

**IS 424WX: Regional Politics and Powers**  
Department of International Studies and Political Science

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1100-1400 & by appointment

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* - Peter J. Katzenstein
- *Regions of War and Peace* - Douglas Lemke
- *International Relations Theory and Regional Transformation* - T. V. Paul, ed.

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Outside official office hours, if I am in my office, you are welcome to meet with me anytime without prior notice. Otherwise, use [www.calendly.com/rhameyjp](http://www.calendly.com/rhameyjp) for appointment scheduling. I am usually available, including nights and weekends, with 24 hours' notice.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines regional sub-systems in international politics, with a specific focus on hierarchy and its consequences. A primary focus of the course will be the behavior of regional powers – those states with sufficient capabilities, willingness, and status to shape politics within their regions – and whether they provide the stability necessary for peace or facilitate violent conflict. As an extension of these peaceful or conflictual patterns of political interaction is the formation of formal intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Union. Careful attention will also be paid to those regional subsystems lacking a regional power, as is the case in the contemporary Middle East. Finally, students will relate regional politics to the broader international order within which they are nested, examining how international system dynamics, such as competition between major powers, shape the regional level.

The course begins with a brief overview of comparative regionalism as a subfield in international relations and the application of the dominant paradigms of international relations theory to the regional level. The course is then divided between a focus on explanations of regional disorder and order. Students are expected to think about international politics as inherently multilateral rather than simply as aggregations of monadic or dyadic behaviors. Students will emerge from the class with an improved understanding of international and regional politics, the role of regional and major powers in shaping international relations, and the sources of economic integration and international organizations.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVES:**

- Gain a better understanding of international and global order in the post-Cold War era.
- Develop analytical tools to understand, evaluate, and respond to international problems through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- Critically evaluate arguments surrounding the sources of states' conflictual and cooperative behaviors.
- Develop arguments on issues of international politics and communicate those arguments effectively.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner:

Participation-----	10%
Reading Questions and Quizzes-----	10%
Identifying Regions Paper-----	20%
Theoretical Visual Diagram-----	20%
Rough Draft-----	10%
Comparative Region Research Design -----	30%

**Participation and Reading Questions/Quizzes.** Cadets are expected to participate in class discussion throughout the semester. To participate effectively, cadets will need to complete the readings before their assigned class sessions. To promote reading engagement, cadets will be subject to reading quizzes and/or questions throughout the semester without prior notice.

**Identifying Regions Paper.** Cadets will identify regions consistent with some portion of the criteria enumerated in Thompson's 1973 article and illustrate their regional delineations on a provided world map. The written explanation should be roughly 5 pages. Sample prompt attached.

**Theoretical Visual Diagram.** Cadets will apply the system from the Visual IR Project to an article of their choosing and explain their application of the system in a roughly 2-page discussion. Sample prompt attached.

**Research Design.** In 10-15 pages, cadets will identify a set of causal variables that constitute a compelling "causal recipe" explaining a regional outcome of their choosing. Cadets will then compare two regions to illustrate their theory and the potential confirmation of a resulting hypothesis. While an executed research design is not expected, Cadets must outline how empirical testing might occur and include some form of summary empirical data. Students are required to submit a rough draft of the paper. Following rough draft submission, students will be required to meet individually with the instructor to discuss revisions prior to the submission of a final draft. The final drafts are due on the last day of classes.

#### ***News Sources:***

*To be successful in the classroom, cadets are expected to maintain an awareness of ongoing developments in international politics and should regularly review some portion of the following news sources.*

**BBC Online:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

**New York Times:** <http://www.nyt.com/>

**Reuters:** <http://www.reuters.com/>

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Comparative Regionalism and International Relations**

**August 30: Introduction to the Course – A Brief History of Regions**

**September 1:**

- "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy" in Rosenau, James N. 1971. *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, New York: Free Press, 95-150.

**September 6:**

- Paul Chapters 1 and 2

**September 8:**

- **Writing Workshop 1**
- Rhamey, J. Patrick, Jr. and Thomas J. Volgy. 2018. "Regional Politics and Powers: Hierarchy and Comparative Regional Analysis in International Relations." *Oxford Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theory*. William R. Thompson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Volgy, Thomas J., Paul Bezerra, Jacob Cramer, and J. Patrick Rhamey Jr. 2017. "The Case for Comparative Regional Analysis in International Politics." *International Studies Review* 19(3): 452-480.

**September 13:**

- Thompson, William R. 1973. "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory." *International Studies Quarterly* 17(1): 89-117.
- Solingen, Etel. 2007. "Pax Asiatica versus Bella Levantina: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East." *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 757-780.

**September 15:**

- **Response Paper 1 Rough Draft Peer Review**
- Volgy, Thomas J, J. Patrick Rhamey Jr., and Elizabeth Faussett. "The Notion of Central Europe" in Sabic, Zlatko and Petr Drulak, eds. *International Relations of Central Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Rhamey, J. Patrick Jr., William R. Thompson, and Thomas J. Volgy. 2014. "Distance, Size, and Turmoil: North-South Mediterranean Interactions." *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 89.

