

POL 240: Introduction to International Politics

Assignment 1 Feedback

The assignment was marked largely based on whether (and how well) you followed the instructions in the original assignment. I highlighted particular passages and commented on them in the margins, then went back to the beginning and gave you individual improvements you should try to make for the next essay. In particular:

1. Did you pick one or more theories and argue which better described gameplay and which offered the best prescriptions? Did you present a clear argument in your introductory paragraph?

Common mistakes:

- picking too many theories (more than three usually resulted in theoretical explanations that were too thin)
- not picking any theories but just describing what happened
- not making a distinction between theories (which were better and which were worse)
- not specifying in the first paragraph the theories you eventually discuss in the paper (Tickner shows up suddenly on page 4!)
- not having an introductory paragraph, but just jumping into your analysis
- specifying which theories were better ("Interactions more closely approximated a Lockean anarchy than a Hobbesian anarchy") but not specifying why (generally speaking) they were: ("because offenders were punished by others.")
- not presenting a clear argument, but just saying that "Hobbes described gameplay well." *Why* did Hobbes describe gameplay well?
- *With comparison to what other theories* did Hobbes' theory do well?
- addressing gameplay but not prescriptions (or vice versa)

2. Did you explain the basic theoretical arguments you were testing?

Common mistakes:

- Not defining terms. What is "power" in croquet? What is "morality"? What constitutes an "offensive capability"?
- Defining terms, but using them in a different way. "power is advancing through wickets." OK, but if you're talking about Morgenthau, who defines power as control over others, your definition is incompatible!
- No explanation of important concepts. You need to define what balancing and bandwagoning are. (On this point, you balance *against* threats, but bandwagon *with* threats)
- No assessment of the theory. The fact that balancing and bandwagoning occur is not a test of Walt's theory; the frequency and circumstances under which they occur tests his theories.
- No connection between theory and evidence. Mentioning that Hobbes has three causes of conflict, then describing conflict, doesn't demonstrate that conflict was specifically affected by any of the three causes.
- Conflating authors. Mearsheimer and Morgenthau are both realists; however, power functions very differently for both (means versus end), and the root causes of conflict (anarchy etc. versus human nature) are different.
- Quoting instead of explaining in your own words. While quoting is good when particular words or phrases are important, it doesn't demonstrate nearly as well that you understand what the author is saying.
- Possibly contentious classification of theorists without explanation ("Tickner is a neoliberal.")

