

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

POLS XXXX

Semester

Colleen Larkin

Meeting Times

Email

Meeting Location

Office Hours: Days and Times, Location

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to a broad range of questions in international relations. What explains cooperation or conflict between countries? How do ideas, individuals, or domestic politics affect international politics? What are the major challenges facing the global community today, and what can be done about them? Students will become conversant in the major theoretical approaches to studying international politics. They will study various issues from historical and contemporary perspectives, including war, diplomacy, international political economy, human rights, nuclear weapons, international institutions, global public health, and climate politics. Students will be able to apply this knowledge of theory to understanding current events in world politics.

Prerequisites

This is an introductory course open to all undergraduates.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Gain a basic understanding of the key components of major international relations theories
- Apply theories to evidence from historical cases as well as contemporary policy issues
- Develop critical thinking skills, analyzing evidence both to evaluate and critique existing arguments as well as to offer original conclusions or policy solutions.
- Improve written and oral communication skills to present arguments clearly and persuasively both in class discussions and written assignments

Requirements

At a glance:

- Participation 15%
- Midterm Essay (due XXX) 20%
- Policy Issue Paper (due XXX) 30%
- Final Exam (due XXX) 35%

Participation. (15%) Participation is an essential component of this course. It will not only help you understand the course material, but it will improve the learning experience of everyone else in the class. Quality contributions to the discussion are preferable to quantity. Quality participation includes: coming to the section prepared to discuss the readings, actively listening to your peers, asking questions, and responding to others' comments and questions. We aim to create a collaborative environment where everyone feels welcome to participate. To that end, please avoid assumptions or generalizations about others in your comments, and make sure you are critiquing ideas rather than individuals. If you are concerned or nervous about participation, please do not hesitate to come to my office hours.

In addition to regular participation in class discussions, you will also give one brief presentation (about 3 minutes) of a recent news article about a current event in international affairs. You will be able to sign up for a presentation slot on the first day of section. Please select an article from a major news outlet (such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc) and post it to a discussion thread in the course website by 8pm the day before class. At the beginning of section, you will briefly summarize the article, describe how it relates to something we've discussed in the course, and a question to spark class discussion. If you have questions about news outlets or finding articles, please reach out to me.

Midterm. (25%) Short take-home essay that will cover materials from the first part of the course, to be assigned two weeks before the due date.

Policy Issue Paper (15%) Take-home essay that will ask you to use readings and course discussions of IR theories and concepts to discuss challenges associated with a current critical issue area in international politics. The list of topics and suggested additional readings will be distributed ahead of time, but topics may include: climate agreements, nuclear nonproliferation, global trade, and UN peacekeeping operations.

Simulation reflection (15%) On [DATE TBA], you will participate in a diplomatic simulation where you will be assigned to country teams tasked with negotiating an agreement on an international issue, such as arms control (topic to be determined). NOTE that this simulation will take place over the course of the entire afternoon, not just the class period (come speak to me if you will be unable to attend). The simulation will offer you a chance to work collaboratively to practice “doing” international politics.

Following the diplomatic simulation on [DATE TBA], you will write a reflection on the negotiations from your country's perspective and provide a post-mortem on the reasons for the negotiation outcomes.

Final Exam. (30%) Two essays that will ask you to draw on materials from the entire course to answer questions, with emphasis on topics covered after the midterm.

Course Readings

I expect students to come to class having done the readings listed on the syllabus for that day. I encourage you to spend time with the readings to develop a deeper understanding, as you will be expected to analyze and evaluate the readings in class discussions and written assignments, not just summarize them.

There is one required textbook for this course: *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions (Third Edition)* - Jeffry A. Frieden, David A. Lake, Kenneth A. Schultz (abbreviated FLS). Note that this is an older edition, which should be readily accessible. All other readings for each class will be available through the course website.

Course Policies

- **Course Website.** Available at ([link](#)). This includes an electronic form of this syllabus, links to all readings, and discussion forums for posting current events articles.
- **Email.** I can be reached at [email]. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week, but may be slower responding to emails sent late at night or on weekends.
- **Technology.** Please keep laptop and tablet use to a minimum. They should only be used to take notes or reference readings online. I expect everyone to stay engaged in the class discussion. Please silence your cell phone and do not take it out during class.
- **Late Assignments.** A half letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. I will not grant extensions except in case of emergencies.
- **Accommodations.** Any student with a disability that may affect their academic or personal well-being should reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. You should also reach out to the Office of Disability Services ([link](#))
- **Honor Code.** Please do not plagiarize, and please abide by the university's honor code ([link](#)). When in doubt, cite your sources!

SCHEDULE

I. Theories of International Politics

What is International Politics?

- FLS Ch 1

Toolkits: Basics of Theory

- FLS Ch 2

Realism I - Anarchy and Morality

- Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue”
- Hans Morgenthau “Six Principles of Political Realism” in *Politics Among Nations* (1948), 4-15.
- Anjali Dayal, “We Must Reckon with the Terrible Realities Hidden in Plain Sight.” *On Being*, 2018,
<https://onbeing.org/blog/anjali-dayal-we-must-reckon-with-the-terrible-realities-hidden-in-plain-sight/>

Realism II - Power

- Steven E. Lobell, “Structural Realism/Offensive and Defensive Realism,” in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, Mar. 2010,
<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/abstract/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-304>
- Oriana Mastro “The Stealth Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2019)
- Dan Drezner, “Can Realism Explain the War in Ukraine?” *Washington Post* (3 March 2022),
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/03/can-realism-explain-war-ukraine/>

Liberalism and International Order

- Michael W. Doyle, “Liberal Internationalism: Peace, War and Democracy,” available at
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/themes/peace/doyle/
- G. John Ikenberry, “The End of Liberal International Order?” *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (January 2018): 7-23.
- Woodrow Wilson, 14 Points Speech (1918),
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/wilsons-fourteen-points-speech>

Constructivism - Norms and Ideas

- Theory in Action: Constructivism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYU9UfkV_XI
- Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” *International Social Science Journal* 51, no. 159 (Mar. 1999): 89-101.

