
POLS 3302-001:

Introduction to International Relations

Course Logistics

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Class location:
Life Sciences 424

Class time:
MWF 10:00-10:50am

Office hours:
Wednesdays, 8:30-9:50am or
by appointment

Readings

Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*

Articles from library catalog

Items on Blackboard



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Course Description

International relations (IR) is about the interplay between various actors (states, international organizations, multinational corporations, social groups, militant movements, and more) in the international system and their continual search for wealth, power, influence, security, and authority. Given Albert Einstein's argument that the purpose of a university education is not to teach students just facts, but to teach them to think, the course will not necessarily provide definitive answers to relevant questions. Rather, it will provide the skills and knowledge necessary for students to understand and analyze actors, events, and processes in world politics. It is divided into four sections: Section A discusses the main conceptual and theoretical tools used to study international relations. Section B explores cooperation and conflict in the international system. Section C introduces key concepts in international political economy. Section D examines select issues of contemporary importance in world affairs.

It is advisable that students keep up with contemporary international political, security, economic, social, and cultural developments through various media outlets. Students can follow developments in all major media outlets—such as CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC, and so on.

Course Format

The course is conducted within a lecture framework. But class time will be used for general discussions, in order to give students more time to discuss their own ideas and to understand the material through dialogue. Because this is a university course, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, and are encouraged to question and debate with the instructor and each other on the various issues. This must be done in a productive and civil manner. Personal attacks and polemics will not be tolerated. The purpose of a freer flow of dialogue is to better understand and absorb the materials covered in class, and offensive actions and ideological or political agendas impede this process. Students who engage in such activities will have to leave the class.

PowerPoint will be used, but only to provide a skeletal outline of the lectures; students must pay attention to and take notes on what is discussed in class. Otherwise, they will not learn what is necessary for the course and the assignments.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Describe the key features of the contemporary international system
- Identify and compare different theoretical approaches in IR
- Think critically about world politics in order to identify, analyze, and work to resolve humanity's dilemmas

Assignments

Test #1:	15%
Test #2:	15%
Learning journal:	50%
Final exam:	20%

Grading Scale

- A: 80-100%
- B: 70-79%
- C: 60-69%
- D: 50-59%
- F: 0-49%

See the course Blackboard for the grading rubric

Responsibilities & Obligations

My responsibilities include making clear the objectives and material of the course; training students to think critically; returning assignments within a reasonable period of time with adequate comments and suggestions for improvement; treating students with respect and a willingness to hear their opinions and ideas; and keeping my own personal politics out of the classroom.

Students' responsibilities include taking seriously the purposes and assignments of the course; preparing themselves adequately for the lectures; handing their assignments in on time; treating each other and the professor with respect and a willingness to hear other opinions and ideas; and a readiness to think about the material with an open mind.

Please see the course Blackboard for more on the DOs and DON'Ts of student interactions with the professor.

Caveat

Please note that the syllabus and course content may change, depending on unforeseen circumstances. Any such changes are at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced at the beginning of class; students are then responsible for being aware of them.

FAQs

I know I am pledged to UTA's Honor Code. Can you remind me of it?

You bet: I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

What do you think of students using laptops or other devices for taking notes?

Great question. I have mixed feelings. Studies show that students learn more effectively when they use paper and pen, and of course electronic devices can be distracting for a variety of reasons (can you list all such reasons?). But such devices are not banned in my classroom. However, students who use these or other devices for listening to music, playing games, or contacting other people, etc. will have to leave the class.

How often do I have to attend class? If I'm absent will I miss anything important?

Instead of giving you a specific answer, I'll say this: I don't call the roll, but poor attendance and poor participation will be reflected in your grade. I do not provide notes or PowerPoint slides. Students who miss class must obtain the notes from a colleague, but I'm happy to talk about these materials once you've gone through them.

Will you write reference letters for students?

Very happy to do so! But certain criteria must first be met. Please see the course Blackboard for specific information on what students must do in order to be eligible for a reference letter.

What e-mail address should I use to contact you?

Only your UTA MavMail account; I will not respond to any correspondence sent by a non-UTA e-mail account. Students are responsible for regularly checking their UTA accounts, for information and correspondence both from the university and from me regarding course matters.

How formal should my e-mail communication with you be?

