

PSC 161: Introduction to International Politics

M/T/W/R 9:00am-12:00pm
University of Rochester
329 Harkness Hall
Summer 2015

Instructor information:

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Office hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm and by appointment

Purpose of the course:

This course provides students with the conceptual foundations needed to understand contemporary international relations. Students will be exposed to a wide range of issues that scholars of international relations address, including international conflict and civil war, terrorism, international institutions, and international economic relations. At the end of the course, students should be able to identify the main theories of international relations and apply them to a wide range of issues, historical and contemporary, as well as have a solid understanding of the types of research political scientists engage in.

Course requirements:

Participation: 30%. The class will be run seminar-style. That means that active participation is required. I expect all students have to done the assigned readings ahead of time and be prepared to engage in conversation about them. Note, however, that this does not mean that you need to have understood everything in the readings. In fact, I encourage you to bring up things in the readings that you found confusing or hard to understand. If you aren't sure what a particular author is saying, chances are others have the same concern and those are exactly the types of issues we should discuss in class.

In-class assignments: 15%. Throughout the course, we will do various in-class assignments. These assignments do not require advance preparation other than keeping up with the readings. These will be tailored, to some extent, to student interest, but may include researching newspaper articles on particular issues, looking for data, and in-class reading and analysis. Most of these assignments will require the use of a laptop. Please let me know right away if you are unable to have a laptop with you in class.

Take-home assignments: 30%. There will be 2 take-home assignments for the class, each worth 15%. The due dates for the assignments are May 26th and June 8th. The first assignment requires you to create an annotated bibliography of the previous week's readings. The second assignment will require you to pick an academic journal article and turn it into a poster for presentation.

These assignments will be explained in greater detail in class and we may use class time to get a head start on them. The penalty for late assignments is one third of a grade for each 24 hours that the assignment is late (i.e., an A will become an A- if the delay is less than 24 hours, a B+ if it is between 24 and 48 hours, etc.).

Final exam: 25%. There will be a final exam on the last day of class. This will be a cumulative exam, covering all the material from the class. However, success on the exam will rely to a large extent on your ability to apply the theories and information presented in class to a particular issue in international relations, rather than on your ability to memorize facts and dates. To that end, you will be allowed to bring certain study materials with you to the exam. We will discuss which materials are acceptable early on in the semester. There will be no make-up exam for the final, so please make any travel or work arrangements accordingly.

Please note that close to 50% of your grade relies on you showing up for class prepared!

Laptop/cell phone policy:

I encourage you to bring your laptop with you to class, as there will be ample opportunity to use it. Out of respect for your fellow class participants, I do ask that you only use it for class purposes. I also ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during class time and keep it on silent. If you have an important call that you need to make or receive during class time, please let me know at the beginning of class.

Academic integrity:

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policies for academic honesty. They can be found here: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/students.html>. If you are not sure whether you are in violation of these policies, ask me before an assignment is due and I am happy to guide you.

Course logistics:

There is no required textbook for this class. We will rely on a mixture of academic journal articles, book chapters, and analytic journalism pieces. Most, if not all, readings will be posted on Blackboard. If you have trouble finding a particular reading, please let me know as soon as possible.

This syllabus and any other needed course materials will be posted on Blackboard. It is possible that changes will be made in the syllabus from time to time. Any changes will be announced with plenty of advance notice and any new readings will be posted on Blackboard.

We will spend some time discussing and thinking about current events throughout the course. To that end, keeping up with international news to some extent will serve you well. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are good sources, but any mainstream newspaper will do.

Course schedule

May 18: Introduction to class

Why study international relations? What comprises the international system?

Readings:

- Walt: One World, Many Theories

May 19: Classic theories of international relations

What is anarchy and why is it important for studying international relations? What do states care about? How much do states cooperate?

Readings:

- Kenneth Waltz: Anarchic Structure of World Politics.
- Robert Keohane: International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?

May 20: Classic theories of international relations (continued)

Are democracies more likely to cooperate than other states? How much do perceptions matter in international relations?

