

# 1.2 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

[W]e are all theoreticians and the only issue is what kinds of theories should we adopt to guide us in our attempts to understand the subject matter. (Joynt and Corbett 1978: 102)

What *is* theory? Why do we have to bother with theory – can't we study IR on its own terms? Why not just look at the facts? These are just some of the questions you might legitimately be asking yourself as you embark on your journey through your course in IR. I want to answer them now by way of introduction, and then in Chapter 1.4 we will return to some of the core issues raised and develop them using the language and tools as they might appear in your course lectures, seminars and assignments.

## WHAT IS THEORY?

Theories have to rely on some principles of selection to narrow their scope of inquiry; they discriminate between actors, relationships, empirical issues and so forth which they judge most important or regard as trivial'. (Burchill and Linklater 2009: 13)

We saw in the last chapter that the subject matter of IR is essentially contested, meaning that all scholars bring to the field different yet sometimes overlapping opinions on what constitutes the 'essence' of IR. Disputes run even deeper than that, however. Not only do experts disagree on what to study, they differ on how to study IR and what counts as appropriate evidence in the discipline. With all this complexity and dispute in mind, it seems logical for rational human beings (assuming that's what academics are!) to seek to navigate some sort of logical path through this mire of uncertainty. This is where IRT comes in.

## 40 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

Think about previous occasions when you encountered a theory or theories in your studies at school or college. What was the purpose of those theories? What did theorists try and achieve by developing them? Did they help you understand more about the subject and how? What were their strengths and weaknesses?

Burchill and Linklater's neat summary, above, of the part theory plays in the study of IR will be the starting point for our consideration of what theory actually is. The telling words they use are 'principles of selection'. Theories take complexity and try to simplify it. How theorists do this, and the success they have trying, is less important to us at this stage than recognizing the goals theorists set themselves. Let us take a range of opinions from across the discipline (and see Jørgensen 2010: 8–9 for a useful text box called 'Ten perspectives on the function of theory'):

- **Martin Wight** (1995: 15): 'By "international theory" is meant a tradition of speculation about relations between states'. You can see here how Wight solves the problem of the subject by taking a popular line on the appropriate subject matter of IR, reflecting its original date of publication (1966): it is nothing more, nothing less than a study of relations between states.
- **Hans Morgenthau** (1985: 3): theories 'bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible'.
- **Kenneth Waltz** (2010) 'Theories explain laws', making them parallel 'to the definition of the term in the natural sciences'. Laws illustrate associations between variables, while theories explain the causal connections. Popular in US IR scholarship the natural science rendering of theory is as follows (Rosato 2003: 585): a theory comprises a hypothesis stipulating an association between an independent and a dependent variable and a causal logic that explains the connection between them. The hypothesis is supported if it can be demonstrated experimentally that A (independent variable) causes B (dependent variable) because A causes x, which causes y, which causes B.
- **Hollis and Smith** (1991: 62–3): Theories perform three functions. They abstract (group together events, situations or objects which are not identical). They generalize (identify what these things which are not identical have in common by virtue of analysis of the available facts). And they connect (identify cause and effect). This definition starts to move us away

from considerations of how 'scientific' theory should or should not be and into the realm of how we *perform* theoretical work by putting them to work. Abstraction, generalization and connection are, for Hollis and Smith, the basic prerequisites of theory in any academic discipline.

