

Introduction to International Relations

Instructor: Luwei Ying

Fall, 2022

Office Hours: TBD

Room: TBD

Email: TBD

Class Hours: TBD

Office Hours Sign Up: TBD

Overview

This course provides a broad exploration of the field of international relations (IR). We cover key theoretical concepts in IR and discuss how empirical evidence and key historical events relate to and inform theory. The course is organized around specific substantive questions such as: why do states choose more costly armed conflict to settle disputes rather than negotiations?; why are levels of economic development among states so unequal?; how do international institutions affect conflict and cooperation?; what logic is behind the use of terrorism by political actors?; and, why do states experience civil war? Most weeks in the course, we will explore one big topic. Each week, we will generally first read the textbook chapter, which provides a nice overview and references to key pieces of literature. For the second lecture, we will read some news items or other supplementary pieces to complement the textbook.

Grading

Final grades for this course are determined as follows:

- Inquisitive Participation (10%): Each chapter of the textbook has an accompanying interactive online quiz associated with it that consists of approximately 20 questions. The questions directly test your understanding of the material we are covering in the text, and allow both you and the instructor to identify areas or topics that you need to revisit. I will keep track of your participation in taking the quiz, and you will obtain the full 10% of your final grade by taking all of them online. You should take the quiz after you have read the material but before class. This way I can see the results prior to finalizing my lecture material. My intention is to emphasize parts of the material where the class struggled more.
- Six Quizzes (30%): Six in-class quizzes (six to eight questions each) will be given during the course. The quizzes are timed to be approximately every two to three weeks, and will cover the course material that has not been covered by a quiz yet. I will allow you to use your highest quiz grade for two of your quizzes at the end of the semester. Thus, your highest scoring quiz will automatically be worth 10% of your grade, while your lowest quiz grade will not influence your final grade. Keeping up with the Inquisitive online quizzes will definitely help you to do well on these in class quizzes.

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- Four Two-Page Memos (40%): Four short memos (no more than two pages each) will be due during the semester. There are two kinds of short papers and you will write two of each (for a total of four during the semester). The first kind of memo will be a summary and critique of the main argument or idea behind an article that is not on the syllabus, but could have been in the sense that it fits in with the material we cover. Your task in this type of memo is to: first, summarize and explain the main argument or finding in the article, and second, provide a brief critique of this point using material from the textbook or from my lectures.

The second kind of memo is to be written as a short policy brief, where you provide a brief summary of how the material we learned about a specific scenario in international relations facing a policy-maker (e.g., whether economic concessions convince the North Korean government to give up their nuclear weapons program) should inform two possible policy responses. I will provide a prompt for each of these that will outline the policy problem and two proposed approaches to it. Your task is to think through how well (or poorly) these two options will work using the concepts, theory and empirical data that we have covered in the course. Given how short these papers are, a premium is put upon being concise and hitting the most important points. There are two objectives here. First, writing concisely in a way that is coherent and convincing requires a very good understanding of the key components of an idea or theory. Thus, I view the shortness of these papers as facilitating really learning and conveying accurately the main ideas central to the problem at hand. Second, our intended audience is a policy-maker who has significant time constraints. Accordingly, she/he needs this brief to get "right to the point" without unnecessary verbiage and detail.

- Final Exam (20%): The final exam will consist of two sections: identification of key concepts in short written answers and short essay. The identification section will list key concepts or ideas from the course readings and lectures of which students will need to choose a subset to explain. The concept should be correctly explained in the context that we discussed it in the course. The essay portion of the exams will consist of questions, again from which students will be able to answer a subset. All identification concepts and essay questions will come directly from the readings and lectures, so exams will reward all who have kept up with the work.

Readings

The course has one main textbook. I will supplement the textbook with some additional readings that will all be made available online well in advance to the time they are assigned.

Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, & Kenneth A. Schultz. 2018. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions, 4th Edition* New York: W.W. Norton. (FLS)

Course Schedule

Below is a schedule for the course. Each class has a topic for lecture and discussion, with the reading assignment associated with it also listed. Please read the assigned reading *prior* to the day of class it is listed under.

Week 1: Introduction to the Study of International Relations.

Lecture 1 - Overview

- FLS: Introduction

Lecture 2 - History and the International System.

- FLS: Chapter 1, "What Shaped Our World? A Historical Introduction"

Week 2: The Study of International Relations.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 2, "Understanding Interests, Interactions, and Institutions"

Lecture 2

- David C. Kang. 2020. "International Order in Historical East Asia: Tribute and Hierarchy Beyond Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism." *International Organization* 74(1): 65–93.
- Take Quiz #1

Week 3: War and Peace.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 3, "Why Are There Wars?"

