**SOCIAL THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Political Science 7340

Spring 2016

Alexander Wendt

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Hours: By appointment only (but don’t hesitate to ask)

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Overview

Social theory is a trans-disciplinary inquiry into the ontology and epistemology of social life – into how we should *think about thinking* about social life – rather than its concrete manifestations in existing societies. It is often distinguished from political theory by the latter’s explicit normative orientation, but the line is blurred in both directions. This is not a course in social theory per se, but in social theory of international relations, which brings this problematic to bear on the subject matter of world politics, and in particular its ontology (I teach a separate course on epistemologies of social inquiry). The syllabus is organized into three parts. Part I introduces perhaps the most fundamental issue in social ontology, the relationship between ideas and material conditions. Part II addresses various forms of agent-centric or micro-level theorizing, and Part III takes up structure-centric or macro-level theorizing. Normative questions will come up periodically in our discussion, and papers dealing in a systematic way with such questions are welcome, but we will not be reading any of the vast literature on international political theory per se.

Readings

There is only one book for this course, my Quantum Mind and Social Science (Cambridge UP, 2015), which we will read the first week. All other readings are available online on Carmen. However, students will be assumed to be familiar with the following books from previous coursework: Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Addison-Wesley, 1979); Robert Keohane, After Hegemony (Princeton UP, 1984) *or* Charles Glaser, Rational Theory of International Politics (Princeton UP, 2010), and my Social Theory of International Politics (Cambridge UP, 1999).

Expectations

There are two course requirements:

1) Attend class and participate actively and in an informed fashion in class discussions. (25% of the final grade)

2) Write a total of 25-30 pages, either in the form of a single original research paper or two critical review essays (75%).

**CALENDAR**

PART I: FOUNDATIONS

**Jan. 11: COURSE INTRODUCTION**

Wendt, Quantum Mind and Social Science; read entire, but focus on chapters 1, 8, 10, and 13.

**Jan 18: Martin Luther King Day, No Class**

**Jan 25: THE END OF IR THEORY?**

Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt (2013) – “Leaving Theory Behind: Why Simplistic Hypothesis Testing is Bad for International Relations,” EJIR, 19, 427-457

Lake, David (2013) – “Theory is Dead, Long Live Theory: The End of the Great Debates and the Rise of Eclecticism in International Relations,” EJIR, 19, 567-587

Levine, Daniel and Alexander Barder (2014) – “The Closing of the American Mind: ‘American School’ International Relations and the State of Grand Theory,” EJIR, 20, 863-888

Reus-Smit, Christian (2013) – “Beyond Metatheory?,” EJIR, 19, 589-608

McIntosh, Christopher (2015) – “Theory across Time: The Privileging of Timeless Theory in International Relations,” IT, 464-500

**Feb 1: IDEAS AND DISCOURSE**

Wendt, Alexander (1999) – “Ideas All the Way Down? On the Constitution of Power and Interest,” chapter 3 in Social Theory of International Politics, pp. 92-138

Wendt, Alexander (1998) – “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” RIS, 24, 101-117

Banta, Benjamin (2013) – “Analysing Discourse as a Causal Mechanism,” EJIR, 19, 379-402

Williams, Michael (2003) – “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics,” ISQ, 47, 511-533

Nordin, Astrid and Dan Oberg (2015) – “Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard,” Millennium, 43(2), 392-410

**Feb 8: TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL CONDITIONS**

Brooks, Stephen and William Wohlforth (2000/01) – “Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Re-evaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas,” IS, 25, 5-53

Deudney, Daniel (2000) - “Geopolitics as Theory: Historical Security Materialism,” EJIR, 6, 77-107

Davenport, Andrew (2013) – “Marxism in IR: Condemned to a Realist Fate?” EJIR, 19, 27-48

Harrington, Anne (2009) – “Nuclear Weapons as the Currency of Power: Deconstructing the Fetishism of Force,” Nonproliferation Review, 16, 325-345