Readings:

- Bruce Russett: Grasping the Democratic Peace (chapter 2)
- Alexander Wendt: Anarchy is What States Make of it

May 21: Power and sovereignty

What is power in international relations? What are the different ways to conceptualize power? Are states sovereign? Is sovereignty important to states?

Readings:

- George Orwell: Shooting an Elephant
- Stephen Krasner: Sovereignty

May 25: Memorial Day. No class!

May 26: Interstate conflict.

Annotated bibliography is due today!

Why do states go to war? What are their motivations? How do they resolve conflict?

Readings:

- James Fearon: Rationalist Explanations for War
- Kenneth Waltz: The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory (in class)

In-class assignment (1):

We will do a data analysis exercise in class today. Please make sure to have your laptops with you. No prior preparation is required for this exercise.

May 27: Weapons of Mass Destruction

What are weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? Are they different from other, more conventional, weapons? Why do states fear the use of WMD?

Readings:

- Jonathan Tucker: War of Nerves (excerpt)
- Robert Einhorn: The Lausanne framework: A promising foundation for a nuclear deal with Iran. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/04/07-einhorn-iran-p5-obama-lausanne-framework-promising-foundation>

May 28: Cold War and nuclear weapons

How have nuclear weapons affected international relations in the post-WWII period? How important are they today?

Readings:

- Martin Walker: The Cold War, chapter 7

In-class movie screening

June 1: Civil and ethnic conflict

How is civil conflict different from international conflict? How does sovereignty impact civil conflict? How does it get resolved?

Readings:

- Fearon and Laitin: Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War
- Virginia Page Fortna: Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace?

In-class assignment (2):

We will do a research assignment related to civil conflict. Further details will be provided ahead of time, but no prior preparation is necessary for this assignment. Do make sure to bring your laptops with you today.

June 2: Terrorism

What is terrorism? Who counts as a terrorist and who doesn't? How do terrorist organizations develop and thrive?

Readings:

- Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter: The Strategies of Terrorism.
- Malala Yousafzai: I am Malala (excerpts, in class)

June 3: International institutions

What is the role of international institutions? How do they impact state relations? How do states influence international institutions, and vice versa?

Readings:

- John Mearsheimer: The False Promise of International Institutions
- Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin: The Promise of Institutional Theory (in class)
- John Mearsheimer: A Realist Reply (in class)

June 4: The United Nations Security Council

How does the Security Council operate? Who is influential? How does its work impact international affairs?

Readings:

- David M. Malone: The International Struggle over Iraq, chapters 7 and 9.
- Karel Kovanda: The Czech Republic on the UN Security Council: The Rwandan Genocide (in class)

In-class assignment (3):

We will do an in-class assignment today, which will be aimed at learning about the institutional processes of the UN Security Council and how it has operated in the past. This will include a couple of in-class readings, as well as online research. Please make sure to bring your laptops with you today.

June 8: Genocide, Human Rights, and the Responsibility to Protect Poster assignment due!

What counts as a genocide? How does state sovereignty influence human rights? What is "the Responsibility to Protect"?

Readings:

- Ed Luck: The Responsibility to Protect: Growing Pains or Early Promise

In-class movie screening

June 9: Foreign Policy

How do statesmen make foreign policy decisions? How can understanding policymaking help us understand international events and crises?

Readings:

- Samantha Power: Bystanders to Genocide
- Colum Lynch: Genocide under our Watch
- Graham Allison: The Cuban Missile Crisis at 50: Lessons for U.S. Foreign Policy Today (in class)

June 10: International Economic Relations

How does international trade influence international relations? How about aid? Why do some states give aid to other states?

Readings:

- Paul Krugman: What do Undergrads Need to Know About Trade?
- Alberto Alesina and David Dollar: Who Gives Aid to Whom and Why?
- Craig Burnside and David Dollar: Aid, Policies and Growth (in class)

Thursday, June 11

Conclusion. How have the readings in this course helped shape your own views of international affairs? Do you view the news differently now than you did at the beginning of the course?

Readings:

- Jack Snyder: One World, Rival Theories