

Theories of International Politics and Zombies: Revived Edition

By Daniel W. Drezner



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What would happen to international politics if the dead rose from the grave and started to eat the living? Daniel Drezner's groundbreaking book answers the question that other international relations scholars have been too scared to ask. Addressing timely issues with analytical bite, Drezner looks at how well-known theories from international relations might be applied to a war with zombies. Exploring the plots of popular zombie films, songs, and books, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* predicts realistic scenarios for the political stage in the face of a zombie threat and considers how valid--or how rotten--such scenarios might be.

This newly revived edition includes substantial updates throughout as well as a new epilogue assessing the role of the zombie analogy in the public sphere.



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• Sales Rank: #150449 in Books

• Brand: imusti

Published on: 2014-10-26Original language: English

• Number of items: 1

• Dimensions: 7.50" h x 4.50" w x .75" l, .0 pounds

• Binding: Paperback

• 216 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drezner (All Politics Is Global), a Tufts professor of international politics, comes up with an intriguing intellectual conceit to explain various schools of international political theory. He imagines a world overrun with zombies and considers the likely responses of national governments, the U.N. and other international organizations, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). He examines possible reactions through the lens of seven theoretical approaches including realpolitik, liberalism, neoconservatism, and bureaucratic politics. After considering the efficacy of each approach in combating the zombie hordes, Drezner weighs their flaws and concludes that given the limitations of human reason and a highly fluid situation, all theories are "more circumscribed than international relations theorists proclaim in their scholarship." Drezner is fascinated with zombies—he's seen all the movies and read the books—and writes with clarity, insight, and wit. For example, he notes that as zombies bite humans, who then become zombies, human-zombie "alliances of convenience" might be possible," that NGOs would arise "devoted to the defense of the living dead," and that neoconservative "shock-and-awe" military approaches probably wouldn't impress the undead zombies. This slim book is an imaginative and very helpful way to introduce its subject—who knew international relations could be this much fun? (Mar.)

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Review

Honorable Mention for the 2011 PROSE Award in Government & Politics, Association of American Publishers

"Drezner... comes up with an intriguing intellectual conceit to explain various schools of international political theory. He imagines a world overrun with zombies and considers the likely responses of national governments, the U.N and other international organizations, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).... This slim book is an imaginative and very helpful way to introduce its subject--who knew international relations could be this much fun?"--Publishers Weekly

"If the dynamics of international politics have conventionally been understood in terms of the quick and the dead, Daniel Drezner invites us to consider another way of being--undead, or 'differently animated.' This ontological category emerges from the world of popular culture in which the 'zombie canon has a distinctive place. In drawing together the interpretation of popular culture and international politics, Drezner provides much food for thought--the food in this case being human flesh, of which zombies are notoriously fond. . . . [D]rezner elucidates the often-arcane world of international theory in an interesting and highly amusing way. He also shows how close the relationship between politics and popular culture is, how the latter can convey social and political critique in the most unlikely ways, and why satire remains such an important form of that critique."--Stephanie Lawson, *Times Higher Education*

"A light, breezy volume, *TIPZ* is a valuable primer in international relations theory for laypeople, and thank God for that--it's been a long time coming. But Drezner's real genius is that he's written a stinging postmodern critique of IR theorists themselves, applying the full force of their structured reasoning to topics as diverse as Michael Jackson's breakdancing zombies, Peter Jackson's lesser film canon, and romantic zombie comedy flicks--'rom zom coms,' as he puts it. It's both a pedagogical text and a lampoon of pedagogy. . . . *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* is one hell of an important tome."--Adam Weinstein, *Mother Jones*

"Besides offering a condensed and accessible survey of how various schools of international-relations theory would respond, he reviews the implications of a zombie crisis for a nation's internal politics and its psychosocial impact. He also considers the role of standard bureaucratic dynamics on managing the effects of relentless insurgency by the living dead. While a quick and entertaining read, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* is a useful introductory textbook on public policy--as well as a definitive monograph for the field of zombie studies."--Scott McLemee, *Inside HigherEd*

"In addition to wargaming various zombie scenarios, Drezner's book serves as an entertaining primer on the distinctions between several theories of international politics."--Katherine Mangu-Ward, *Reason*

"Smart, funny, creative, and thought provoking, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* is a worthwhile and engaging read, and is essential reading for all political leaders if the fight against zombies is ever to be won."--Sara Yasin, *LSE British Politics and Policy blog*

"Juxtaposing George A. Romero with Donald Rumsfeld to make real-world 'predictions,' Daniel W. Drezner's *Theories of International Politics & Zombies* . . . explores feasible scenarios for the political stage contrasted with an undead threat, the objective being to render just 'how valid--or how rotten--such scenarios might be.' No man seems better qualified for this exposé than Drezner, whose bio credentials list him as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Zombie Research Society."--*Fangoria*

"In the end, Drezner's task is to lead a tour through academic Graceland, pretending political theories are serious business, while mocking academia's obsession with political theories, which any person with common sense knows too often fail to predict real world outcomes. A political science book about zombies is funny not because of the zombies, but because political science treats them like everything else. The juxtaposition of the two brings out the best in both."--Jessica Palmer, *Biophemera* blog

"[Theories] of International Politics and Zombies is clever, nicely dissecting the strengths and weaknesses of different theories and offering observations about how, for instance, constructivists should destroy all previously published-zombie-apocalypse movies, lest people actually act as selfishly as most characters in those films do. While most zombie narratives start after government has failed, Drezner is far more optimistic that through cooperation, humanity would survive a zombie outbreak."--Samantha Nelson, A.V. Club

"[A]n amusing primer on IR theory, a comprehensible introduction to the tenets of liberalism, neoconservatism, social constructivism, bureaucratic politics, realpolitik, and insight into their plausible responses to a new type of threat."--San Francisco Book Review

"It's attractive quality is, of course, its flesh-eating meta-theme, but the work is successful for its clear, comparative introduction to international relations theory. . . . Drezner's work frequently leaves the reader hungry for more discussion."--Choice

"Overall, this is an accessible first introduction for students unfamiliar with the philosophical side of international relations."--Christopher Housenick, *Political Studies Review*

From the Back Cover

"One of the most creative books about international relations you will ever read and one of the smartest."--**Peter Beinart, author of** *The Icarus Syndrome*

"Bless Dan Drezner for this book which punches huge holes in the hokum of American foreign policy

thinking. Our theories in this business have been thin and often very costly, and if it takes Drezner's 'zombie attack' to puncture their bloat, so be it. Besides, the book is fun."--Leslie H. Gelb, president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and former *New York Times* columnist

"Drezner is to the zombie attack what Thucydides is to the Peloponnesian War--he is its great chronicler. As witty as he is insightful, Drezner has taken old ideas and traditions in international relations and brought them back to life."--G. John Ikenberry, Princeton University

"This book fills a gnawing gap in the international relations literature and adds flesh to those bones by communicating key international relations theories in a fresh, fun, and effective way."--Daniel Nexon, Georgetown University

"This interesting, thoughtful, and engaging book nicely integrates the classics of zombie work with theories of international politics to make sense of human--and nonhuman--behavior. This is the only international politics textbook that will make students frequently laugh and think at the same time. Indeed, this textbook is food for brains, which may, of course, only attract more zombies."--Stephen Saideman, McGill University

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cory Kyle:

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