- **Buzan** (2004: 24) picks up regional dimensions to how we comprehend the nature and purpose of theory by writing 'Many Europeans use the terms theory for anything that organizes a field systematically, structures questions and established a coherent and rigorous set of interrelated concepts and categories. Many Americans [see Waltz and Rosato above], however, often demand that a theory strictly explains and that it contains – or is able to generate – testable hypotheses of a causal nature'.
- **Hooghe and Marks** (2008: 2): these scholars from a different field, European Studies, show that you can find speculation about the nature of theory across the social sciences and humanities, and that you can be creative about where you look for this kind of material. They suggest that: 'Every theory is grounded on a set of assumptions – intellectual short cuts – that reduce complexity and direct our attention to causally powerful factors'. It is reminiscent of the next authors' use of the term...
- **Baylis, Smith and Owens** (2008a: 4; emphasis in original): '*a kind of simplifying device that allows you to decide which facts matter and which do not*'. This definition undermines those who believe processes of theorizing in IR can or should mimic processes of theorizing in the natural sciences. Theory, they assert, is not simply 'some grand formal model with hypotheses and assumptions' (Baylis et al. 2008a: 4). Instead, we should be modest about what we can expect theory to deliver, and more aware of the presuppositions and biases we bring to the study of the social world.
- **Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen** (2007: 54): 'We always look at the world, consciously or not, through a specific set of lenses; we may think of those lenses as theory'. Theory, according to this interpretation, forms a fundamental part of the world we live in; it makes the world and helps construct it for us whether we realize it or not.
- **Cynthia Weber** (2010: 2): 'IR theory makes organizing generalizations about international politics. IR theory is a collection of stories about the world of international politics. And in telling stories about international politics, IR theory doesn't just present what is going on in the world out there. IR theory also imposes its own vision of what the world out there looks like'. Weber pulls us even further from the realms of IR theory as natural science. Look at the language she uses. Words like 'story' imply imagined and imaginative elements to theories developed in the field of IR. Weber is in accordance with writers such as Baylis, Smith and Owens when she collapses the distinction between a 'world' of IR and a separate 'world' of the observer.

## 42 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

So we encounter an array of perspectives on theory. From the formal natural science model outlined by Hollis and Smith to Weber's view that we are ourselves parts of the theories we devise, no two IR authors quite agree on what IR theory is or should be. In Chapter 1.4 we will revisit the debate about the impact of these debates over the nature of theory. For now, all you need to have clear in your mind is that these differences exist and they materially influence the work that goes on in the field of IR. In the next section we will take a step back and consider an even more basic question: why bother with theory in the first place?

Whenever you come across a definition of 'theory' or 'IR theory', make a note of it in a theory checklist as I have done above. It will provide you with a comprehensive list of writers and their respective interpretations which you can get lots of mileage from in essays and exam answers.

### WHY BOTHER WITH THEORY?

You are not alone if you doubt the 'value added' theory brings to the study of academic subjects. In this section we will review both sides of the argument by looking first of all at the positions taken by those writers who doubt the utility of theory. We then consider those writers who trumpet the value of theory – not just because they believe it is intrinsically useful to us but because it is inescapably everywhere, always shaping our study of the world whether we care to acknowledge it or not. Several IR textbooks (for instance, Mansbach and Rafferty 2008) include reflections on the nature and uses of theory so you can fruitfully consult these before moving to the more complex treatments.

### THE 'TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT' APPROACH TO THEORY

In the discipline of history there is a book by Keith Windschuttle (1996) called *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering our Past*. In the book, Windschuttle describes how the discipline of history, traditionally concerned with the factually-based narration of events in the past using archival documents and other remnants from the period in question, 'is now suffering a potentially mortal attack

from the rise to academic prominence of a relatively new array of literary and social theories' which question traditional historical practices and the knowledge produced by them (Windschuttle 1996: 10). There is 'history', Windschuttle implies, and there is 'theory', and it is dangerous for the two to get mixed up because the former deals with the real world of the past while the latter throws up needless conjecture about the reliability of all this knowledge. Too much concern with theory, Windschuttle argues, is dangerous. 'The central point upon which history was founded no longer holds: there is no fundamental distinction any more between history and myth' (Windschuttle 1996: 10).

