

POLS 1420

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30pm - 3:20pm in MCHU 101
Discussion sections held each Friday

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30pm-5:30pm in Oak Hall #409A

Teaching Assistants:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

International relations is the study of the interactions between states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other global actors like terrorists, private companies, activists, and so on. It explores how these entities cooperate, compete, and conflict with one another on issues such as security, trade, diplomacy, human rights, and environmental sustainability. Scholars of international relations seeks to understand these interactions, their consequences, and the forces that shape them.

This course offers students a broad introduction to the study of international relations. We will study different frameworks for evaluating global politics before applying them to key issues like interstate war, civil conflict, international monetary and financial policy, development, and so on. While the topics covered in this course do not capture the full breadth of the field, they represent some of the most developed and important areas of research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the study of international relations and what it involves.
2. Describe the current international system and the main actors in international politics.
3. Evaluate international events according to a consistent theoretical framework.
4. Describe why interstate wars, acts of terrorism, trade disputes, and other events occur.
5. Identify some of the barriers to interstate cooperation and how they can be overcome.
6. Explain some of the main forces that shape the behavior of states.

READINGS

One textbook is required for this class: *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*, written by Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz. This is not optional as most course meetings will require you to read at least one chapter.

In addition to the textbook, you will often be assigned another reading or two to go along with it. These readings are designed to provide a bit more context or to connect the material to current events. All of these are required to be completed in *Perusall*, and completing these will account for a portion of your final grade.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There are eight grading components to this course:

- 1. First Short Paper – 5%.** *Due by midnight on Sunday, September 22nd to Husky CT.* Students will submit a three to four page paper describing how the book's theoretical framework (actors, interests, and institutions) applies to a major work of fiction. Options include, but are not limited to, Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, Star Wars, and so on.
- 2. Second Short Paper – 5%.** *Due by midnight on Sunday, December 8th to Husky CT.* Students will submit a two to three page paper that reflects on the week's in-class simulation. Students can consider how the simulation reflects course material, what was most or least realistic, how it relates to current events, and what else they learned.
- 3. Recitation Attendance and Participation – 10%.** Since this is a large lecture course, recitations are critical. This is your opportunity to engage the course material, to ask questions, and to get to know your peers. As such, attendance and participation are important. Students are expected to come to recitations – and indeed, all classes – prepared, having completed the required readings, and ready to engage with the material.
- 4. Recitation Quizzes – 10%.** Throughout the semester's recitation sections, you will randomly be given quizzes to complete on Husky CT using a cell phone, tablet, or computer. If you complete the readings and come to class, these will not be difficult. We will automatically drop the lowest two grades.
- 5. Perusall – 15%.** Perusall is a “social annotation” platform that helps students engage with course material in class groups. You can highlight important material, pose questions, respond to other students, and so on. *Apart from the textbook chapters, all assigned readings are to be completed in Perusall.* For each reading, you are expected to contribute at least three thoughtful annotations or replies in total, and to upvote a few of your classmates' comments as well (as appropriate).

6. **Exam I – 15%.** *In class on October 16th.* It will cover all material from the beginning of class onward.
7. **Exam II – 15%.** *In class on November 11th.* It will cover all material from the first exam onward.
8. **Final Exam – 25%.** *The final exam will be administered on the date and time assigned by the registrar.* It will be cumulative.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Technology: Students cannot use laptops, tablets, and other devices during lectures. The research on this is clear: without laptops students take better notes, learn more, get better grades, and pose fewer distractions to those sitting around them (as measured by their neighbors' grades). Evidence also suggests that students enjoy classes more when laptops are disallowed, and in hindsight they overwhelmingly support these policies. Exceptions are of course available for students with legitimate needs.

Deadlines: Students should be prepared to take exams when they are scheduled and to submit assignments when they are due. Exceptions to these deadlines must be approved in advance. Failing to do so may result in grade deductions.

Grade Disputes: In the event that a student wishes to dispute their grade on an assignment, the following procedure may be used. First, students must wait at least 48 hours after the assignment has been handed back. Second, students must email their TA a typed summary of why they believe the grade is unfair. The TA and I will consult, and if I agree that there is merit, then I will personally regrade the assignment. However, revised grades may be higher or lower than the original, and this new grade will be final. Grade disputes submitted more than ten days after the assignment is handed back will not be considered.

Students with Disabilities: The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020, or <http://csd.uconn.edu>.

Communication: The best way to contact me and your TAs is via email. We will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours, but do not expect a reply within 12 hours or outside of normal business hours. Therefore, if you have questions leading up to an exam or assignment deadline, make sure to reach out to us well in advance. If you have questions that require a lengthy or detailed response, please talk to us during office hours to save us both time.

Academic Integrity and Personal Conduct: Students are expected to act in accordance with the Guidelines for [Academic](#) and [Personal](#) Integrity at UConn. Regarding AI, submitting ChatGPT-generated text as your own work would be an act of plagiarism insofar as it would involve passing off the work of others as your own. For these reasons, you are not allowed to use this ChatGPT or other similar tools to produce essays or other academic work for this class, unless otherwise explicitly permitted to do so. The university has AI detection software that distinguishes between AI generated content and human generated content.

Missed Classes: When absent, it is the student's responsibility to review lecture slides and to get notes from their peers. While your TAs and I are happy to answer *specific* questions about the week's material in office hours, it would be infeasible for us to fully recount the lectures on a personal basis.

