

PS 280: Introduction to International Relations

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Office Hours: M/W 9-10 am Class Hours: M/W 11-11:50 am
Office: 316 Armory Class Room: 106 David Kinley Hall

Course Description

What are the causes of the September 11 attacks? Why is there a trade war between the United States and China? Why do some people oppose globalization while other people welcome it? Due to the rapid development of information and communication technology, interactions among nations considerably increased over the past decades. As a result, many complex political phenomena happen across the globe. Also, there are many puzzles in international relations that we might not be able to understand well if we do not understand and critically analyze the phenomena. This course provides 1) analytical tools and 2) theoretical and historical foundations which are necessary for students to understand and critically analyze political activities that happen around the world.

Required Materials

- There is one required text book for this course. Frieden, J. A., Lake, D. A., & Schultz, K. A. (2019). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. WW Norton. Additional readings are available on course web page

Course Objectives

1. To be able to apply critical analytical tools in understanding political phenomena
2. To understand basic theories of international relations, including realism and liberalism
3. To understand the basics of game theory
4. To improve students' written communication skills through an analytic writing assignment

Course Requirements

- Exam I: 25%
- Exam II: 25%
- Exam III: 25%
- Analytic Writing Assignment: 25%

Exams

There will be three in-class exams. Topics of the exams are non-cumulative. The first exam will test students' knowledge of Tools of Analysis and Theories. The second exam will test students' knowledge of interstate and intrastate conflicts. Lastly, the third exam will ask questions about international cooperation. Each exam will consist of 5 short answer/essay questions.

Analytic Writing Assignment

There will be a short analytical writing assignment for this class. The purpose of this writing assignment is 1) to apply analytical tools and theories we learned from this class and also 2) to learn to improve analytical writing skills. To do that, each semester, I ask students to analyze an international event using the perspective of 1) liberalism, 2) realism, or 3) game theory. This semester, students will be asked to analyze the 2021–2022 Russo-Ukrainian crisis. The paper length is 5 to 6 double-spaced and is due at the end of Week 6. A detailed prompt will be provided on week 3.

Course Policies

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted. However, the penalty for a late assignment is five points per day.

Academic Integrity

Students should follow the university rules for academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please review the university rules for your reference. (<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-402/>)

Students with Disabilities

If students with disabilities need accommodations for class, please let me know. I attach the information regarding academic support and accommodations for your reference. (<https://www.disability.illinois.edu/academic-supports-and-accommodations>)

Class Schedule and Readings

Part A: Tools of Analysis and Theories

Week 1: Introduction/ Tools

Readings

- *World Politics, Introduction and Chapter 1*
- *The 7 steps of scientific inquiry*

Week 2: Game Theory

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 2 and A Primer on Game Theory*

Week 3: Liberalism Tradition

Readings

- *Kant, I. (1795). Perpetual peace. Kant's political writings, 2.*
- *Wilson, W. (1918, January). Fourteen points. In Address to Congress (Vol. 8, pp. 33-36).*

Week 4: Realism Tradition

Readings

- *Machiavelli, N. (2004). The prince. YOUTH, 1(3), 1-12.*
- *Hobbes, T., & Missner, M. (2016). Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (Longman Library of Primary Sources in Philosophy). Routledge.*
- *Morgenthau, H. J. (2014). A realist theory of international politics. Realism reader, 53.*

Week 5: Exam I - Tools of Analysis and Theories

Readings

- *Exam week: No readings*

Part B: Conflicts

Week 6: War I - Causes of War

Analytic Writing Assignment Due

Readings

- *Bremer, S. A. (1992). Dangerous dyads: Conditions affecting the likelihood of interstate war, 1816-1965. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 36(2), 309-341.*

Week 7: War II - Rationalist Explanations for War

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 3*
- *Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. International organization, 49(3), 379-414.*

Week 8: Civil War

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 6, pp.234 - 264*

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Terrorism

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 6. pp.264 - 289*

Week 11: Exam II - Conflicts

Readings

- *Exam week: No readings*

Part C: Cooperation

Week 12: International Political Economy I: Trade

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 7*

Week 13: International Political Economy II: International Institutions

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 8*

Week 14: International Law

Readings

- *World Politics, Chapter 11*

Week 15: International Cooperation

Readings

- *Fearon, J. D. (1998). Bargaining, enforcement, and international cooperation. International organization, 52(2), 269-305.*
- *Putnam, R. D. (1988). Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games. International organization, 42(3), 427-460.*

Week 16: Exam III - Cooperation

Readings

- *Exam week: No readings*