Windschuttle's opinion is that we can have facts or we can have theory. We do not profit from mixing the two. In IR this 'take it or leave it' approach to theory can be exemplified using the sceptical stance on theory adopted by Raymond Aron, who said that theorizing international politics was more arduous than theorizing economics for a list of reasons including the following: the international system is affected by happenings inside and outside states; states are not unitary actors possessing one single aim; identifying the dependent and independent variables is impossible; supposed equilibria at the systemic level are inherently unstable; and prediction is impossible (Aron's position summarized in Waltz 1990: 25. For an excellent overview of Aron's contribution to international theory more generally, see Hoffman 1985).

As James Rosenau describes this position (2003: 7–8): 'Frequent are the comments that theories are wasted effort and misleading, if not downright erroneous. "Come off your high theoretical perch," say the critics, "come down where the action is and get your hands dirty with real world data'. Rosenau identifies three types of critic of 'theory' from within IR: first, those in government circles who believe 'theory' is removed from the 'real' day-to-day public policy problems that need to be confronted; second, journalists who echo Windschuttle by saying that theoretical language is gobbledygook ('Why don't they write in plain English?'); and third, academics themselves, who propound the notion that theory-based teaching is insufficiently policy-relevant (Rosenau 2003: 7–8).

William Wallace put the case that IRT had become too detached from practice in a 1996 article on 'Truth and Power'. Having warned against the perils of 'scholasticism' and what he saw as IR scholars' increasing tendency to speak to each other rather than the outside world, Wallace opened fire on the 'flippancy' of the postmodernist 'celebration of theory at the expense of empirical work' (Wallace 1996: 311). Scholastic word games, he argued, are all very well but theory 'for its own sake'

## 44 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

does nothing to contribute to public debate and certainly will not catch the ear of policy-makers (Wallace 1996: 314). Wallace took the line that IRT needed to re-engage with the normative policy-driven agenda that made it such a fruitful approach to international affairs in its early years. Wallace did not suggest we 'leave' theory in quite the same fashion as Windschuttle, but he certainly gave the discipline cause to reflect on the uses of IRT.

### THE 'THEORY IS INESCAPABLE' APPROACH

Many writers disagree with the 'take it or leave it' approach to theory exemplified by Windschuttle, Aron and Wallace. Writers subscribing to the interpretation that 'theory is inescapable' push the idea that theory is everywhere, and therefore that understanding theory is not an option but is rather forced on us by the conditions of our human existence.

A review of the literature in this area reveals two interconnected propositions about the role and value of theory. The first and arguably best known is associated with writers such as Steve Smith and Ken Booth, and features in some form in all their books and articles on IRT you will cover on your course. The clearest rejection of the 'take it or leave it' line comes in Baylis, Smith and Owens' Introduction to *The Globalization of World Politics*:

It is not as if you can say that you do not want to bother with a theory, all you want to do is to look at the 'facts'. We believe that this is simply impossible, since the only way in which you can decide which of the millions of possible facts to look at is by adhering to some simplifying device which tells you which ones matter the most. (Baylis et al. 2008a: 4)

Contrary to what the theory-sceptics say, argues Rosenau, the element of choice implied by the proposition that we can either embrace theory *or* ignore it simply does not exist:

Being theoretical is unavoidable! Why? Because the very process of engaging in observation requires sorting out some of the observed phenomena as important and dismissing others as trivial. There is no alternative. The details of situations do not speak for themselves. Patterns are not self-evident. Observers must give them meaning through the theories they bring to bear. They must, to repeat, select out from everything they observe those aspects that seem significant and discard those they deem as inconsequential. (Rosenau 2003: 8)

Fred Halliday takes a similar position, contending that theory performs three functions with respect to facts: it helps us decide which facts are significant and which are not; it helps us explain how the same fact can be interpreted differently; and it helps bring to the fore questions of morality which cannot be decided by an appeal to the facts alone (summarized in Burchill 2001a: 13). Whether you are member of a governing coalition, journalist or academic you will use theory daily to come to a view on pressing political matters.

When watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers think about the number of times you hear the words 'fact'. Why are the 'facts' of a story prized so highly? What is it about 'facts' that makes them so important to us? What, at root, are 'facts'?

