

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Terms and concepts to know:

City-state system	Thucydides
Plato	Aristotle
Cicero	Imperialism
Feudalism	Thirty Years War
Westphalian System	Sovereignty
Nationalism	Concert of Europe
Treaty of Versailles	League of Nations
Fascism	Cold War
Truman Doctrine	Containment
Capitalism	Socialism
NATO	Reagan Doctrine
Deterrence	Uni / Bi / Multipolarity
Hegemony	<i>Glasnost / Perestroika</i>

Study and discussion questions:

1. Among Waltz's "images," which of the three do you think offers the best explanation for war and why? Why does Waltz distinguish between the "immediate" causes of war and the "permissive" causes of war?
2. Why does Walt conclude that "realism remains the most compelling general framework for understanding international relations?" Why does he believe that constructivist theories best explain *change* in world affairs?
3. Colin and Miriam Elman summarize their position at the end of their essay by noting that "for political scientists [of which IR is an important subfield], history will continue to remain... 'absolutely central to theory construction'. In your mind, how does history support theory construction and testing?"
4. Does the post-Cold War world signal a return to the multipolar system of the late 18th century, or is this going to be a unipolar era with the U.S. exercising the same hegemonic domination that the British did in the early part of the 19th century? Or does the War on Terrorism signal the beginning of a new "Cold War"?
5. What is the most significant historical point made in the video "Why Are We in Afghanistan?" Does this history make it more or less likely that you would support our invasion in 2001?

Readings:

International Relations: Britannica.

Video:

Iran: Is Not the Problem.