Race and International Politics

- W.E.B. Du Bois “The African Roots of War,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 707-714.

- Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken, “Why race matters in international relations,” *Foreign Affairs* (2020).
- Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), Ch. 1.

Gender and International Politics

- Charli Carpenter “Gender Theory in World Politics,” *International Studies Review* (Autumn 2002), 153-165.
- Laura J. Shepherd, “Sex or Gender? Bodies in World Politics and Why Gender Matters” in *Gender Matters in Global Politics* (Routledge, 2020), 1-14.

II. War and International Security

Bargaining and War

- FLS Ch 3
- James Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization* (1995): 379-408.
- Stephen Walt, “Does Anyone Still Understand the ‘Security Dilemma?’” *Foreign Affairs* (2022)

Domestic Politics and War

- FLS Ch 4
- Kenneth Schultz “Perils of Polarization for U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2018), 7-24.

International Institutions and War

- FLS Ch 5
- Stacie Goddard, “The Outsiders: How the International System Can Still Check China and Russia,” *Foreign Affairs* (2022): 28-39.

Individuals and world politics

- Elizabeth Saunders, “Is Trump a Normal Foreign-Policy President?” *Foreign Affairs* (January 2018)
- Aubrey Immelman, “The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump,” Working Paper (Release 1.2), Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, Jan. 20, 2017,
- Daniel Treisman, “Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin,” *Foreign Affairs* 95 no. 3 (May/June 2016): 47-54

Historical Application: Causes of WWI

- Jack Snyder, “Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive,” *International Security* (Summer 1984), 108-129.
- Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, 17-27; 33-44.

Historical Application: Causes of WWII

- Woodrow Wilson, 14 Points Speech
- Erez Manela, “Woodrow Wilson and ‘the Ugliest of Treacheries,’” *New York Times*, March 9, 2019.
- Norrin M. Ripsman and Jack S. Levy, “Wishful Thinking or Buying Time? The Logic of British Appeasement in the 1930s,” *International Security* (Fall 2008), 148-181.

III. International Political Economy

International Trade

- FLS Ch 7
- Alan Blinder, “The Free-Trade Paradox,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2019).

International Finance and Globalization

- FLS Ch 8
- Dani Rodrik, “Globalization’s Wrong Turn,” *Foreign Affairs* (2019).

Migration

- Margaret Peters, “Immigration in an Increasingly Globalized World,” in *Trading Barriers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 222-241.
- Fiona Adamson and Kelly Greenhill, “Deal-making, diplomacy, and transactional forced migration,” *International Affairs* 99 no. 2 (2023): 707-725.

IV. Contemporary Issues in International Politics

Nuclear Weapons and Proliferation

- Kenneth Waltz and Scott Sagan, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: Norton, 2002), 3-17, 29-41, 46-69, 83-88.

- Micah Zenko (with Kyle Beardsley, Sarah Kreps, Matthew Kroenig, Annie Tracy Samuel, and Todd S. Sechser), “Ask the Experts: What Would Iran Do With a Bomb?” Council on *Foreign Relations Blog*, Feb. 21, 2012,
<https://www.cfr.org/blog/ask-experts-what-would-iran-do-bomb>
- Susan Wareham, “It’s Time to Abolish Nuclear Weapons,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (2005), 439-445.

Civil Wars and Humanitarian Intervention

- FLS Ch 6
- Severine Autesserre, “The Crisis of Peacekeeping,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2019)

Terrorism and Violent Non-State Actors

- Martha Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (2019), 54-64.
- “The Middle East’s Dangerous Escalation: A Conversation with Audrey Kurth Cronin, Marc Lynch, and Dana Stroul,” Podcast, *Foreign Affairs* (2024),
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/podcasts/middle-east-s-dangerous-escalation>
- Robert Malley and Jon Finer, “The Long Shadow of 9/11,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2018)

Human Rights

- FLS Ch 12
- United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”,
<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>
- Keisha Blain, “Civil Rights International.” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2020).

Great Power Competition: China and Russia

- Avery Goldstein, “China’s Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping: Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance,” *International Security* 45, no. 1 (Summer 2020): 164-201.
- Jessica Chen Weiss, “The China Trap” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2022)
- Tatyana Stanovaya, “Putin’s Age of Chaos” *Foreign Affairs* (August 2023)

Diplomatic Simulation

- Materials TBD

Simulation Reflection

Climate Change

- Joshua Busby, “The Warming World,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2018).
- William Nordhaus, “Climate Club: How to Fix a Failing Global Effort,” *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 3 (May/June 2020): 10-17.
- Anja Kanngieser, “Weaponizing Ecocide: Nauru, Offshore Incarceration, and Environmental Crisis,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 32(2): 2020.

Pandemics and Global Public Health

- Michael T. Osterholm and Mark Olshaker, “Chronicle of a Pandemic Foretold: Learning from the COVID-19 Failure, Before the Next Outbreak Arrives,” *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2020): 10-24.
- Lisa Monaco and Vin Gupta “The Next Pandemic Will Be Arriving Shortly,” *Foreign Policy* (28 September 2018).
- Dan Drezner, “Why COVID-19 Didn’t Change World Politics” *Foreign Affairs* (2022).