Why do these writers see a world in which theory is inescapably everywhere? The answer lies in a second assumption about the role theory has played, unwittingly or not, in the actual conduct of international relations. As Stephen Walt puts it:

Even policymakers who are contemptuous of 'theory' must rely on their own (often unstated) ideas about how the world works in order to decide what to do. It is hard to make good policy if one's basic organizing principles are flawed, just as it is hard to construct good theories without knowing a lot about the real world. (2006: 386)

It is only by knowing theory that we can improve practice and by the same token theoretical sophistication comes from knowing about the world policy-makers inhabit. Scholars engage in theoretical speculation, but so do policy-makers. As Martin Wight explains: 'The political philosophy of international relations is the fully-conscious formulated theory, illustrations of which you may find in the conduct of some statesmen, [Woodrow] Wilson, probably [Winston] Churchill, perhaps [Jawaharlal] Nehru' (Wight 1987: 221).

Our goal here is not to evaluate the persuasiveness of this argument (I leave that up to you as you progress through this book and your course), but rather to set out a range of opinions which you might find interesting points of departure. Steve Smith (1995: 3) puts the theory-practice overlap in its sharpest relief by writing that 'international theory has tended to be a **discourse** accepting of, and complicit in, the creation

## 46 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

and recreation of international practices that threaten, discipline and do violence to others'. He points to the role that theoretical assumptions associated with the Realist tradition (explored in Chapter 2.2 of this book) played in moulding superpower foreign policies during the Cold War from 1945–89, particularly in terms of the nuclear arms race. Playing an active part in the development of aggressive American and Russian foreign policies, this suggests, Realist IRT can be held partially accountable for some of the many horrors and catastrophes the world witnessed during that period. Smith has therefore entered into dialogue with William Wallace over the alleged 'theory–policy' divide, which he sees as a misnomer. Theory and practice are not separate spheres of activity, Smith argues: 'theory is already implicated in practice, and practice is unavoidably theoretical' (Smith 1997: 515); the world is theoretical 'all the way down'.

Tim Dunne and Brian Schmidt agree that policy and theory are interconnected, especially as far as Realism goes: 'From 1939 to the present, leading theorists and policymakers have continued to view the world through realist lenses' (Dunne and Schmidt 2008: 92). Francis Fukuyama likewise suggests that Realism has provided 'the dominant framework for understanding international relations and shapes the thinking of virtually every foreign policy professional today in the United States and much of the rest of the world' (quoted in Little 1995: 71). Martin Hollis and Steve Smith give us an excellent summary of the 'theory is inescapable' approach:

[M]any International Relations scholars are directly involved in the US foreign and defence policy community. They try to use their theories to improve policy-making and they search for theories which will be relevant and useful for this purpose ... Hence the truth of International Relations theories has something to do with which theories are known and applied in the process they purport to analyse. (Hollis and Smith 1991: 70–1)

We come to discuss the tenets of Realist theory later. The salient point for now is that Realism is the theory most frequently cited by writers seeking examples of the theory–practice overlap.

Is it just coincidence that Realism is so often used as an illustration of the interplay between the theory and practice of international relations? As you go through your course see if you can find other examples from the literature where writers cite a direct connection between theory (any theory) and practice.

In sum, contrary to the ‘take it or leave it’ approach, writers in the ‘theory is inescapable’ school are very clear about the pervasiveness, the ‘everywhere-ness’ of theory. For them, there is no such thing as choosing to use a theory or not because it is a fundamental part of life. And if that is not enough, they argue, look at the reasons why IR was founded as an academic discipline (explored further in Chapter 1.4 below). It was set up in the aftermath of the First World War (1914–18) to help us understand and explain (theorize) the relations between states, so that the futile carnage of the Great War could be avoided in the future. The theory–practice overlap has not just come about by chance, but by design. As Scott Burchill (2001a: 6) explains: ‘The very purpose of intellectual endeavour was to change the world for the better by eradicating the scourge of war. This was really the only function international theory had’. If we accept the ‘theory is inescapable’ approach in general, then in the field of IR its ramifications are doubly important because it is a discipline and a practice that deals directly with war, conflict, death and destruction.

