

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

MAJ J. Patrick Rhamey, Jr.  
Scott Shipp 435  
Ext. 7675  
rhameyjp@vmi.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesday, 0900-1100 & 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

**OFFICE HOURS:**

I am typically in my office, and if my office door is open, you are welcome to meet with me anytime without prior notice. Office hours are guaranteed Wednesday 0900-1100. However, I am usually available for an appointment at other times, including evenings and weekends.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines regional sub-systems in international politics, with a specific focus on regional conflict, security, and integration. 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 Arab League or 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 it is nested, examining how international system dynamics, such as competition between major powers, shape the regional level.

The course provides a broad overview of the emergence of order in three parts: first, the development of the American unipolar system and its implications for international politics; second, the development of regional politics and powers within the broader systemic environment; finally, the evolution of cooperative regional architecture in the post-Cold War system. Students are expected to take a critical analysis of these shifting global dynamics, and approach questions of international politics not through understanding the politics of individual states, but how states interact with each other in, and are influenced by, their regional and global contexts. Students will emerge from the class with an improved understanding of international conflict, 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-----	10%
Response Papers-----	50%
Research Design and Comparison-----	30%

**Participation.** Cadets are expected to participate in class discussions throughout the semester. In order to participate effectively, students will need to complete the readings before their assigned class sessions. To promote reading engagement, students are required to submit carefully crafted questions about the day’s reading for ten class periods of their choosing by 0800 via e-mail. Because topics may be controversial and/or complex, students are expected to be civil in their discussion and respectful toward viewpoints other than their own.

**Response Papers.** There will be two response papers which will be reviewed and discussed in class. In class, cadets will engage in a “guided” peer-reviewed process whereby they will review rough drafts of one another’s papers, with guidance from the professor on the review process. Students will turn in final drafts of their response papers, incorporating peer-reviewed comments and criticisms with a copy of the peer-reviewed rough draft attached, in the following class period. These final drafts will be handed back within one week, including detailed comments from the instructor on the cadets writing and suggested means of improvement for the next response paper and/or the final research design. Cadets will be expected to select a conceptual source of regional identification as discussed in class and Thompson's 1973 article on regions. Using this foundation, cadets will (1) identify regional subsystems, including a graphic illustration, defending their selections. Cadets will compare their methods of regional identification and debate their merits in class. Cadets will then select two or more regions from their identification and write response papers comparing the regions’ power hierarchy and interactions between region members. Each response paper will be 1000-2000 words.

*Sample prompts attached.*

**Research Design.** In ten to fifteen pages, identify the set of causal variables that comprise the most compelling “causal recipe” explaining the regional political behaviors. To develop the argument, you will build on your analysis from the term’s response papers. Cadets will compare their theoretical explanation of the regional outcome of their choosing to the evolution of causal

processes within an alternative regional environment to provide further evidence of their theoretical claims. 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, which will be carefully revised by the instructor. Following rough draft submission, students will be required to meet individually with the instructor to discuss these revisions prior to the submission of a final draft. The final drafts are due on the last day of class.

***News Sources:***

*To be successful in the classroom, on exams, and in their papers, students 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/>

**Al Jazeera:** <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

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

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Domestic, International, and Regional Linkages**

#### **January 17: Introduction to the Course**

##### **January 24:**

- "The Geographical Pivot of History." – H.J. Mackinder. *The Geographical Journal* 23(4): 421-437.
- "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds." - Amitav Acharya. *International Studies Quarterly* 58(4).

##### **January 26:**

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

##### **January 31:**

- Paul, Chapters 1 & 2

##### **February 2:**

- "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory." - William R. Thompson. *International Studies Quarterly* 17(1): 89-117.
- "Review Article: Comparative Regionalism: What Might It Be?" – Alberta Spragia. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(1): 29-49.

**February 7:**

- "Pax Asiatica versus Bella Levantina: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East." - Etel Solingen. *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 757-780.
- "The Case for Comparative Regional Analysis in International Politics." - Paul Bezerra, Jacob Cramer, Thomas J. Volgy, and J. Patrick Rhamey, Jr. *International Studies Review*.

**February 9:**

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

**February 14:**

- "Studying Regions: Learning from the Old, Constructing the New." – Shaun Breslin and Richard Higgot. *New Political Economy* 5(3): 333-352.
- "Theorising the Rise of Regionness." – Bjorn Hettne and Frederik Soderbaum. *New Political Economy* 5(3): 457-472.

