

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Political Science 205, Spring 2024
Portland State University

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 3:30-4:30, in person or via [Zoom](#),
and by appointment

Description

This course is an introductory survey of the political science subfield of international relations, with special emphasis on such topics as war and peace, foreign policy, international law and organization, human rights, global trade and finance, and economic development. We begin by discussing the origins of the modern state system, its key actors, and the most influential theories for understanding how international politics works. We then turn to events and issues drawn from the variety of topics that international politics encompasses – for example: Did nuclear weapons keep the Cold War cold? Do we need a world government? When is war illegal? Does prosperity in the most advanced countries require poverty in others? Is foreign aid an obligation or just charity?

The aim of the course is to familiarize students with contemporary issues in international relations and to provide an analytic foundation for more advanced coursework in the field. The course may count as one of the three lower-division courses required for a major in [political science](#), and one of two for the minor. There are no prerequisites for this course and it may also be taken by students majoring in other disciplines.

Learning Objectives

- *Show a familiarity with a wide range of substantive issues in international politics and foreign policy:* Students will explore and gain insight into a broad spectrum of critical topics in international relations, including geopolitical conflict, diplomacy, international law, human rights, global trade, and economic development.
- *Demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of international relations:* Students will be equipped with an understanding of the foundational theories and methodologies used in international relations, such as realism and liberalism, and will learn how these theories can frame the analysis of international events and policies.
- *Articulate normative positions on key ethical dilemmas arising from interactions among states and nonstate actors in global society:* Students will be able to engage with complex ethical questions that surface in international politics, such as sovereignty versus intervention, the ethics of warfare, and the distribution of global resources.

Requirements and Evaluation

Course grades are based in part on [midterm](#) (35%) and [final](#) (50%) examinations. These exams consist of both multiple-choice questions and longer essays. Students are also required to write a 3-4 page [briefing paper](#) on a current event, and make a short [presentation](#) (less than 5 minutes) on that event (15%). Attendance is expected; course grades will be adversely affected by excessive absence from class.

I hold on to students' written work for one academic term after the end of the course, so if you want to keep your final exam or paper, please retrieve it from me no later than the end of fall term 2024.

Readings and Other Course Materials

The reading list for this course includes both older and newer writings. Some are "academic" in the sense of being abstract and analytical; others are pitched to more general audiences. The mix is intentional for an introductory course like this, which introduces students both to what goes on in international politics and how we might analyze what goes on. However, you are also invited to bring to my attention other readings on the topics covered in this course, items you have found compelling or useful, and we can share these with the entire class as a recommended reading list.

All assigned readings are available online; there are no books to purchase for the course. Unless the reading assignment includes a web link, it is available online from the PSU library. You must retrieve these readings (all journal articles) by logging into the [PSU library website](#) and locating and downloading the article from one of the library's full-content subscription services. Access to other readings requires logging into the Canvas course site.

In addition to the assigned readings, you should be reading, on a regular basis, the [New York Times](#), the [Washington Post](#), or some other reliable news source with thorough international coverage. Your performance in the course will reflect your familiarity with current issues in international relations, and not just an understanding of lecture material and course readings.

All slides used during lectures are available online via a link to the list of weekly reading assignments. If I revise those slides prior to the time of the lecture, an updated version will be posted shortly thereafter.

Courtesy, Conduct, and Resources

Academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for being familiar with the PSU [Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility](#), especially the section concerning academic misconduct -- that is, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of the definition or consequences of academic misconduct, please consult with me.

Use of Generative AI tools. Using tools to check and correct your own writing (built-in spelling and grammar checkers or third-party tools like Grammarly) is different from using generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to create content or structure in response to your prompts (like ChatGPT). In your work for this course, use of the first sort of tool is encouraged, while use of the second sort of tool is subject to the following limitations. Using generative AI to complete written assignments, including examinations, is not permitted. However, you may use these tools to study, help conduct research, or

brainstorm ideas and argument. The use generative AI tools outside these parameters qualifies as [academic misconduct](#). If you are uncertain about the allowable use of generative AI in the course, please consult with me in advance.

