

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
REALISM

**Terms and concepts to know:**

<i>The Prince</i>	Balance of power
<i>The Twenty Years' Crisis</i>	Rational Actor
Neo-Realism	Anarchy
Self-help system	Security dilemma
Melian dialogue	Morgenthau's Six Principles

**Study and discussion questions:**

1. Describe the "Thucydides Trap"? Are the U.S. and China condemned to be stuck in it? How might both countries avoid the trap in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
2. Do you agree with the maxim that, in international politics, the "strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept"?
3. What are Morgenthau's Six Principles of Political Realism? Which of the six have the most theoretical power in your opinion? Which lack theoretical power?
4. Stephen Walt wants you to "think like a realist" because he thinks paradoxically, that might actually lead to a *decline* in international conflict. Would you agree with his line of thinking? Why or why not?
5. Is Robert Gilpin's theory of hegemonic rise and decline useful in explaining the end of the Cold War?
6. Do you think Waltz's structural realism provides an adequate explanation for the end of the Cold War and for the current state of international politics?
7. In what ways does Dr. Kissinger's assessment of U.S. policy in the war against terrorism reflect general realist principles? In what ways does it differ?
8. Concerning the video Niccolo Machiavelli, do you agree with Machiavelli that it is better for the Prince (the United States) to be parsimonious, rather than generous? Feared or loved? Do you agree or disagree with his analysis of leadership with regard to our foreign policy towards Russia? Why or why not?
9. What is Michael Klare's thesis about the next 30 years? How is it similar or dissimilar to the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648) which led to the adoption of the Treaty of Westphalia and the modern nation-state system?

**Readings:**

Text. *Conflict and Cooperation*. Chapter 2.

**Video:**

*Blood and Oil*.