**Major Powers and International Orders****February 16:**

- "Major Power Status (In)Consistency and Political Relevance in International Relations Studies" – Renato Corbetta, Thomas J. Volgy, and J. Patrick Rhamey Jr. *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 19(3): 291-307.
- "Going for the Gold: Status Seeking Behavior and Olympic Performance" – J. Patrick Rhamey Jr. and Bryan R. Early. *International and Area Studies Review* 16(3): 244-261

**February 20 @ 0800: Identifying Regions Response Paper Due****February 21:**

- **Present Regions Identification to Class**
- "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War." - William C. Wohlforth. *World Politics* 61(1): 28-57.
- "Systemic Leadership, Evolutionary Processes, and International Relations Theory: The Unipolarity Question." - William R. Thompson. *International Studies Review* 8(1):1-22.

**February 23:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 1.

**February 28:**

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

**Regional Powers and Regional Orders**

**March 2:**

- Lemke Chapters 1-2

**March 7:**

- Lemke 3

**March 9:**

- “Regions in International Politics: A Framework for Integrating Systemic, Regional, and Monadic Approaches.” - Thomas J. Volgy and J. Patrick Rhomey Jr. *Russian International Studies Review* 1(3): 105-122.

**March 21: Compensatory Class Time for Speaker on Technology and Politics**

**March 23:**

- Lemke 4

**March 28:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 2

**March 30:**

- Lemke 5
- Katzenstein Chapter 3

**April 6:**

- Katzenstein Chapter 4

**April 10 @ 0800: Regional Hierarchy Response Paper Due**

**April 11:**

- Katzensten Chapter 5

## **Regional Conflict and Cooperation**

### **April 13:**

- Paul Chapters 3 and 4

### **April 18:**

- Paul Chapters 5 and 7

### **April 20:**

- Paul Chapter 8 and 9

### **April 25:**

- Paul Chapter 10 and 11

### **April 27:**

- Paul Chapter 6
- Lemke Chapters 6 and 7

### **May 2:**

- Katzenstein 6 & 7

### **May 5: Recap and Review**

**May 5 @ 1700: Final Paper Due**

### **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 LTC Jones, Director of Disabilities Services, for more information, 464-7667 or [jonesl10@vmi.edu](mailto:jonesl10@vmi.edu).

### **Classroom Rules:**

No tobacco products, food, beverages beyond water in a closed container, or gum are allowed. Profanity and racial or gender slurs will not be tolerated. Use of personal electronic devices during class is prohibited – unauthorized devices will be confiscated.

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

Work for Grade in this department is generally of the following types.

1. Written quizzes, tests, or examinations
2. Book reviews
3. Research papers, policy memoranda, briefing papers, and discourse analysis – identification and analysis of the critical difference is in the findings and opinions of scholars on issues of interest to the discipline.

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.

In the case of book reviews, research and other papers, as described in “2” and “3” above, research and composing of such works must be done by the cadet alone. Cadets are permitted to use spell and grammar-checking facilities.

IS cadets are encouraged to make use of all VMI tutoring services to receive critical comments.<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> of a cadet’s written work is not permitted.

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.**

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<sup>1</sup> As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, critical comments are “general advice given on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing.”

<sup>2</sup> As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, “proofreading means correcting errors (e.g., in spelling, grammar, 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, sentences, phrases, or words. A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor.”

Identifying Regions Response Paper  
IS 424 – Regional Politics and Powers

1. In the attached image of the world, delineate the contours of regions. All countries must be placed in a region. No countries may be placed in more than one. 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 in text, for example (Rhamey 2012). A separate references page should be included at the end of your homework detailing the full information for each citation, such as:  
Rhamey, J. P. 2012. *Homework 1*. Lexington, VA: Virginia Military Institute.

Regional Hierarchy Response Paper  
IS 424 – Regional Politics and Powers

In this paper you will take one of the regions whose membership you outlined in your regional identification project and analyze the underlying hierarchy within the region. You should answer the following questions in your paper, building on the readings and providing a clear argument in favor of your particular vision of the region's structure.

- 1) Lemke, Volgy, and Katzenstein all offer different ideas regarding regional power hierarchy. In your opinion, who is/are the regional power(s) in the region? Why are they regional powers?
- 2) What type of vision (norms, rules, institutions) do these regional powers have for their regional space?
- 3) Are there dissatisfied challengers that oppose the regional power?
- 4) How do external major powers influence the actions of the regional power?
- 5) How do your answers to questions 1-4 affect the politics of the region generally? To answer this question, think of your answers to 1-4 as *independent* variables that cause some outcome or *dependent* variable. Be very precise in explaining the relationship.
- 6) Briefly summarize how some other region has a different configuration of independent variables than your region of focus, and how that different configuration results in a different outcome than what you describe in question 5.

Times New Roman, Double-Spaced, 12 point font. Your responses should be cited appropriately and included a separate works-cited page attached to the end. Avoid sources that simply reproduce information (Wikipedia, nationmaster, etc.) and cite the original sources.