

# Global politics essays. chapter 2.

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



Chapter 2 Multiple Choice Answers 1. D 2. E 3. E 4. D 5. C Essay #1 —

Human Nature and International Institutions Two theories dominated the early twentieth century's view of world politics: liberalism and realism. The latter stresses the importance of the nation-state itself and security via national defense and strategic alliances; whereas the former believes that although nation-states are crucial, international institutes and global corporations are also pivotal to maintaining peace. While the two paradigms have many differences, some of the most important distinctions lie in their views on human nature and the significance of international institutions. Realism can generally be described as pessimistic with regards to human nature, believing that a person's reason is often overwhelmed by their passion. With that in mind, realists are skeptical to the intentions of rival nations, and prepare for the worst as a result. This preparation comes in the shape of military advancement and the formation of strategic alliances in order to obtain absolute security. The Cold War embodies many of the principles of the realist theory, with both the United States and Soviet Union constantly vying for military supremacy and forming military alliances, such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact. On the other hand, liberalism is comparatively idealistic to realism. According to liberals, humans have a moral imperative to ensure others are treated as ends, rather than means. Also, with the advancement of democracy, liberal theory believes that nations will be less inclined to wage war with one another due to a shared sense of legitimacy. For example, the US is less opposed to the United Kingdom's nuclear program, a fellow democracy, than the budding development of the program in North Korea, an authoritarian state.

International institutions are a contentious topic among liberals and realists. Liberalism stresses the importance of these institutions, such as the United Nations, in resolving disputes peacefully before they can escalate, and mitigates the necessity of raw power struggles. However, realists believe that a nation will defer to its own power before entrusting its security to the promises of an institution, and that even members will be unable to resist the allure of power politics, making the entire effort counter-intuitive and a waste of resources. Both theories have waned in prominence over time. Primarily, this is due to neither capturing the importance of both high and low politics. Liberalism focuses on low politics, which concerns economics, social structures, and environmental issues. Likewise, realism is concerned almost entirely with national defense, a facet of high politics. Since neither is able to integrate the qualities of the opposing theory, both remain incomplete, and as a result insufficient in explaining the increasing complex nature of international politics.

Essay #2 — Liberalism vs. Realism in the New Millennium

The world has entered the twenty-first century and global politics are more complex than ever. As a result, neither liberalism nor realism is fully capable of understanding international phenomena. However, by analyzing both theories, it is possible to explain some of the occurrences since the beginning of the new millennium, especially with regards to the Middle East. One of the most significant events of the early twenty-first century was the United States' decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Liberalism played a part in the US's justification of this conflict. One reason liberals would favor the war is their strong moral imperative to defend human rights. With the notorious amount of human rights violations under the rule of

Saddam Hussein, such as torture and mass murder, it is easy for liberals rationalize an armed intervention under the premise that any nation conducting these violations forfeits their international protection. Hussein's political party had ruled the country unopposed for over two decades due to the citizenry's fear of reprisal from their own government. Therefore, the liberal philosophy of spreading democracy would also heavily contribute to overthrow the Iraqi dictatorship. Realist theory would also endorse the idea of war with Iraq. As realism emphasizes national security above all else, the threat of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is a powerful incentive to intervene in the nation's affairs. In addition to the potential WMDs, some evidence at the time pointed to Iraq's possible involvement in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center. With that knowledge, the US's national security was at a great risk, and a pre-emptive strike against a would-be aggressor is preferable to retaliation after the fact. Thus, since both theories could justify the conflict with Iraq, it is little surprise the US would declare war. However, neither theory could predict the incredibly poor reception the invasion would garner both domestically and internationally. Although realism stresses national security, the act of aggression against one Middle Eastern state caused neighboring countries to feel less secure, and as a result makes the United States more vulnerable to potential counteralliances. As for liberalism, choosing to invade Iraq lowered the international community's opinion of the United States, which would negatively affect the US's legitimacy as a paragon of democracy. While neither paradigm is able to fully grasp the international arena in the new millennium, liberalism seems to be more qualified than

realism. The rationalization of liberalism for the invasion of Iraq exemplify this, as the corporeal menace of human rights violations and the spread of democracy are worthier goals than the paranoid fears of potential weapons of mass destruction, which were eventually found nonexistent. Also, the repercussions of the war favor liberalism as well. Although the loss of prestige from the international community as a result of the invasion is undesirable, it is preferable to the possible threat of reprisal from a counteralliance.