Student Health and Wellness: The University of Connecticut strives to support the optimal well-being of all students. [Student Health and Wellness \(SHaW\)](#) offers a comprehensive set of services including medical care, mental health, and health promotion.

GRADES

The following grading scheme will be used throughout the course:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Lower Bound</i>	<i>Upper Bound</i>
A	94	100
A-	90	93
B+	87	89
B	84	86
B-	80	83
C+	77	79
C	74	76
C-	70	73
D+	67	69
D	64	66
D-	60	63

Class 1, August 26. Course Introduction.

————— PART I: THE BASICS —————

Class 2, August 28. A Brief History of International Relations.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 1.

Class 3, September 4. Frameworks in IR I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 2.
- Watch: The history of the Cold War, [available here on YouTube](#).

Class 4, September 9. Frameworks in IR II.

- Perusal: Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 145 (November/December 2004), pages 53-62.
- Perusal: Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), pages 1-15.

————— PART II: INTERNATIONAL SECURITY —————

Class 5, September 11. Why are There Wars I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 3.
- Perusal: Clausewitz, “War as an Instrument of Policy.” *On War*. Pages 75-81, 605-610.

Class 6, September 16. Why are There Wars II.

- Perusal: Lake, David A. “Two cheers for bargaining theory: Assessing rationalist explanations of the Iraq War.” *International Security* 35, no. 3 (2010). Pages 1-15.

Class 7, September 18. Why are There Wars III.

- Perusal: Alex Weisiger, *Logics of War: Explanations for Limited and Unlimited Conflicts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013), Chapter 1, pages 11-19.
- Perusal: Biddle, Tami Davis. “Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners.” *Texas National Security Review* (Spring 2020). Selected pages.

Class 8, September 23. Domestic Politics and War I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 4.

Class 9, September 25. Domestic Politics and War II.

- Perusall: Bausch, Andrew W. "Democracy and war effort: An experiment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 4 (2017). Pages 814-818.
- Perusall: Horowitz, Michael C., Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. *Why leaders fight*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pages 25-40.

Class 10, September 30. International Institutions and War I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 5.
- Perusall: Brands, Hal, and Peter D. Feaver. "What are America's alliances good for?" *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 47, no. 2 (2017).

Class 11, October 2. International Institutions and War II.

- Perusall: Gilligan, Michael, and Stephen John Stedman. "Where do the peacekeepers go?" *International Studies Review* 5, no. 4 (2003). Pages 37-42.
- Perusall: Raustiala, Kal and Viva Iemanjá Jerónimo. "Why the UN Still Matters." *Foreign Affairs*, June 7, 2003.

Exam I review in recitation sections.

Class 12, October 7. Exam I.

- In-class exam.

Class 13, October 9. No Class.

- Perusall: "The Battle of Algiers," YouTube. This is about 2 hours long so plan accordingly.

No recitation sections this week.

Class 14, October 14. Terrorism and Civil War I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 6.
- Watch: Samantha Bee interview, "Life after Hate." [Available here on YouTube.](#)

Class 15, October 16. Terrorism and Civil War II.

- Perusall: Walter, Barbara F. "The critical barrier to civil war settlement." *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997). Pages 335-341.
- Perusall: Fisher, Max. "Syria's Paradox: Why the War Only Ever Seems to Get Worse." *New York Times*, August 26, 2016.

PART III: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Class 16, October 21. International Trade I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 7.
- Perusall: Lemieux, Pierre. "Biden's Protectionism: Trumpism with a Human Face." Cato Institute, Fall 2022.

Class 17, October 23. International Trade II.

- Perusall: Sutherland, Peter D. "Transforming Nations-How the WTO Boosts Economies and Opens Societies." *Foreign Affairs* 87 (2008).

Class 18, October 28. International Finance and Money I.

- Watch: World Bank and the IMF available [here on YouTube](#).
- Watch: Exchange Rates available [here on YouTube](#).

Class 19, October 30. International Finance and Money II.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 8.
- Perusall: "The Global Consequences of Financial Contagion." Council on Foreign Relations. August 3, 2023.

Class 20, November 4. International Finance and Money III.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 9.
- Perusall: Swenson, Ana. "The U.S. Labeled China a Currency Manipulator. Here's What It Means," *New York Times*, August 6, 2019.

Class 21, November 6. Review Finance, Trade, and Money.

- No reading, but watch the news.

****Exam II review in recitation sections.****

Class 22, November 11. Exam II.

- In-class exam.

PART IV: CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Class 23, November 13. The US Election..

- Meeting virtually: see Husky CT announcement for link.

****No recitation sections this week.****

Class 24, November 18. International Law and Norms I.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 11.
- Perusall: MacDonald, Eryn. “What Is the Nuclear Taboo and Is Putin About to Break It?” March 16, 2022.

Class 25, November 20. Climate Change and the Environment.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 13.
- Please skim the following: National Intelligence Estimate. “Climate Change and International Responses Increasing Challenges to US National Security Through 2040.” US National Intelligence Council. [Available here](#).

Class 26, December 2. New Challenges to the Global Order.

- Read: *World Politics*, chapter 14.

Class 27, December 4. In-class Simulation.

- No reading.

****Final exam review in recitation sections.****