3. Did you illustrate your arguments with direct examples?

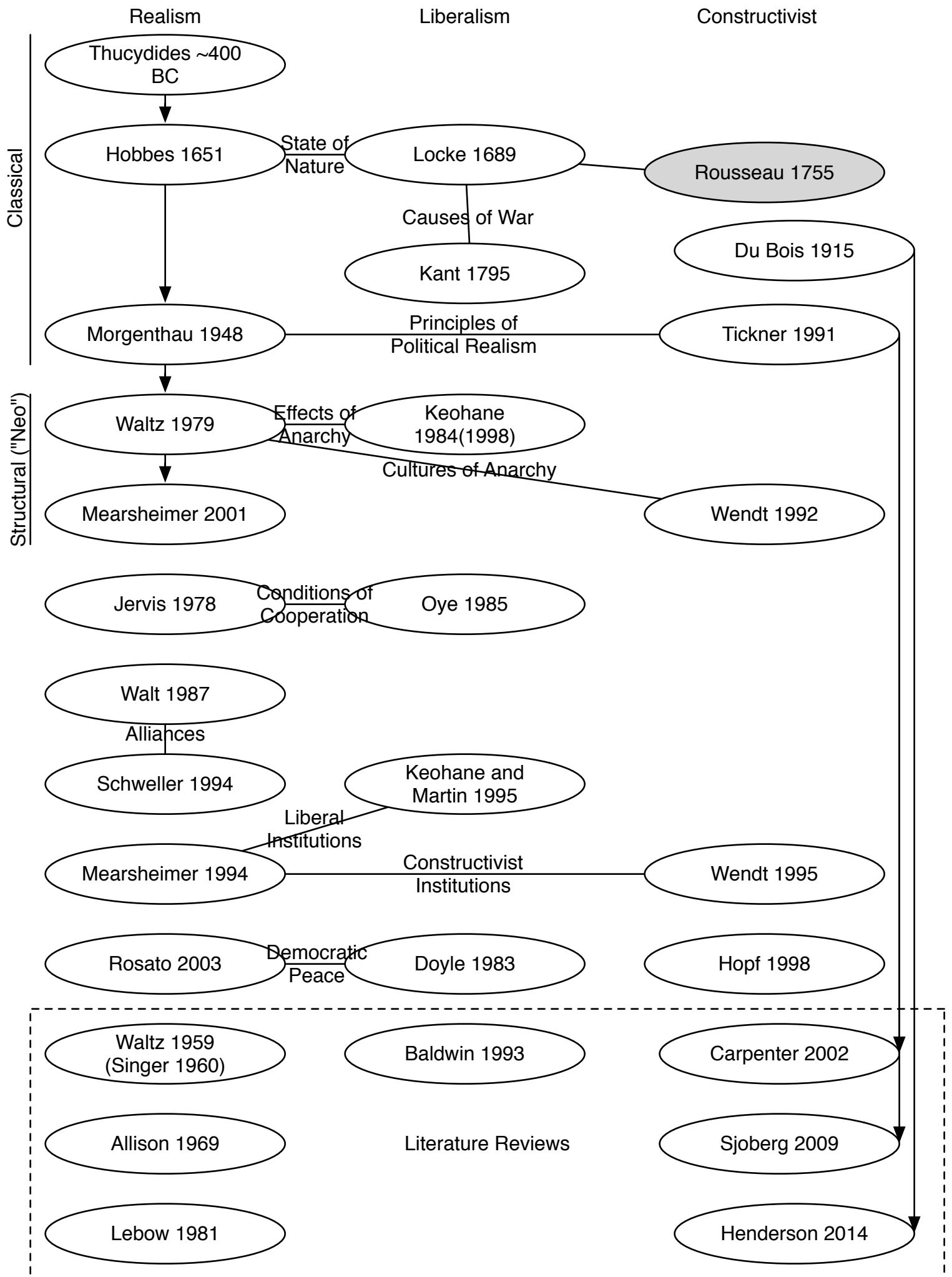
Common mistakes:

- Examples were too vague to distinguish between theories
- Examples were missing entirely
- Examples didn't appear to apply to the theory
- A long description of the game was followed by assertions that one theory or another was better. Your examples should come *after* theories, and should specifically address the theories.
- Examples were vague generalizations ("everyone punished people who roqueted them") rather than specific demonstrations of the theory ("Red roqueted black in one turn; the next turn, black chose to roquet red instead of blue, even though blue was closer.")
- Note: Examples can be analytical (e.g., an analysis of the rules of the game and how they created a zero-sum situation supports an argument that the game intrinsically was relative-gains instead of absolute-gains), but where possible should be backed up by empirical evidence as well.

4. Did you conclude with implications of your results?

Common mistakes:

- Entirely missing conclusion. Make it a clearly separate paragraph, after your analysis.
- Conclusions that said nothing about implications
- Conclusions that brought in entirely new concepts never discussed previously in the paper
- Conclusions that brought in new theorists
- Conclusions that weren't connected to the rest of your analysis
- One-sentence conclusions. Say a little more than "Realism correctly predicted behavior."



POL 240: Introduction to International Politics

Overview

- Introduction: Levels of Analysis, Paradigms
- Four Paradigms
 - Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Feminism
- Debates
 - Conditions for Cooperation
 - Balancing and Bandwagoning
 - Democratic Peace
 - Organizations

Three Levels of Analysis: Singer 1960 [Waltz 1959]

- 1st Level: Individual
 - Nature of “Man” (“Man seeks Power,” “Men seek power”)
 - Individual Leaders (“George Bush seeks power”)
- 2nd Level: State
 - Country level
 - Nature of (some) States (“Democracies are less warlike”)
 - Individual States (“The US seeks power”)
 - Organization level
 - Nature of Organizations (“SOPs lead to errors”)
 - Individual Organizations (“The DOD seeks power”)
- 3rd Level: Structure
 - Interaction
 - Interaction among Units (“Democracies don’t attack each other”)
 - Relational Arguments (“Allies don’t attack each other”)
 - State System
 - Distribution of Power/Threat/Interests (“Bipolar is more stable than multipolar”)
 - Positional Arguments (“Hegemons seek power”)

