**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Theories and Problems in International Relations (POLS 4720 and POLS6580)**

**Fall 2019**

**Instructor:** Professor David B. MacDonald

**Time:** Thursdays 11:30 - 2:20 pm

**Place:** MINS 101Office: 508 MacKinnon

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This Honours and MA level seminar series focuses on contemporary developments in IR theory. IR is a vast field of study, with dozens of journals and thousands of books approaching key issues from myriad perspectives. The purpose of this course is NOT to provide an exhaustive overview and representative sampling of the entire discipline but rather to focus on some interesting and relevantquestions in IR, amenable to class discussion and debate. Many of the readings have been written against the backdrop of the global economic downturn, the erosion of US primacy, and the (partial) post-positivist turn in IR. Each week will be devoted to a central research question, with authors taking different perspectives on the issue: from offensive realists to radical feminists. I must assume that you have prior grounding in IR theory. This course will be based around seminar presentations and discussion, with a week of group debate. The emphasis will be on examining primary sources and highlighting points of convergence and divergence in the discipline.

Course Assessment:

* 35% Participation and preparation:
  + doing 3 readings per week
  + submitting your weekly notes on 3 for 4th year, 4 for MA
  + doing two article presentations
  + taking an active role in class discussion
* 10% Group debate presentation
  + including pp slides and handout
* 35% Video essay and written discussion:
  + 10 minute video essay
  + 1,000 word discussion of the topic for POLS4720 (2,500 words for POLS6580)
* 20% take home exam
  + two questions for 4th year, three for MA.