### **Origins of Regional Politics**

**September 20:**

- Mackinder, Halford J. 1904. "The Geographical Pivot of History." *The Geographical Journal* 23(4): 421-437.

- Sakuwa, Kentaro. 2018. “Approaches to Explaining Regional Conflict and Peace.” *Oxford Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theory*. William R. Thompson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**September 21 @ 1600: Identifying Regions Paper Due on Canvas**

**September 22:**

- Paul Chapters 3 and 4

**September 27:**

- Paul Chapter 8
- Lemke, Douglas. 2011. “Intra-national IR in Africa.” *Review of International Studies* 37(1): 49-70.

**Regional Disorder**

**September 29:**

- Volgy, Thomas J., Kelly Marie Gordell, Paul Bezerra, and J. Patrick Rhamey Jr. 2018. “Conflict, Regions, and Regional Hierarchies.” *Oxford Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theory*. William R. Thompson, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**October 4: No Class – Conference. Compensatory for Rough Draft Meetings**

**October 6: No Class – Conference. Compensatory for Rough Draft Meetings**

**October 13:**

- **Writing Workshop 2**
- Hensel, Paul R. and Paul F. Diehl. 1994. “Testing Empirical Propositions about Shatterbelts.” *Political Geography* 13(1): 33-51.
- Rhamey, J. Patrick Jr., Michael O. Slobodchikoff, and Thomas J. Volgy. 2015. “Order and Disorder across Geopolitical Space: The Effect of Declining Dominance on Interstate Conflict.” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18(3): 383-406.

**October 18:**

- Lemke Chapters 1-3

**October 20:**

- Lemke Chapter 4

**October 25:**

- Lemke Chapters 5 and 6

**October 26 @ 1600: Theoretical Visual Diagram Due on Canvas**

**October 27:**

- Lemke Chapters 7 and 8

**October 31:**

- Paul Chapter 11
- Solingen, Etel. 2012. "Of Dominoes and Firewalls: The Domestic, Regional, and Global Politics of International Diffusion." *International Studies Quarterly* 56(4): 631-644.

**Regional Order**

**November 3:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 1

**November 8:**

- Katzenstein Chapters 2 and 3

**November 10:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 4

**November 15:**

- Katzenstein Chapters 5 and 6

**November 16 @ 1600: Rough Draft Due on Canvas**

**Schedule 1-on-1 Rough Draft Meetings via [calendly.com/rhameyjp](https://calendly.com/rhameyjp) for NLT November 30**

**November 17:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 7

**November 29:**

- Paul Chapter 5

**December 1:**

- Paul Chapters 6 and 7

**December 6:**

- Paul Chapters 9 and 10

**December 8:**

- Paul Chapter 12
- "Chapter 11: Regions and World Order Preferences" in Thompson, William R., Thomas J. Volgy, Paul Bezerra, Jacob Cramer, Kelly Marie Gordell, Manjeet Pardesi, Karen Rasler, J. Patrick Rhamey Jr., Kentaro Sakuwa, Rachel Van Nostrand, and Leila Zakhirova. *Regions, Power, and Conflict: Constrained Capabilities, Hierarchy, and Rivalry*. Singapore: Springer.
- Rhamey, J. Patrick Jr. "Central Asia: Caught in the Middle" in Tammen, Ronald L. and Jacek Kugler, eds. 2020. *The Rise of Regions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

## **December 13: Recap and Review**

### **December 14 @ 1600: Final Paper Due on Canvas**

#### **Disabilities and Accommodations:**

VMI abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which mandate reasonable accommodations are provided for all Cadets with documented disabilities. If you have a registered disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disabilities Services, the designated office on Post to provide services for Cadets with disabilities. The office is located on the 2nd floor of the VMI Health Center. Please call or stop by the office of Dr. Sarah Jones, Director of Disabilities Services, for more information, 464-7667 or email at: [jonessl10@vmi.edu](mailto:jonessl10@vmi.edu).

#### **Classroom Rules:**

No tobacco products, food, beverages beyond water in a closed container, or gum are allowed. Profanity or slurs will not be tolerated. Use of electronic devices for any use unrelated to class is prohibited.

#### **Institute Work for Grade Policy:**

The below work for grade policy is taken directly from “Part IV: Academic Regulations” of *Regulations for the Virginia Military Institute*, under “Cadets’ Responsibilities”:

“Work for grade” is defined as any work presented to an instructor for a formal grade or undertaken in satisfaction of a requirement for successful completion of a course or degree requirement. All work submitted for grade is considered the cadet’s own work. “Cadet’s own work” means that he or she has composed the work from his or her general accumulation of knowledge and skill except as clearly and fully documented and that it has been composed especially for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any course at VMI or elsewhere will be resubmitted or reformatted for submission in a current course without the specific approval of the instructor.