Lundborg, Tom and Nick Vaughan-Williams (2015) – “New Materialisms, Discourse Analysis, and International Relations,” RIS, 41, 3-25

PART II: APPROACHES TO MICRO-THEORY

**Feb 15: THINKING ABOUT STATES AND WHAT THEY WANT**

Wendt, Alexander (2004) – “The State as Person in International Theory,” RIS, 30, 289-316

Mitzen, Jennifer (2006) – “Ontological Security in World Politics,” EJIR, 12, 341-70

Epstein, Charlotte (2013) – “Theorizing Agency in Hobbes’ Wake: The Rational Actor, the Self, or the Speaking Subject?,” IO, 67, 287-316

O’Mahoney, Joseph (2015) – “Why Did They Do That? The Methodology of Reasons for Action,” IT, 7, 231-262

Kadercan, Burak (2013) – “Making Sense of Survival: Refining the Treatment of State Preferences in Neorealist Theory,” RIS, 39, 1015-1037

**Feb 22: RATIONAL CHOICE AND THE LOGIC OF CONSEQUENCES**

McGinley, William (2014) – “Mechanisms and Microfoundations in International Relations Theory,” RIS, 40(2), 367-389

Snidal, Duncan (2012) – “Rational Choice and International Relations,” in W. Carlsnaes, et al., eds., Handbook of International Relations, Sage Publications, pp. 85-111

Debs, Alexandre and Nuno Monteiro (2014) – “Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War,” IO, 68, 1-31

Mitzen, Jennifer and Randall Schweller (2011) – “Knowing the Unknown Unknowns: Misplaced Certainty and the Onset of War,” SS, 20, 2-35

Kirschner, Jonathan (2015) – “The Economic Sins of Modern IR Theory and the Classical Realist Alternative,” World Politics, 67, 155-83

**Feb 29: LEGITIMACY AND THE LOGIC OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Hurd, Ian (1999) - “Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics,” IO, 53, 379-408

Wallace, M. (2012) – “Fighting the Good Fight? Legitimating Violence in a World of Contested and Contingent Moral Frameworks,” International Politics, 49, 671-695

Sending, Ole (2002) – “Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the ‘Logic of Appropriateness’ and its Use in Constructivist Theory,” EJIR, 8, 443-70

Thomas, Christopher (2014) – “The Uses and Abuses of Legitimacy in International Law,” Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, 34, 729-758

Schweller, Randall and Xiaoyu Pu (2011) – “After Unipolarity: China’s Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline,” International Security, 36(1), 41-72

**Mar 7: COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND PERSUASION**

Müller, Harald (2004) – “Arguing, Bargaining and All That: Communicative Action, Rationalist Theory and the Logic of Appropriateness in International Relations,” EJIR, 10, 395-435

Deitelhoff, Nicole (2009) – “The Discursive Process of Legalization: Charting Islands of Persuasion in the ICC Case,” IO, 63, 33-65

Fluck, Matthew (2014) – “The Best There Is? Communication, Objectivity and the Future of Critical International Relations Theory,” EJIR, 20, 56-79

Wigen, Einar (2015) – “Two-Level Language Games: International Relations as Inter-Lingual Relations,” EJIR, 21, 427-450

Holmes, Marcus (2013) – “The Force of Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Mirror Neurons and the Problem of Intentions,” IO, 67(4), 829-861

**Mar 14: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS**

**Mar 21: RECOGNITION AND STATUS SEEKING**

Dafoe, Allan, et al. (2014) – “Reputation and Status as Motives for War,” Annual Review of Political Science, 17, 371-393

Wolf, Reinhard (2011) – “Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition,” IT, 3, 105-142

Lindemann, Thomas (2014) – “Interest, Passion, (Non)recognition, and Wars: A Conceptual Essay,” Global Discourse, 4(4), 483-496

