

Introduction to International Relations

[Semester/Session]

Instructor: Abigail Post

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This course, *Introduction to International Relations*, is intended to do just that: introduce you to the field of international relations. However, rather than present you with the overwhelming amount of events going on in the world, it provides you the toolkit to analyze and understand why things are happening. While we will explore history and current events in a number of sessions, the goal of this class is not to debate current events per se. Rather, we seek to use the best methods in the field of international relations to understand them. We will use historical data to help us understand patterns across history and develop policy recommendations for similar situations. As you will see, policymakers have limited tools at their disposal, making it difficult to address current issues—even when these problems eerily resemble past cases. The hope is that you will gain a better appreciation for the complexity of international relations and foreign policy.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Use international relations theory to understand why state still get into disagreements of all sorts after centuries of trying to cooperate. By the end of class, students should be able to answer specific questions such as: Why are long-standing enemies like France and Germany close allies today? Will the rise of China usher in war with the United States?
2. Apply international relations theory to current events to make sense of nations' complex interactions (and policymakers' difficult decisions). For example, what is the best way to deal with rogue states pursuing nuclear proliferation? In what ways, if any, should the United States intervene in the Syrian refugee crisis?
3. Conduct rigorous research, which includes finding and citing appropriate sources, thinking critically about international relations, and writing both clearly and persuasively.

Required Text

The following book is required:

- Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz (2009). Second Edition. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. Norton. ISBN: 978-0393938098.

In addition, I expect students to read one of the following newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times*, or a comparable international paper. It is entirely likely that questions on the final will require you to be up-to-date on current events.

All other readings will be made available in PDF format online, or sent out via email to the class. All readings listed in the syllabus are mandatory. Students are encouraged to attend office hours to discuss both the assigned readings and opportunities/materials for further exploration of particular topics.

Assignments and Evaluation

The core of this class is critical thinking. The goal of all assignments is to help you understand the relevant sides of the debate and come to a well-reasoned conclusion about the merits of a given theory and its application. Along the way, you will learn to approach international problems in a thoughtful manner that will help you in future classes, prepare you for your career, and make you a better informed global citizen.

- Research paper on a selected current event (30%).
 1. Find appropriate sources (5-10 sources, at least 2 books and 2 academic articles)
 2. Write up a proposal describing the event, sources, and how it relates to the class material (2 pages double-spaced)
 3. Write draft (5 pages double-spaced)
 4. Feedback (2 pages double-spaced) [Note: with lecture class, peer feedback]
 5. Final paper
- Attendance/Reading quizzes (10%). Reading is essential to this course. Since I cannot lecture on all material, your learning relies on your completing all assigned readings before attending class. To ensure your involvement, I will assign brief reading quizzes at the beginning of class on the first day of the week, based on the readings for that week. [Note: with a lecture class, use iClicker.]
- Participation (10%). This course will sometimes be run as a seminar, with student participation an absolutely vital component. Discussion is not designed to put you on the spot; it's an effort to help you learn the material more thoroughly. Thus, participation will not only affect your participation grade but will also improve your

understanding of the material. I will assign tasks to facilitate dialogue but expect you to pose questions, insightful comments, and the like. In such discussions, I am mostly here to *facilitate* discussion rather than lecture on the material. Students learn just as much (if not more) from each other than they do from their instructors. [Note: with lecture class, assign reading questions and collect at random.]

- Midterm Exam (20%). This exam covers Units 1 and 2.
- Take-home final exam (30%). This exam is cumulative.

Final grades will be determined based on the following breakdown: 93 - 100 = A; 89.5 - 92.9 = A-; 86.5 - 89.4 = B+; 82.5 - 86.4 = B; 79.5 - 82.4 = B-; 76.5 - 79.4 = C+; 72.5 - 76.4 = C; 69.5 - 72.4 = C-; 66.5 - 69.4 = D+; 62.5 - 66.4 = D; 59.5 - 62.4 = D-; 0 - 59.4 = F

Professionalism, Ethics, and Other Policies

1. *Attendance.* Regular attendance is required. You are allowed two (2) unquestioned absences per semester. If you miss class due to illness or family emergency, you need to let me know as promptly as possible and be prepared to provide documentation attesting to the reason for your absence.
2. *Lateness/Early Departure.* You must arrive to class on time, and stay for the entire 50 minute class session. If you know in advance that you will be arriving late or leaving early, please let me know beforehand and sit near an exit so you do not disrupt class.
3. *In-class distractions.* Remember to turn off/silence and put away your phones prior to the beginning of class. If there is an emergency which requires you to keep your ringer on, please inform me before class begins. You may use your laptops during class, but please do not surf the Internet, text, or chat when class is in session. If you violate this policy, you will be marked absent for the day.
4. *Email.* Face-to-face communication is best. Students should ask questions before, during, and after class; or during office hours. Please type all emails in a professional manner.
5. *Late Assignments.* Late assignments will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day late. In case of computer failures, I highly recommend that all files be backed up through some variety of cloud-based services, such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Box, etc.
6. *Missing Exams:* Students who plan to miss a scheduled exam for legitimate reasons (i.e. official athletic competition, school-related travel) must let me know in writing at least two weeks before the exam so alternative arrangements can be made. I will allow make up exams in the event of unplanned absences due to medical or family emergency. Documentation must be provided for a make-up exam to be given.

