**Interpersonal Theory: Applications to Social and Political Relations (MC399)**

Spring 2014
MC 399 (1 credit) or non-credit reading group

Thursdays, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

January 30 – March 12

North Case Hall Seminar Room

Group leaders: Matt Yalch (yalchmat@msu.edu)

Prof. Constance Hunt (huntc@msu.edu)

Prof. Colleen Tremonte (tremonte@msu.edu)

The goal of this reading group is to enable students to think about social/ political issues in terms of interpersonal theory. We will use interpersonal theory to answer questions like: “How do you describe what an actor (individual or organizational) is like?” and “How do you explain and predict the patterns of how an actor interacts with others?” By the end of the class, we should all be able to apply interpersonal theory to better understand, describe, and predict social relations. Our reading group will meet weekly beginning 1/30, lasting until 3/12. During meetings, we will discuss the week’s assigned reading(s), how the reading(s) relate(s) to interpersonal processes, and the potential implications of what we are learning for social and political relations more broadly. Although readings for the first few group meetings will be chosen by the group leaders, students are encouraged to suggest readings for future sessions (see below).

Students’ grade in the class will be influenced by two factors, each of which will be weighted equally. First, students will be graded in terms of their participation in group discussion/activities. Second, students will be assigned a short (4-7-page) paper in which they will use concepts drawn from interpersonal theory to describe and/or explain a social/political topic of their choice. This paper will be due on the last day of class.

Tentative schedule:

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Activity** |
| Intro to Interpersonal Theory |
| 1/30 |   | None | Introductions |
| 2/6 | Wiggins (1991) in *Thinking Clearly About Psychology* | Feedback |
| Applying Interpersonal Theory |
| 2/13 | Israel | Rowley & Webb (2007) |   |
| 2/20 | Russia | Putin (2013); Koesel & Bunce (2012) | (Paper prospectus) |
| 2/27 | Rogue States | Jervis (2013) on Iran; Hwang (2013) on North Korea |   |
| 3/12 | Wrap-up | *Dr. Strangelove* | Pizza (Paper) |