remember, an “A” letter grade means that, according to the Faculty Guidelines, you have shown “outstanding performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter and sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.” You should not expect an “A” simply for completing the basic requirements.

\*Accessibility Needs: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or the course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

**\*ACADEMIC HONESTY\***

- Using the words, content, or ideas of others in written work for which you will receive credit in this course requires citing that work. This includes ideas or articles found on the internet. Failure to properly cite other people’s words or ideas constitutes plagiarism and is a **very serious** academic offence, as are other forms of academic dishonesty. *If you are uncertain whether citation is needed, or how to cite properly, please consult the instructor.* See also the website below. Ignorance of citation requirements does not constitute an excuse.  
See: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>
- *Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.*

## Course Plan

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Week 1: September 13

### Class Introduction

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Week 2: September 20

### “The Rational Baseline”

Lake, David and Robert Powell. (1999). *Strategic Choice and International Relations*: Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Pr., Chapters 1-2. **BB**

Snidal, Duncan. “Rational Choice and International Relations,” In *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen and Beth A. Simmons, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications. pp. 73-94. **BB**

Fearon, James. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379-414. **EL**

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Week 3: September 27

### Leaders as Individuals in IR

Byman, DL, and KM Pollack. 2001. Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In. *International Security* 25(4): 107-46. **EL**

McDermott, Rose. 2004. *Political Psychology in International Relations* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 7-8 **BB**

Henry A. Murray, “Analysis of the Personality of Adolph Hitler: With Predictions of His Future Behavior and Suggestions for Dealing with Him Now and After Germany's Surrender.” Available at:  
<http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeHave/SpecialCollections/Donovan/Hitler/Hitler-TOC.cfm>

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Week 4: October 4

**Information, Beliefs, and Biases**

Kaufmann, CD. 1994. Out of the Lab and into the Archives: A Method for Testing Psychological Explanations of Political Decision Making. *International Studies Quarterly* 38(4): 557-86. **EL**

Jervis, Robert. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4-5 **BB**

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Week 5: October 11

**Learning and Analogies**

Levy, Jack. 1994. Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield. *International Organization* 48(02): 279-312. **EL**

Khong, YF. 1992. *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*: Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-2, 7-9 **BB**

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Week 6: October 18

**Prospect Theory and IR**

McDermott, R. "Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission." *Political Psychology* (1992): 237-63. **EL**

Haas, M.L. "Prospect Theory and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2001): 241-70. **EL**

Levy, Jack. 1992. Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems. *Political Psychology* 13(2): 283-310. **EL**

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Week 7: October 25

**Social Identity Theory and IR**

Mercer, Jonathan. 1995. Anarchy and Identity. *International Organization* 49(2): 229-52.

**EL**

Gries, Peter. H. 2005. Social Psychology and the Identity-Conflict Debate: Is a 'China Threat' inevitable? *European Journal of International Relations* 11(2): 235-65. **EL**

Clunan, A.L. 2009. *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 4. **BB**

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Week 8: November 1

**Foreign Policy Decision Making**

Holsti, Ole. 1989. "Crisis Decision Making." *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1. **BB**

Lebow, Richard. 1981. *Between Peace and War*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 5, 8. **BB**

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Week 9: November 8

**The Emotions in IR**

Crawford, N. 2000. The Passion of World Politics. *International Security* 24( 4): 116-54.

**EL**

Löwenheim, Oded, and Gadi Heimann. 2008. Revenge in International Politics. *Security Studies* 17: 685-724. **EL**

Saurette, Paul. 2006. You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics. *Review of International Studies* 32(3): 495-522 **EL**

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Week 10: November 15

**The Emotions in IR (Part 2)**

Mercer, Jonathan. 2010. Emotional Beliefs. *International Organization* 64(Winter): 1-31.

**EL**

Bar-Tal, D., E. Halperin, and J. De Rivera. "Collective Emotions in Conflict Situations: Societal Implications." *Journal of Social Issues* 63, no. 2 (2007): 441-60. **EL**

Sasley, B.E. "Theorizing States' Emotions." *International Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2011): 452-76. **EL**

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Week 11: November 22

**Conclusions**

Goldgeier, J.M., and P.E. Tetlock. "Psychology and International Relations Theory."

*Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 67-92. **EL**

Janice Gross Stein, "Threat Perception: The Political Psychology of Signaling," **BB**

McDermott, Rose. 2004. The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science. *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4): 691-706. **EL**

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Week 12: November 29

**Presentations of Final Papers**

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**\*\*\*FINAL PAPERS DUE THE LAST CLASS\*\*\***