7. *Grades.* Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets** expectations. Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations. Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
8. *Grade appeals:* Hopefully there will be no reason to contest a grade. However, I will accept grade appeals no sooner than 48 hours and no later than 10 days after students receive their graded assignments. I provide detailed comments on graded assignments. Take the time to read and consider these comments before lodging an appeal. Grade appeals must include a written statement that addresses my comments on the assignment and indicates specifically why the student feels the grade is inappropriate. If a grade appeal is made, I reserve the right to adjust the grade either upward or downward, so I strongly recommend that you not lodge grade appeals frivolously.
9. *Academic Integrity.* I take academic integrity *very* seriously. Students are expected to learn from one another, and collaborative study groups are encouraged. But all submitted assignments must be entirely your own, original work. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties.
10. *Special Needs.* If you have (or suspect you have) a learning or other disability that requires academic accommodations, you should contact the Student Disability Access Center as soon as possible. The instructor will be happy to make whatever accommodations students need to be successful in the course. Please be sure that necessary accommodations are properly documented by the SDAC. Be sure to provide the instructor with enough notice to make appropriate arrangements.

Schedule of Readings and Discussion

This syllabus assumes a 15-week semester with class meeting three days a week for a total of 45 class-days. It includes five library/research days, which are classes set aside to teach students various research strategies including how to identify appropriate sources, how to use library resources, how to make an argument, etc.

Unit 1: The Toolkit (3 weeks)

Day 1: Introductory Material

- No reading

Day 2: A Brief History of the International System, 1648 – 2016

- FLS: Chapter 1 (pp. 2-37)

Day 3: A Unified Approach

- FLS: Introduction (pp: xix-xxxii)

Day 4: IR Theory, Part I: Realism

- John Mearsheimer: “Structural Realism,” *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (2016).

Day 5: IR Theory, Part II: Institutionalism

- Jennifer Sterling-Folker: “Neoliberalism,” *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (2016).

Day 6: IR Theory, Part III: Liberalism

- Bruce Russett: “Liberalism,” *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (2016).

Day 7: IR Theory, Part IV: Constructivism

- Alexander Wendt: “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” *International Organization* (1992), excerpt.

Day 8: Summary

- Stephen Walt “International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy* (1998).

Day 9: Library/Research Day I

Unit 2: Topics in International Security (4 weeks)

Day 10: The Security Dilemma

- FLS: pp 74-79
- Jervis: “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* (1978), excerpt.

Day 11: The Bargaining Model of War

Case Study: The Cuban Missile Crisis

- FLS: pp 84-105
- May & Zelikow: *The Kennedy Tapes* (2002), excerpt

Day 12: Commitment Problems and Preventive War

- FLS: pp 105-122

Day 13: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy

- FLS: pp 124-154

Day 14: Democratic Peace

In-class Debate: Would a world of democracies create peace?

- FLS: pp 154-167

Day 15: Library/Research Day II

Day 16: Civil War and Ethnic Conflict

- FLS: pp 213-242

Day 17: Case study – Syrian Conflict

- TBD

Day 18: Terrorism

- FLS: pp 242-263

Day 19: Counterterrorism

- 2002 National Security Strategy (pp 1-17)

Day 20: Case study – U.S. Invasion of Iraq

- Robert Jervis: “Understanding the Bush Doctrine,” *Political Science Quarterly* (2003).

Day 21: Catch Up and Review Session

Day 22: Midterm Exam # 1

Unit 3: Institutions, Norms, and Cooperation (2 weeks)

Day 23: The Collective Action Problem

In-class activity

- No readings

Day 24: Alliances, Collective Security, and the United Nations

- FLS: Chapter 5 (pp 169-213)

Day 25: International Environmental Politics

- FLS: pp 494-517

Day 26: International Law and Norms

- FLS: pp 421-451

Day 27: Institutions

- FLS: pp 62-71; 517-525

Day 28: Library/Research Day III

Unit 4: International Political Economy (2 weeks)

Day 29: International Trade

- FLS: Chapter 7, pp. 265-305

Day 30: Globalization

- FLS: pp 557-579

Day 31: International Finance

- FLS: pp 312-349

Day 32: International Monetary Policy

- FLS: pp 350-385

Day 33: Financial Crises

- Dan Drezner: “The Irony of Global Economic Governance: The System Worked” (2012).

Day 34: Library/Research Day IV

Unit 5: The Human Aspect (2 weeks)

Day 35: Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect

- FLS: pp 452-480

Day 36: Case Study – Origins and Implications of ISIS

- Ghosh: “Short History of ISIS,” *The Atlantic* (2014).

Day 37: Case Study – The Current Refugee Crisis

- TBD

Day 38: Development and Poverty

- FLS 387-419

Day 39: Library/Research Day V

Unit 6: Current International Concerns

* Dependent on student interest and timing

Day 40: The Rise of China

- FLS: pp 548-557
- G. John Ikenberry: “The Rise of China and the Future of the West,” *Foreign Affairs* (2008).

Day 41: Trump & International Order

- G. John Ikenberry: “American leadership may be in crisis, but the world order is not,” *Washington Post* (2016).

Day 42: Weapons of Mass Destruction

- FLS 538-548

Day 43: Case Study – North Korea

- TBD

Day 44: Drones

- Daniel Byman: “Why Drones Work,” *Foreign Affairs* (2013).
- Audrey Kurth Cronin: “Why Drones Fail,” *Foreign Affairs* (2013).

Day 45: Catch Up and Review Session

Final Exam

- Time & Date – TBD