### Ray Winstone on facts and theory

In 2009 a UK advertisement for a new cereal ran on television and in the cinema, featuring British actor Ray Winstone. In the cereal advert Winstone complained that ‘When it comes to food there’s a bit of a nanny culture thing going on. Don’t do this. Don’t do that. That is very bad for you. This is for your own good.’ He argued that we should be free to choose for ourselves how we live and what we do to our bodies – the state should butt out. ‘We’re old enough and wise enough to just be given the facts, so this is a new cereal called Optivita. It contains oatbran which can help actively reduce cholesterol. Now, it’s up to you to reduce cholesterol – or not.’ In the final scene Winstone made clear he was not trying to bully us into making a decision. ‘Well don’t look at me: I’m not gonna tell you what to do.’ The decision, it seems, was ours – to Optivita or not to Optivita.

There are many interesting points about this advert, not least the idea that you might choose to ignore the advice of a well-known ‘hard man’ such as Winstone. But the crucial point for us lies in the moves the advert made to convince us to buy this product. Winstone tells us that there is a ‘bit of a nanny culture thing going on’ when it comes to food. This is asserted as the truth (a ‘fact’ if you like) but the nature of that ‘nanny culture’ is neither defined nor elaborated upon – as if we all plug into what he is talking about straight away. There is an extensive British libertarian tradition of railing

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## 48 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

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against an overweening 'nanny state' which unnecessarily interferes in the daily lives of 'ordinary people'. The advert was broadcast at a time when then British Prime Minister Tony Blair was promoting the idea of 'social marketing' which relied on food companies giving the public more information on health and diet because he felt that consumers were more likely to believe companies than the government and untrustworthy politicians (Wainwright and Carvel 2006). The 'fact' of the matter was that Britain was becoming *less* of a 'nanny state' just when the advertisers told us it was becoming *more* of one.

Thus, the 'nanny culture thing' was not a fact about the world, but a theory. It was one interpretation or 'take' on the government's policy to promote corporate and social responsibility for healthy living. If we do not accept the theory of the nanny state as far as healthy eating goes, then the rationale for both the cereal and the advert go out of the window. The idea that there are theory-free 'facts' about the world might not be as accurate as we might wish to believe.

Can you think of other advertisements which rely on theories about how the world works presented as straightforward facts about how the world works?

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY ON FILM

Scholars of IR are not alone in debating the value – or otherwise – of theory, and in doing so they show how deeply interconnected IR as a discipline is with the wider cultural context within which scholarship is practised and disseminated. If we take this view seriously it has potentially radical consequences. Gone are the days of the lonely scholar sat under a wodge of papers and books in an ivory tower writing huge tomes which only get read by a handful of other professors working in the same field, but of marginal importance to society as a whole.

There is a popular phrase 'it's only academic', used to refer to something that has theoretical relevance but no practical relevance. In the study of IR is it feasible to say that the books and articles we read are ever only of 'academic' relevance?

Two writers who make this point very effectively are Cynthia Weber (2010) and Dan Drezner (2011), who show us how we can use popular films and characters to understand and critique key IR theories. At first sight this might seem a strange thing to do. Is not IR a distinct discipline of study with its own language, ideas, set of concepts, and 'great debates'? Is it not the case that early IR theorists and their successors today pride themselves on working in a separable, if not separate, social scientific discipline which they have worked for years to demarcate from history, law, philosophy, politics and economics (see Chapter 1.4)? What can Weber's films and Drezner's zombies tell us about a theoretical, sometimes abstract subject like IR?

