

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
HUMAN NATURE AND COGNITIVE THEORIES

**Terms and concepts to know:**

Human Nature

"State of Nature"/ Leviathan

Personality/ Cognition

Participatory leader

Elites

Instinct

Competition/ Diffidence/ Glory

Independent Leader

Operational reality

Perception/ misperception

**Discussion and study questions:**

1. How do individual level theories differ from both the state and system level theories? What are the benefits to studying international relations at the individual level as opposed to the system and state level?
2. How did Aristotle view war? Did he recognize the need for war?
3. Discuss the conditions of humankind in the state of nature as described by Hobbes. How did it differ from Aristotle's? Do you agree with his description?
4. According to Hobbes, why do individuals sacrifice their liberty to the Leviathan? Do you believe this is the proper course to take in the modern world? Why or why not?
5. How did Freud explain the existence of war and what factor did he suggest was absent in the League of Nations that might prevent war?
6. What role does the "ego" identified by Lasswell play in shaping a nation's actions in the international system? Can you think of some examples in which a leader promoted symbolism to achieve particular international aims?
7. According to Hermann, what impact does training (or lack thereof) have on the foreign policy behavior of a leader? What do you think this means for President Barack Obama?
8. What are the two propositions that Jervis identifies regarding his "perception" model?
9. Comment on the film *Soldiers of Conscience*. It appears that some of the soldiers are making an argument for cognitive theory. Would you agree?

**Readings:**

Genest. *Conflict and Cooperation*, Chapters 8 and 9, pp. 487-546.

**Video:**

*Soldiers of Conscience*