Lecture 2

- Stephen Van Evera. 1984. "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War." *International Security* 9(1): 58–107.
(Note: As you read Van Evera's account of the causes of World War I, take notes over whether and how his view corresponds to any of the three rationalist explanations for war discussed in Chapter 3 of FLS.)

Week 4: War and Peace: Domestic Politics.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 4, "Domestic Politics and War"
- Two-Page Memo #1 Due

Lecture 2

- Christopher Gelpi and Peter D. Feaver. 2002. "Speak softly and carry a big stick? Veterans in the political elite and the American use of force." *American Political Science Review* 96(4); 779–793.
- Take Quiz #2

Week 5: War and Peace: International Institutions.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 5, "International Institutions and War"

Lecture 2

- Havard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, and Havard Mogleiv Nygard. June 28, 2018. "U.N. peace-keeping really can be effective. Here's how we tabulated this." *Washington Post* Monkey Cage: available online

Week 6: War and Peace: Non-State Actors and War.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 6, "Violence by Non-state Actors: Civil War and Terrorism"

Lecture 2

- How do citizens become more "radical" or anti-government? An interesting case, read: Dorian Lynskey. 2011. "Fela Kuti and Afrika 70." Chapter 14 in *33 Revolutions Per Minute*. (Note: As you read this short case, try to relate what happened to some of the ideas about how state and non-state group interactions can lead to more unrest and violence. Pay particular attention to the discussion on pages 279-289 in FLS.)
- Take Quiz #3

Week 7: International Political Economy: International Trade.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 7, "International Trade"

Lecture 2

- Joanne Gowa and Raymond Hicks. 2017. "Commerce and Conflict: New Data about the Great War." *British Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 653–674.
- Two-Page Memo #2 Due

Week 8: International Political Economy: Institutions.

Lecture 1 - International Financial Relations

- FLS: Chapter 8, "International Financial Relations"

Lecture 2 - International Monetary Relations

- FLS: Chapter 9, "International Monetary Relations"

Week 9: International Political Economy: Development.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 10, "Development: Causes of Wealth and Poverty of Nations"

Lecture 2

- Angus Deaton. 2008. "Income, Health, and Well-Being around the World: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22(2): 53–72.
- Take Quiz #4

Week 10: Transnational Politics: International Law.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 11, "International Law and Norms"

Lecture 2

- Paul K. Huth, Sarah E. Croco and Benjamin J. Appel. 2011. "Does international law promote the peaceful settlement of international disputes? Evidence from the study of territorial conflicts since 1945." *American Political Science Review* 105(2): 415–436.
- China, the Philippines and International Law: available online
- Two-Page Memo #3 Due

Week 11: Transnational Politics: Human Rights.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 12, "Human Rights"

Lecture 2

- Hunjoon Kim and Kathryn Sikkink. 2010. "Explaining the deterrence effect of human rights prosecutions for transitional countries." *International Studies Quarterly* 54(4): 939–963.
- Take Quiz #5

Week 12: Transnational Politics: The Environment.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 13, "The Global Environment"

Lecture 2

- Katharine J. Mach, Caroline M. Kraan, W. Neil Adger, Halvard Buhaug, Marshall Burke, James D. Fearon, Christopher B. Field et al. 2019 "Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict." *Nature* 571(7764): 193–197.

Week 13: Emerging Issues in IR.

Lecture 1

- FLS: Chapter 14, "Challenges to the Global Order"

Lecture 2

- Systemic Instability and Conflict in International Politics
- Take Quiz #6

Week 14: Today's International Politics

Lecture 1

- Emerging challenges in IR and the Biden administration

Lecture 2

- Review for Final Exam
- Two-Page Memo #4 Due

Final Exam

Time and Location: TBD

Course Policies

During Class

You are welcome to take notes electronically. However, refrain from using computers for anything but course-related activities. The use of cell phones is prohibited, as they are of no use in this course. You're welcome to eat and drink, but be respectful of your classmates and avoid disruptions.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Student with disabilities are encouraged to make a private appointment with me during the first two weeks of the course so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Preferred Name and Gender Inclusive Pronouns

In order to affirm each person's gender identity and lived experiences, it is important that we ask and check in with others about pronouns. This simple effort can make a profound difference in a person's experience of safety, respect, and support.