In all work for grade, failure to distinguish between the cadet’s own work and ideas and the work and ideas of others is known as plagiarism. Proper documentation clearly and fully identifies the source of all borrowed ideas, quotations, or other assistance. The cadet is referred to the VMI-authorized handbook for rules concerning quotations, paraphrases and documentation.

In all written work for grade, the cadet must include the words “HELP RECEIVED” conspicuously on the document, and he or she must then do one of two things: (1) state “none,” meaning that no help was received except as documented in the work; or (2) explain in detail the nature of the help received. In oral work for grade, the cadet must make the same declaration before beginning the presentation. Admission of help received may result in a lower grade but will not result in prosecution for an honor violation.

Cadets are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam until it is returned to them or final course grades are posted. This enjoinder does not imply that any inadvertent expression or behavior that might indicate one's feeling about the test should be considered a breach of honor. The real issue is whether cadets received information, not available to everyone else in the class, which would give them an unfair advantage. If a cadet inadvertently gives or receives information, the incident must be reported to the professor and the Honor Court.

Each cadet bears the responsibility for familiarizing himself or herself thoroughly with the policies states in this section, with any supplementary statement regarding work for grade expressed by the academic department in which he or she is taking a course, and with any special conditions provided in writing by the professor for a given assignment. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the correct interpretation of a policy, the cadet should consult the instructor of the course. There should be no confusion, however, on the basic principle that it is never acceptable to submit someone else's work, written or otherwise, formally graded or not, as one's own.

The violation by a cadet of any of these policies will, if he or she is found guilty by the Honor Court, result in his or her being dismissed from VMI. Neither ignorance nor professed confusion about the correct interpretation of these policies is an excuse.

Department of International Studies & Political Science  
**Work for Grade Policy**

Work for Grade in the International Studies (IS) department is generally of the following types:

1. Written quizzes, tests, or examinations;
2. Research papers, policy memoranda, briefings, and discourse analysis – identification and analysis of the critical differences in the findings and opinions of scholars on issues of interest to the discipline, and the application of social science theory to empirical phenomena.

Policies:

- A. **Peer Collaboration:** IS Cadets are permitted and encouraged to study with their peers to prepare for quizzes, tests and exams. However, when a cadet takes either written or oral quizzes, tests, and examinations, answers must be his/her own work without help from any other source, including notes or consultation with others. Additionally, the research and composition of all papers (as described in #2 and #3 above) must be done by the individual cadet alone.
- B. **Tutoring:** IS cadets are encouraged to make use of all VMI tutoring services to receive critical comments.\* Cadets who do so and mark "Help Received" will not receive a lower grade on an assignment. Cadets are also permitted to seek critical comments on their written work from their peers. However, proof-reading and editing\* of a cadet's written work is not permitted.
- C. **Computer Aids:** Cadets may use electronic spelling and grammar-checking facilities, and need not cite this assistance in their Help Received statements.

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\* *Definition from the VMI Work for Grade Policy:* "Offering *critical comments* means giving general advice on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. *Proofreading* means correcting errors (e.g., in grammar, spelling and punctuation. It is the last step taken by the writer in the *editing* process. In addition to the corrections made in proofreading, editing includes making such changes as the addition, deletion, or reordering of paragraphs, phrases, sentences, or words. A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor."

Any exceptions to these rules, including the use of tutors, collaboration among cadets, and the use of computer style, spell and grammar checkers must be explained in writing by the course instructor. Instructors are at liberty to stipulate exceptions only with the written approval of their Department Head.

**If you have any questions about the application of these rules, consult your instructor. Do not leave anything to chance.**



Colonel Dennis M. Foster  
Professor and Head



Identifying Regions Response Paper  
IS 424 – Regional Politics and Powers

1. On the provided image of the world, delineate the contours of regions. All countries must be placed in a region or be recognized as a “border state” between regions. No countries may be placed in more than one region. You are welcome to qualify any placements in your written component.
2. Explain why you chose the regional delineations you did. Answer the following
  - a. What are the rules for geography?
  - b. What attributes do you use to determine country placement?
    - i. What data/sources/tools did you use?
    - ii. If any of your attributes contradict one another, how did you choose which is more important?
  - c. What types of research questions would your definition of regions help answer (give at least one detailed example)?

Your written work will be doubled spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman. Citations should be made parenthetically in-text, for example (Rhamey 2012). A separate references page should be included at the end of your paper detailing the full information for each citation, consistent with the APSA Style Manual for Political Science (<https://connect.apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf>).

Theoretical Visual Diagram  
IS 424 – Regional Politics and Powers

- 1) Select a reading from the semester and diagram its contents consistent with the Visual International Relations Project (VIRP): <https://visualinternationalrelationsproject.com/>.
- 2) Provide a brief (two page) explanation of the visualization.

Your written work will be doubled spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman. Citations should be made parenthetically in-text, for example (Rhamey 2012). A separate references page should be included at the end of your paper detailing the full information for each citation, consistent with the APSA Style Manual for Political Science (<https://connect.apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf>).