How you answer this question depends on your view of what makes an academic discipline and what makes for a valid approach to studying IRT. Let us take a look at the reasons why Weber believes it is possible and enlightening to study IR through film using two quotes from her book:

IR theory can be studied as a site of cultural practice. IR theory is an 'ensemble of stories' told about the world it studies, which is the world of international politics. Studying IR theory as a site of cultural practice means being attentive to how IR theory makes sense of the world of international politics. (Weber 2010: 4)

Popular films provide students with answers to the question, How does an IR myth appear to be true? In so doing, popular films point to how politics, power, and ideology are culturally constructed, and how the culture of IR theory might be politically reconstructed. (Weber 2010: 20)

The moves Weber makes here are fascinating.

First of all, like Holsti (1985) she argues that the development of IRT reveals a good deal about the cultures within which those theories have developed (and vice versa), particularly the 'Westernized' bias within the discipline. IR is assumed to be a site of 'cultural practice' which reveals theorists' unspoken assumptions about how the world operates. Second, the 'stories' IR theorists tell us about the world rely on the same plot lines we find in 'stories' told to us by novelists and filmmakers. Third, theories have to rely on hidden assumptions to make them 'work'. They are 'mythical' in the sense that they purport to describe aspects of the 'real world' whilst simultaneously constructing aspects of that 'real world' for us (this is what goes on in the Ray Winstone advert in the 'Taking it further' section above). Finally, since IR, like novels and films, is composed of 'stories' about international politics, uncovering the assumptions and ideologies behind the narratives IR tells enables us to rethink the basis of IR theories themselves.

## 50 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

This strategy for studying IR is enlightening because:

- It helps us better understand IR theories by making a complex set of ideas and language more accessible to us as students.
- It helps us critique the theories as well as understanding them. Being able to critique theories is likely to be a vital part of the assessments you undertake on your course in IR theory. Criticizing a theory in an academic way is not undertaken to say it is 'wrong', but to unpack its assumptions (explicit or implicit), empathize with the evidence it presents, and then to read down into the theory to expose its explanatory and/or factual limitations.
- It provides us with a new dimension to the 'facts versus theory' debate. By arguing that theory is everywhere, even in Hollywood blockbusters such as *Independence Day*, these scholars encourage us to think about theory's role in our efforts to explain international relations today.

You might be lucky enough on your course to spend time exploring how Weber uses film to deconstruct IR theory in timetabled sessions. If not, you can still get full value for money by renting or buying the various films, watching them, and then seeing how Weber makes use of them in her work. You could incorporate the films as case studies in assessed work on the respective theories.

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

### 'Why do we need theories about international relations when we can look at the facts?'

There are two promising ways to approach this question. The first is to think about it in 'for and against' terms. You would begin by setting out the case 'against' theory and 'for' facts, looking at writers who question the utility of theory. You should mainly concentrate on writers from within the discipline of IR who posit the 'take it or leave it' approach to theory. You might show knowledge of the wider social scientific debates by referring to writers from outside the discipline, such as

historians, who question the value or utility of theory. In the second part of the essay you would consider the case 'against' facts and 'for' theory, using any of the key points about the 'everywhere-ness' of theory raised by writers such as Steve Smith and Cynthia Weber. All this would be framed by your own view on which body of writing you find most persuasive.

A second approach would be to present a numbered list of reasons why you believe we should bother with theory and deal with each in turn in a 'fat paragraph' (of approximately 250 hundred words). Taking this route makes it slightly harder to achieve balance in the essay because your tutor would presumably want to see some consideration of the 'take it or leave it' approach and you would have to think hard about where and how far to explore that interpretation. It might, for example, be useful to have a long introduction setting out the rationale for the assertion made in the question and then arguing that you intend to knock it down by exploring a series of points from the literature on the value of IR theory.

### 'How do IR theorists make sense of the world?'

Vague or open-ended questions can be both a curse and a blessing. To put it another way, they can be deceptively difficult to answer despite on the surface appearing to be fairly straightforward. The place to start is to try and pin down for your tutor what you take the different bits of the question to mean:

Which IR theorists? Can they all be lumped together? Do all of them view 'theory' in the same way? Are there differences between, say, a Realist and a postmodernist take on theory and if so how is this expressed in their ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches to studying IR?

