

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**  
**Political Science Department**

**Political Science 53000**

Seminar on Great Power Politics

Winter 2018

Instructor: John Mearsheimer

**Course Description:** The aim of this course is to explore some of the key questions concerning relations among the great powers.

**Course Requirements:** Every student is expected to do all the reading, attend every seminar, and participate in the discussion. The 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 on February 28, from which they can choose two. Both papers will be due in my office (Pick 416A) no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday of exam week – March 13. Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. 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.

Please type your name and the question itself at the top of each paper.

**Readings and Books:** The following books – all in paperback – are available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore.

John Ikenberry, *After Hegemony* (Princeton)

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

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton)

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

Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale)

All articles, unpublished papers, and book chapters with \*\* next to them are on **Canvas**.

**Course Outline:**

**1. January 3 (Wednesday): Organizational Meeting**

**2. January 10 (Wednesday): Realism 101**

-- Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), chap. 1. \*\*

-- Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chaps. 1-6, 8-9.

**3. January 17 (Wednesday): More Realism 101**

-- Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167-214. \*\*

-- Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Fall 1997), pp. 114-55. \*\*

-- Sebastian Rosato, "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Winter 2014/15), pp. 48- 88. \*\*

-- Also read the correspondence on the Rosato article: "Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?" *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Winter 2015/16), pp. 208-15. \*\*

#### **4. January 24 (Wednesday): The Nuclear Revolution**

-- Jervis, *Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, read entire book.

-- Keir Lieber and Daryl Press, "The Myth of the Nuclear Revolution," manuscript. \*\*

#### **5. January 31 (Wednesday): Nuclear Deterrence**

-- Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (January 1959), pp. 211-34. \*\*

-- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, read entire book.

#### **6. February 7 (Wednesday): Nuclear War-Fighting**

-- Charles L. Glaser and Steve Fetter, "Should the United States Reject MAD? Damage Limitation and U.S. Nuclear Strategy toward China," *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Summer 2016), pp. 49-98. \*\*

-- Also read the correspondence on the Glaser and Fetter article: "The Limits of Damage Limitation," *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Summer 2017), pp. 193-207. \*\*

-- Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence," *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Spring 2017), pp. 9-49. \*\*

-- Austin Long and Brendan R. Green, "Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, Nos. 1-2 (2015), pp. 38-73. \*\*

-- Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), chap. 1. \*\*

-- Caitlin Talmadge, "Would China Go Nuclear? Assessing the Risk of Chinese Nuclear Escalation in a Conventional War with the United States," *International Security*, Vol. 41 No. 4 (Spring 2017), pp. 50-92. \*\*

#### **7. February 14 (Wednesday): The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation**

-- Francis J. Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Summer 2015), pp. 9-46, \*\*

-- Eliza Gheorghe, "Proliferation and the Logic of the Nuclear Market," manuscript. \*\*

-- Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Fall 2014), pp. 7-51. \*\*

-- Bradley A. Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Nonproliferation Regime," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1995), pp. 463-519. \*\*

### **8. February 21 (Wednesday): Is Great Power War Obsolete?**

-- Pinker, *Better Angels of Our Nature*, read entire book.

### **9. February 28 (Wednesday): The Future of the Liberal International Order – I**

-- Ikenberry, *After Victory*, read entire book.

### **10. March 7 (Wednesday): The Future of the Liberal International Order – II**

-- Hal Brands, "American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order: Continuity, Change, and Options for the Future," RAND Corporation, 2016. \*\*

-- Jeff D. Colgan and Robert O. Keohane, "The Liberal Order Is Rigged: Fix It Now or Watch It Whither," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (May-June 2017), pp. 36-44. \*\*

-- Judy Dempsey, "Judy Asks: Is the Crisis of the Liberal Order Exaggerated?" *Carnegie Europe*, February 18, 2017. Available @ <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/68041>

-- John J. Mearsheimer, "The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," manuscript. \*\*

-- Pankaj Mishra, "Welcome to the Age of Anger," *The Guardian*, December 8, 2016. Available @ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/dec/08/welcome-age-anger-brexit-trump>

-- Andrew J. Nathan, "The Chinese World Order," *New York Review of Books*, October 12, 2017. \*\*