Paradigms

- Different Paradigms (realism, liberalism, constructivism, feminism) can be seen as:
 - Competing perspectives on the world
 - Explaining different phenomena
 - A division of labor between determining interests and outcomes
 - Empirical bets on the frequency of international phenomena

Ologies

- Ontology: What is
 - varies by, within paradigms
- Epistemology: How we can know
 - (post)positivistic except for critical theory
- Methodology: How we go about doing it
 - varies by paradigm (game theory, statistics, process tracing, focused comparison, deconstruction)

Realism: Origins

- Thucydides 1972 [400 BC]
 - Premise: Justice only exists between equals
 - Prescription:
 - Strong do what they will, weak suffer what they must.
- Hobbes 1909 [1651]
 - Premises:
 - Men are equal, which leads to diffidence (suspicion), which (along with competition and glory) leads to war
 - Prescription:
 - Submit to central authority
 - Without central authority, man is in a state of war (no peace)

Classical Realism: Morgenthau 1948

- Premises
 - Objectivity: World is separate, can be observed, relatively constant
 - National interest is defined as power
- Analysis
 - 1st Level: Man desires power (control of man over man) as an end
 - 2nd Level: Some states better than others at balancing (not democracies)
 - 3rd Level: Consider the interests of others
- Prescriptions
 - Minimize risks, maximize benefits, balance power

Structural Realism I (Neorealism): Waltz 1979

- Premises
 - Ordering principle: Anarchy (vs. Hierarchy)
 - Character of the Units: States treated as functionally identical, rational, seek survival
 - Distribution of capabilities: Material
- Analysis (3rd level)
 - States will balance against each other
 - States will be concerned with relative power gains
 - Bipolar systems more stable than multipolar ones
- Prescriptions
 - States try to maintain status-quo: Defensive Realism

Structural Realism II (Neorealism): Mearsheimer 2001

- Premises
 - Anarchy
 - Effective Offense
 - Intentions are uncertain
 - Own Survival
 - Utilitarian Rationality
- Analysis (3rd Level)
 - Fear: Other states are deadly enemies
 - Self-Help: No subordination of interests
 - Power Maximization: Only way to be secure (Means, not End)
- Prescriptions
 - States are all revisionist except hegemon: Offensive Realism

Liberalism: Origins

- Hobbes 1609 [1651]
 - Premises: State of Nature is War
 - Prescription:
 - Central Authority leads to commerce, internal peace
- Locke 1624 [1689]
 - Premises: State of Nature is Peace, Violations cause War
 - Prescription:
 - Central Authority stops retribution cycle
- Kant 1797 [1795]
 - Premises: State of Nature is War, Nations natural units
 - Prescription:
 - Republican (rule of law) Constitutions
 - Interstate Trade
 - International Organizations

(Classical) Liberalism: Doyle 1983

- Premises
 - Treat others as ethical objects, with freedoms, representation, and participation
 - This can be applied to the international system as well
 - Four institutions: Juridical equality, representative government, private property rights, economy shaped by supply and demand
- Analysis
 - 2nd Level: Constitutional law: Individuals who rule the polity bear costs of wars
 - 3rd Level: International law: Accommodation between countries; Cosmopolitan law: Commerce and trade pacifies.
- Prescriptions
 - Promote democratization, organizations, trade

Liberal Institutionalism (Neoliberalism) Keohane 1998

- Premises
 - Cooperation is possible, but states need help
 - Depends on factors other than material power
- Analysis (3rd Level)
 - Institutions Reduce:
 - Uncertainty of intentions
 - Transaction Costs
 - Institutions Increase:
 - Shadow of the future (multiple plays, value of the future)
 - Transparency
- Prescriptions
 - More institutions!