What does 'make sense of the world' mean in this context? It seems fair to take it to mean 'how do the theorists you have chosen study the world of IR?' That is, how do they make it intelligible to us as fellow students of international affairs? Here we get into issues raised in the previous chapter about how different IR theorists define their field of study.

One thing you might then do is choose a case study which exemplifies how academics from obviously different theoretical traditions 'make sense' of 'their world' of IR and draw conclusions from that. Weber's films could be used here, amongst other cases.

## 52 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

The use of case studies can provide you with valuable ways of comparing and contrasting different theoretical approaches to IR. Always make it clear why you choose particular cases and make sure to tell the reader after presenting case study material what conclusions you draw from it. Do not expect your tutor miraculously to be able to infer from your case studies why you chose them: make it explicit in the essay.

### REFERENCES TO MORE INFORMATION

Lepgold, J. (1998) 'Is Anyone Listening? International Relations Theory and the Problem of Policy Relevance', *Political Science Quarterly*, 113(1): 48–62.

Booth, K. (1997) 'Discussion: a Reply to Wallace', *Review of International Studies*, 23(3): 371–7.

Backs Steve Smith (1997) in his counter attack on William Wallace's views on 'truth and power'.

Reus-Smit, C. (2012) 'International Relations, Irrelevant? Don't Blame Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 40(3): 525–40.

Carr, E.H. (1990) *What is History?* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

There are various reprints of the 1961 original. Especially thought-provoking is the opening chapter which rethinks the idea of 'facts'.

Goldstein, J.S. and Pevehouse, J.C. (2008) *International Relations*, 8th edn. New York: Pearson Education.

Usefully, from a student's point of view, the book is liberally sprinkled with 'thinking theoretically' text boxes which help you think through theoretical explanations for different outcomes in the cases covered.

Hay, C. (2002) *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

The opening two chapters introduce you to the problems of defining the field of Political Science (including the subfield of IR) and to the problems we encounter in trying to study this subject 'scientifically'.

Burnham, P., Gilland, K., Grant, W. and Laytonhenry, Z. (2004) *Research Methods in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chapter 1 outlines big debates about how to study Politics which filter into discussions about how to study IR.

Axford, B., Browning, G.K., Huggins, R. and Rosamond, B. (2006) *Politics: An Introduction*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Chapter 14 by Rosamond introduces ways of thinking about IR and shows how the borders between domestic and international politics are in the process of dissolving.

Nexon, D. and Neumann, I.B. (eds) (2006) *Harry Potter and International Relations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

For fans of the novels and/or the films of J.K. Rowling, this book helps us see the parallels between the 'real world' of international relations and the fictitious world of Harry Potter.

Sterling-Folker, J. (2006) 'Making Sense of International Relations Theory', in J. Sterling-Folker (ed.) *Making Sense of International Relations Theory*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 1–12.

This short chapter usefully introduces you to the main contours of the debates about 'theory' and works by using different theoretical takes on the same case: the Kosovo intervention of 1999.

Jabri, V. (2000) 'Reflections on the Study of International Relations', in T.C. Salmon (ed.) *Issues in International Relations*. London: Routledge, pp. 289–313.

Good on the nature of theory and the problems of defining the scope of IR as a subject area.

Hall, I. (2006) *The International Thought of Martin Wight*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Neuman, W.L. (2007) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 2nd edn. New York: Pearson Education.

Chapter 2 covers general issues to do with the nature of theory.

Harding, S. and Hintikka, M.B. (eds) (2003) *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and the Philosophy of Social Science*, 2nd edn. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

See especially the chapters by Eve Keller on gender and science.

Roskin, M.G., Cord, R.L., Madeiros, J.A. and Jones, W.S. (2006) *Political Science: An Introduction*, 9th edn. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Part I introduces the 'science' debate and introduces basic concepts useful for the study of domestic and international politics.