Essay #3 — Feminist and Radical Critiques

Besides the theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, other ideas on international politics exist. Specifically, these theories have often been challenged, most notably by feminism and various radical critiques. These critiques emphasize the importance of class structure and gender roles in world politics, and are useful for filling in gaps left by the dominant theories. Of the radical critiques, the most influential is socialism. Pioneered by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, it argues that history is a series of class struggles. In particular, the subordinate class is in constant conflict with the ruling class. When adopted by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Marxism would come to have dramatic effects on international politics. Eventually, Russia would become the Soviet Union and attempt to spread its brand of socialism across the globe. The resistance of this movement by the United States would lead to the Cold War, one of the most dominant subjects of world politics in the second half of the twentieth century. Class struggle dictates much of a country's domestic policy, such as taxes, distribution of wealth, social safety nets, or the resistance to these ideas. Vehement states, such as the former Soviet Union, may seek to

spread the influence of their domestic policy to other nations of the world, and these states will be forced to respond positively or negatively. Either option affects world politics and changes the course of international relations. Feminism has been an influential movement in politics since the nineteenth century, as women began to demand the right to suffrage. However, it would not be until the end of the twentieth century that women demanded visibility on the global stage. As the second and third waves of feminism emerged, the role of women as actors in politics became harder to dismiss. With powerful politicians such as Hillary Clinton and Margaret Thatcher, alongside nonstate influences such as women's role in the United States labor force during World War II, grassroots activists, and religious figures like Mother Theresa, it was obvious that the female voice could no longer be ignored. The rise of feminism adds a new array of actors to the global political arena. Integrating women into the political spectrum gives many states an entirely new vantage point on world politics. Even though some feminists believe that there is no distinction between the capabilities of males and females, it is certain that at the very least women add a new perspective to the international community. By utilizing these new perspectives in global politics, it will be possible to paint a fuller picture of the world. Gender and class play a pivotal role in international politics. Class struggle is a defining characteristic of domestic policy, which affects the leadership of a nation. Feminists force a state to acknowledge an alternative perspective, adding to the international dialogue. Both critiques have become increasingly important to the international community, and neither seems poised to lose traction. Essay #4 — Behavioral Approach Traditionally,

scholars have analyzed world politics via composing fieldwork, documentation, and historical records into a narrative which can then be dissected and concluded upon. This method of research has been challenged in recent years for overreliance on individual analysis and judgment, especially by a movement called behavioralism. This movement operates under the assumption that the world exists independent of our minds, making the application of the scientific method an appropriate avenue for the analysis of international politics. Behaviorists assume the world functions largely as a series of recurring patterns. Hypotheses formulated from ample testing and observation lead to reproducible evidence which can be utilized to explain these patterns. By examining all available evidence, as opposed to specific historic facts, behavioralism builds a cumulative source of knowledge for the world to parse. While the emphasis on objectivity in behavioralism is innovative, the movement is not without criticism. In particular, the application of the heavily structured scientific method to the unpredictability of human nature is called into question. Although electrons and neutrons may react to stimuli in the same manner consistently, sentient beings engaging in purposeful action are not so reliable. Alongside this criticism, postmodernists contend that knowledge is relative, and universal truth is impossible to ascertain. The truth of one nation may be anathema to another, which makes judging both entities by the same standard ineffective. For example, Israel and Iran both believe in the religious importance of their holy land, but greatly disagree on which group should hold sovereignty over it. On its own, behavioralism is an insufficient approach to the analysis of world politics. However, the emphasis on analyzing all available accounts

and evidence is an important element that can be utilized in conjunction with other theories such as liberalism and constructivism. Also, the value of objectivity is another facet of behavioralism worth considering. By removing personal judgments from analysis, a scholar can make clearer assessments without their own feelings interfering with their research. These aspects of behavioralism are useful additions to any theory on world politics.