Discrimination. PSU's policies require faculty members to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact a confidential advocate (503.725.5672 or [online](#)) or another confidential employee listed on the sexual misconduct resource [webpage](#).

Disabilities. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The [PSU CARES](#) Team, hosted by the Dean of Student Life, is available to consult with you regarding any issues of students in distress, including sexual misconduct.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

1-5 Apr **Global Society**

Readings

- David Kinsella, Bruce Russett, and Harvey Starr, *World Politics: The Menu for Choice* (Cengage, 2013), chap. 3. ([Canvas](#))
- Michael Axworthy and Patrick Milton, "A Westphalian Peace for the Middle East: Why an Old Framework Could Work." *Foreign Affairs* (Snapshot: 10 October 2016). ([Canvas](#))
- [slides](#)

8-12 Apr **Worldviews**

Readings

- Randall L. Schweller, "The Balance of Power in World Politics." Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Politics (Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Summer 1983): 205-232.
- [slides](#)

15-26 Apr **War: Hot, Cold, and Hybrid** (2 weeks)

Readings

- Kori Schake, "What Causes War?" *Orbis* 61 (2017): 449-462.
- John Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System." *International Security* 10 (Spring 1986): 99-142.
- Barry Buzan, "Will the 'Global War on Terrorism' be the New Cold War?" *International Affairs* 82 (November 2006): 1101-1118.
- Josef Schroefl and Stuart J. Kaufman, "Hybrid Actors, Tactical Variety: Rethinking Asymmetric and Hybrid War." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37 (2014): 862-880.
- [slides](#)

29 Apr - 1 May **U.S. Foreign Policy**

Readings

- Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review* 63 (September 1969): 689-718.
- Stephen Chaudoin, Helen V. Milner, and Dustin Tingley, "'America First' Meets Liberal Internationalism." In *Chaos Reconsidered: The Liberal Order and the Future of International Politics*, edited by Robert Jervis, et al. (Columbia University Press, 2023). ([Canvas](#))
- [slides](#)

3 May **Midterm Exam**

6-10 May **Global Political Economy**

Readings

- Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)" *Foreign Policy* 118 (Spring 2000): 104-119.
- Maria Gavris, "Revisiting the Fallacies of Hegemonic Stability Theory in Light of the 2007-2008 Crisis: The Theory's Hollow Conception of Hegemony." *Review of International Political Economy* 28 (2021): 739-760.
- [slides](#)

13-17 May **International Organization**

Readings

- Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (Vintage, 2007), chap. 1. ([Canvas](#))
- Campbell Craig, "The Resurgent Idea of World Government." *Ethics and International Affairs* 22 (Summer 2008): 133-142.
- [slides](#)

20-24 May **International Law**

Readings

- Anthony Clark Arend, "International Law and Rogue States: The Failure of the Charter Framework." *New England Law Review* 36 (2002): 735-753. ([Canvas](#))
- International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures. [Order of 26 January 2024](#) and [Order of 28 March 2024](#).
- [slides](#)

29-31 May **International Ethics**

Readings

- Amartya Sen, "Elements of a Theory of Human Rights." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 32 (2004): 315-356.

- Jonathan Gilmore, "Protecting the Other: Considering the *Process and Practice* of Cosmopolitanism." *European Journal of International Relations* 20 (2014): 694-719.
- [slides](#)

3-7 Jun **Global Environmental Politics and Law**

Readings

- Robert Falkner, "The Paris Agreement and the New Logic of International Climate Politics." *International Affairs* 92 (2016): 1107-1125.
- Joshua W. Busby, "Who Cares about the Weather? Climate Change and U.S. National Security." *Security Studies* 17 (2008): 468-504.
- [slides](#)

12 Jun (Wed) **Final Exam, 12:30-2:20**

This syllabus is available online at web.pdx.edu/~kinsella/ps205s24.pdf and all course materials can be linked from this address. *Last updated on 31 Mar 2024.*