**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

**Political Science Department**

Political Science 41502

Foundations of Realism-2

Spring 2023

Instructor: John Mearsheimer

**Course Description**: This is the second course in a sequence that examines the core concepts and theoretical ideas that underpin realist theories of international politics. To take this course, it is necessary to have taken the first course in the sequence during the previous quarter (Winter 2023).

**Course Requirements**: Every student is expected to do all the reading, be present for every class, and participate in the discussion. The final grade will be based on classroom participation (33%), and two 7-page papers (33% each).

I will provide students with a list of paper topics from which they can choose two. Both papers will be due in my inbox ([j-mearsheimer@uchicago.edu](mailto:j-mearsheimer@uchicago.edu)) no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday of exam week – May 23. Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. For graduating students, papers will be due no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday May 17th.

The papers must be no longer than 7 pages of text, double-spaced, have at least 1-inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font (12).

**Readings and Books**: All of the following books are in paperback – save for Rosato – and have been ordered through the Seminary Coop.

Robert Gilpin, *War and Change* (Cambridge)

G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory* (Princeton)

Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear* Revolution (Cornell)

Keir Lieber & Daryl Press, *The Myth of the Nuclear Revolution* (Cornell)

Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge)

Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (Penguin).

Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, & Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford)

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (Basic)

All pieces with \*\* are on Canvas.

**Course Outline**:

**1. March 20 (Mon): Change in International Politics**

-- Gilpin, *War and Change*.

**2. March 27 (Mon): Neoclassical Realism**

-- Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*.

**3. April 3 (Mon): Unipolarity**

-- Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*.

-- William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security*, Vol. 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5-41. \*\*

**4. April 10 (Mon): State Strategies**

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, chapters 5 and 8.

-- Joseph M. Parent and Sebastian Rosato, "Balancing in Neorealism," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Fall 2015), pp. 51-86. \*\*

-- Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 1963), chapters 1 and 4. \*\*

-- Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press, 1988), chapter 5. \*\*

**5. April 17 (Mon): The Rational Actor Assumption**

-- John J. Mearsheimer and Sebastian Rosato, *How States Think: The Rationality of Foreign Policy* (forthcoming from Yale University Press). \*\*

**6. April 24 (Mon): Realism and the Nuclear Revolution**

-- Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*.

-- Lieber and Press, *The Myth of the Nuclear Revolution*.

**7. May 1 (Mon): International Institutions and International Order**

-- Ikenberry, *After Victory*.

-- John J. Mearsheimer, “Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,” *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Spring 2019), pp. 7-50. \*\*

**8. May 8 (Mon): Realism and Just War Theory**

-- Alexander Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Cornell University Press, 2012), Introduction, chapter 1, Conclusion. \*\*

-- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*.

**9. May 15 (Mon): The Liberal Challenge**

-- Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*.