Why does war occur between states? Why at other times do states choose to co-operate and at others to fight? Are certain states more cooperative than others? What factors shape state policy and behavior towards other states? These are the primary questions driving this course. We will seek answers in the major theories designed to help us understand international politics. We will begin by assessing how theories in general help us understand the world. We will then push and pull on the major theories of international politics by applying them to major events in international history, assessing the degree to which each individual theory provides a convincing outline of of international behavior. We will then turn to the issues predominating current international politics. We will learn specific things about theories and about international history. Almost more importantly, we will develop two important skills – the abilities to think critically about the world around us and to devise nuanced understandings of highly complex events.

Seminar objectives:
1. To develop an understanding of theoretical approaches to thinking about international politics.
2. To develop historical knowledge of major international crises and conflicts.
3. To provide students an opportunity to individually apply the theoretical explanations to actual cases of conflict.
4. To assist students in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical explanations by gauging how well they explain the real world.
5. To develop reading skills such that students read not only to master content but also to critique the approach and validity of the work.

The course will involve both lecture and discussion. Students will be expected to show up having read all required texts and to be ready to talk about them. Students should also stay abreast of current affairs during this course (and hopefully in the future!). Read the international section of the New York Times, listen to NPR, read The Economist – as long as you stay informed about what is going on in the world around you. We will be bringing these events into classroom discussion. One cannot assess the validity of theories in a vacuum – you need events to apply theories to.
Grades and Requirements:

Two exams: 50%
Analytical Writing Assignment: 25%
Participation in class discussion: 25%

The course will entail one midterm exam and one final exam. Unexcused absences for exams will result in an exam grade of “0”. Exams will be comprised of short and long essay questions.

The writing assignment will involve a 5 - 7 page essay applying the theories we learn in the first section of the class to a particular instance of international conflict. The essay will be written individually and will be due one week after the readings are assigned. No late papers will be accepted.

Participation during class is important for a number of reasons. First, it allows you to demonstrate that you are engaged with the course and are processing its contents. Second, it helps you develop the important skill of feeling comfortable offering your opinion in front of many others. Third, it provides you practice at making verbal arguments in constructive and respectful ways.

Participation will be evaluated not solely on the amount that you talk but also on the quality of your comments and on the degree to which you respond to the comments of others. I will assign one Participation grade for the semester. If you are interested in how you are doing in class, please stop by my office hours. I will be happy to discuss it with you.

Class Conduct:

A few guidelines to ensure that class time will run smoothly and will adhere to basic notions of respect for others.

- Arrive on time so as not to disturb others and to ensure you don’t miss the comments of others.

- No eating.

- No texting, surfing, making or answering calls, or any other form of electronic disturbance during class. I understand it is useful to have your laptops open in class. Often times, we will be using them to access materials. It is terribly distracting to you and to those around you when you allow your fingers and
minds to wander to non-course related stuff. Use this time to practice the valuable skill of self control!

- Turn off all cell phones or don’t even bring them.

Reading Materials:

We will be using the following book: Robert Art and Robert Jervis, *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues, 11th Edition.* It should be available at the bookstore. It is also of course available for purchase or for rental on Amazon. All other readings will be available on the course website. Please note that reading assignments are subject to change. Always consult the most recent syllabus and readings on the course website.

Course Outline

I. Introduction to the Study of International Relations

1. Tuesday, September 3rd: Course Introduction
   - What questions will we be asking? How will we go about answering them?
   - Review of Syllabus

2. Thursday, September 5th: Theories and Their Utility

II. Theoretical Perspectives: What Causes War?

3. Tuesday, September 10th: Anarchy, Realism and the Balance of Power
4. **Thursday, September 12th:** Strategies in an Anarchic World


5. **Tuesday, September 17th:** Liberalism: Institutions and Interdependence


6. **Thursday, September 19th:** Constructivism


7. **Tuesday, September 24th:** Domestic Level: The Democratic Peace


8. **Thursday, September 26th:** Individual Level: Individuals, Bureaucracy and War


9. Tuesday, October 1st: Negotiated Solutions and The Bargaining Model of War


10. Thursday, October 3rd: Commitment Problems, Incomplete Information & Indivisibility


III. Application of Theory

11. Tuesday, October 8th: World War I


12. Thursday, October 10th: World War II


13. **Tuesday, October 15th:** The Iraq War


14. **Thursday, October 17th:** Mid-term Exam

15. **Thursday, October 24th:** Trager at Conference.

Readings for Analytical Writing Assignment:


IV. **Contemporary Issues in International Politics**

16. **Tuesday, October 29th:** Post-Cold War Security


17. **Thursday, October 31st:** Coercive Diplomacy, Bargaining, Deterrence

Writing Assignment Due


18. Tuesday, November 5th: Case Study - Cuban Missile Crisis
Questions:
• Bundy, McGeorge, Danger and Survival, ch. 9, “Cuban Missile Crisis.”

19. Thursday, November 7th: Nuclear Proliferation

20. Tuesday, November 12th: Terrorism
• Robert Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism’ (A&J), pp. 214-231

21. Thursday, November 14th: International Political Economy

22. Tuesday, November 19th: Globalization

23. **Thursday, November 21st**: Human Rights and Multilateral Interventions


24. **Tuesday, November 26th**: Environment and Conflict


25. **Tuesday, December 3rd**: The Rise of China and US Hegemony


26. **Tuesday, December 5th**: Conclusion

Final Exam Tuesday, December 12th, 7- 10 pm