Constructivism: Origins

- Rousseau 1913 [1755] (A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality)
 - Premises
 - State of Nature is peaceful and lacks morality
 - War is created through civilization
 - Prescriptions
 - Social reform, collective state with "General Will"

(Structural) Constructivism: Wendt 1992

- Premises
 - People act towards other actors on the basis of their understanding of those actors (collective meaning)
 - Actors acquire (relational) identities by participating in collective meanings
 - Identities are the basis of interests
 - An institution is a relatively stable set or structure of identities and interest
 - Self-help is such an institution
- Analysis (3rd Level)
 - Anarchy is what states make of it:
 - Competitive (Hobbesian)
 - Individualistic (Lockean)
 - Cooperative (Kantian)
- Prescriptions
 - States should act based on how their actions reinforce structures

Feminism: Tickner 1991

- Premises
 - Dynamic Objectivity: World is not separate, is affected by our lenses.
 - Language and values contain gendered assumptions
- Analysis
 - 1st Level: Human nature doesn't lead to will to power; power can be defined as collective empowerment.
 - 3rd Level: States in weak positions build coalitions rather than balance, achieve cooperative solutions. Common moral elements can de-escalate international conflict
- Prescriptions
 - Band together to solve pressing collective world problems

Conditions for Cooperation:

Jervis 1978

- Premises
 - Security dilemma (SD increase in my security decreases your security) prevents cooperation
 - Offense/defense advantage and differentiation affect this
- Analysis (3rd Level)
 - Differentiation eliminates SD
 - Defensive advantage mitigates SD
- Prescriptions
 - Get defensive weapons where possible

Oye 1985

- Premises
 - Structure of payoffs, shadow of the future, number of players determine cooperation
- Analysis (3rd Level)
 - Payoff structures can be changed through publicizing agreements, defensive weapons, hostages,...
 - Shadow of the future useful for PD, SH, not CH. Reciprocal strategies help. Regimes, linkage, decomposition over time.
 - Number of Players: Transaction costs, autonomous defection, etc. increase; sanctioning and monitoring abilities decrease.
- Prescriptions
 - Alter structures, increase shadow of the future, decrease players.

Balancing and Bandwagoning:

Walt 1987

- Premises
 - Balance versus threat, not power
- Analysis
 - Bandwagoning (3rd Level) if:
 - Relatively weak
 - Geography (Unavailable allies)
 - End stages of war
 - Balance otherwise
- Prescriptions
 - Better to balance than bandwagon in most circumstances

Schweller 1994

- Premises
 - Balance for interests
- Analysis
 - Bandwagoning (3rd Level)
 - End-of-war
 - Wave of future
 - Contagion
 - Types of States (2nd Level)
 - Wolves, Jackals: Revisionist, Bandwagon
 - Lions, Lambs: SQ, Balance
- Prescriptions
 - Bandwagon when profitable and your security isn't threatened

Democratic Peace:

Doyle 1983

- Premises
 - Treat others as ethical objects
 - This can be applied to the international system as well
 - Juridical equality, representative government, private property rights, economy shaped by supply and demand
- Analysis
 - 2nd Level: Constitutional law: Individuals who rule the polity bear costs of wars
 - 3rd Level: International law: Accommodation between countries; Cosmopolitan law: Commerce and trade pacifies.
- Prescriptions
 - Promote democratization, organizations, trade

Rosato 2003

- Premises
 - Democracies must externalize norms, be accountable to be peaceful.
- Analysis
 - Externalization hasn't happened: Imperial wars, Cold War Interventions, Great Power rivalries.
 - Lack of accountability: Democrats don't lose power, constraints don't operate domestically, democracies can mobilize quickly and conduct surprise attacks, and don't give off useful information.
- Prescriptions
 - The US shouldn't continue to promote democracy.

Organizations: Allison 1969

- Classical Realism
 - Premises: Rational Unitary Actor
 - Analysis (<3rd Level): Optimal decisions are made for security.
- Organizational Process
 - Premises: Government is a group of organizations
 - Analysis (<2nd Level): Inputs and outputs are made based on SOPs that are good for the organization, which constrain decisions.
- Bureaucratic Politics
 - Premises: Government is a group of interested individuals in particular positions
 - Analysis (~1st Level): Decisions are made based on bargaining games between individuals with different levels of power in different positions with different psychologies.

Psychology: Lebow 1981

- Cognitive Biases (Jervis)
 - Premises: See what you expect to see
 - Analysis: Historical and/or Personal images lead to incorrect attribution, premature closure, perceptual satisficing, masking, insensitivity, belief-system overkill, and rationalization
- Motivated Biases (Janis and Mann)
 - Premises: See what you want to see
 - Analysis: If risks are low, get unconflicted adherence or change; if can't hope to solve the problem, defensive avoidance or hypervigilance.