Erman, Eva (2013) – “The Recognitive Practices of Declaring and Constituting Statehood,” IT, 5, 129-150

Strombom, Lisa (2014) – “Thick Recognition: Advancing Theory on Identity Change in Intractable Conflicts,” EJIR, 20, 168-191

**Mar 28: PRACTICES AND PERFORMATIVITY**

Adler, Emanuel and Vincent Pouliot (2011) – “International Practices,” IT, 3, 1-36

Bueger, Christian and Frank Gadinger (2015) – “The Play of International Practice,” ISQ, 59, 449-460

Ringmar, Erik (2014) – “The Search for Dialogue as a Hindrance to Understanding: The Practice Turn as Inter-Paradigmatic Research Program,” IT, 6, 1-27

Doty, Roxanne (1997) – “Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory,” EJIR, 3, 365-92.

Hopf, Ted (2010) – “The Logic of Habit in International Relations,” EJIR, 16, 539-561

**Apr 4: EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

Sylvester, Christine (2012) – “War Experiences/War Practices/War Theory,” Millennium, 40, 483-503

Gregory, Thomas (2015) – “Drones, Targeted Killings, and the Limitations of International Law,” International Political Sociology, 9, 197-212

Hall, Todd and Andrew Ross (2015) – “Affective Politics after 9/11,” IO, 69, 847-879

Mercer, Jonathan (2014) – “Feeling Like a State: Social Emotion and Identity,” IT, 6, 515-535

Berenskoetter, Felix (2014) – “Parameters of a National Biography,” EJIR, 20, 262-288

PART III: APPROACHES TO MACRO-THEORY

**Apr 11: THINKING ABOUT STRUCTURE AND ITS EFFECTS**

Donnelly, Jack (2015) – “The Discourse of Anarchy in IR,” IT, 7(3), 393-425

Barnett, Michael and Duvall, Raymond (2005) – “Power in International Politics,” IO, 59, 39-75

Donnelly, Jack (2012) – “The Elements of the Structures of International Systems,” IO, 609-643

Sjoberg, Laura (2012) – “Gender, Structure, and War: What Waltz Couldn’t See,” IT, 4, 1-38

Koddenbrock, Kai (2015) – “Strategies of Critique in International Relations: From Foucault and Latour towards Marx,” EJIR, 21(2), 243-266

**Apr 18: RATIONALIZATION AND GOVERNMENTALITY**

Goodman, Ryan and Derek Jinks (2003) – “Toward an Institutional Theory of Sovereignty,” Stanford Law Review, 55, 1749-1788

Aalberts, Tanja (2014) – “Rethinking the Principle of (Sovereign) Equality as a Standard of Civilisation,” Millennium, 42(3), 767-789

Pena, Alejandro (2015) - “Governing Differentiation: On Standardisation as Political Steering,” EJIR, 21(1), 52-75

Jaeger, Hans-Martin (2010) – “UN Reform, Biopolitics, and Global Governmentality,” IT, 2, 50-86

Allan, Bentley (2016) – “Producing the Climate: States, Scientists, and the Constitution of Global Governance Objects,” manuscript, Johns Hopkins University.

**Apr 25: EVOLUTIONARY AND SELF-ORGANIZATION THEORIES**

Gat, Azar (2009) – “So Why Do We Fight? Evolutionary Theory and the Causes of War,” EJIR, 15, 571-599

Sharman, J.C. (2015) – “War, Selection, and Micro-States,” EJIR, 21(1), 194-214

Cederman, Lars-Erik (2005) – “Computational Models of Social Forms,” American Journal of Sociology, 110, 864-893

Bousquet, Antoine and Simon Curtis (2011) – “Beyond Models and Metaphors: Complexity Theory, Systems Thinking and International Relations,” Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 24(1), 43-62

Wendt, Alexander (2003) – “Why a World State is Inevitable,” EJIR, 9, 491-542