I have strong feelings about this (hint: very formal), so I'll spare you a long lecture and let you watch a short video and then read a handy list.

Video: <http://digg.com/video/how-not-to-email-your-professor-you-dingus>

List: <http://blog.cengagebrain.com/blog/2016/03/dos-and-donts-on-how-to-email-yourprofessor/>

Are you on social media?

I am indeed active on Twitter and other social media as well as in publishing my research online. I use these primarily for analytical commentary. My online activities represent only my own views, not those of the Department or the University. Students are welcome to respectfully respond to any tweets or posts. Students' grades are not in any way connected to this.

What is the university's policy on withdrawal from courses?

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Important:** Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. The last day to drop the class is March 30. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

Can I hand an assignment in late?

It's better if you don't, because the penalties are quite severe. First, all assignments are due by the beginning of class (**10:00am, per the time stamp in my inbox**). Any assignment e-mailed in after class begins will be considered late. Tests and final exams will not be accepted after the due date and time per the time stamp in my inbox unless an extension or make-up has been granted (see below); students will then receive a zero on the assignment. Entries in learning journals will not be accepted without penalty after the due date and time per the time stamp in my inbox unless an extension has been granted (see below). Entries e-mailed in after 10:00am, but on the same day the assignment is due, will be penalized one percentage point per day off the mark received out of the total worth of the assignment (i.e., 1% per day off whatever grade is given out of 10%), with an additional percentage point taken off for each additional day the paper is late. Entries will not be accepted after three calendar days after the due date; students will then receive a zero on the assignment.

Okay, but what if there's a genuine emergency? What then?

Life happens, so there are conditions under which late assignments will be accepted. However, extensions and make-up work are allowed only under rare circumstances, such as a very serious development or illness. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; visiting friends or relatives; being sick the day the assignment is due; having other work. Any request must be before the assignment due date and time. Any such allowance is at my discretion. Documentation is always required and subject to verification, and must be provided within three calendar days after the assignment is due, regardless of the reason. Assignments must be handed in within three calendar days after the original due date. But again, these must be genuine emergencies.

Do you provide extra credit work?

No.

*** Please see the course Blackboard for more important information on university policies.**

Course Assignments

Key Points

All assignments must be emailed in; no hard copies will be accepted.

Assignments will be returned to students by e-mail, with an attached rubric and comments at the end of the paper.

Students are expected to use proper format, structure, grammar, and citations in all of their assignments; how students make their arguments is as important as what they argue.

For technical material, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), sixth edition or later. Students may also consult the professor for further help.

Standards

- Not handwritten
- Times New Roman font
- 12-inch font
- Double spaced
- 1-inch margins all around the document
- Use of citations (including page numbers)
- Title page and bibliography
- Page length excludes title page and bibliography

Tests (2)

There are two take-home tests. The first test will be accessible on the course Blackboard at 11:00am on Monday, February 26 and is due by 10:00am on Friday, March 2. The second test will be accessible at 11:00am on Friday, April 6 and is due by 10:00am on Wednesday, April 11. The format of each test is a single essay section; students will answer one question. Students must include a minimum of three course readings in their answers. Each test is worth 15% of the final grade.

Learning journal (5 entries)

Students will keep a learning journal of the class, composed of five separate entries. Entries are due by 10:00am on: Wednesday, February 7; Monday, February 26; Friday, March 23; Wednesday, April 18; and Friday, May 4. Each entry should include the following: 1) A short summary of one news story on international relations that you think is important; 2) A short explanation of why you think it is important; 3) A short comment on how course materials help us understand the news story; 4) Two to three discussion questions about the story that readers might think about. Each entry is worth 10% of the final grade.

Final exam

There is one cumulative final exam. The exam will be accessible on the course Blackboard at 11:00am on Friday, May 4 and is due by 10:00am on Friday, May 11. The exam will consist of two essay sections. Students must answer one question from each section. Students must include a minimum of three course readings in each answer. The final exam is worth 20% of the final grade.

Lecture Topics, Readings, and Notes

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
W 1/17	Introduction to course	<i>No readings</i>	
F 1/19	The discipline /ing of IR	Vitalis, Introduction, 25-27, 55-58, 85-92, 121-128	
M 1/22 - No class			
W 1/24	The modern states system	Stephen Krasner, "Westphalia and All That"	Blackboard
F 1/26	The modern states system	Vitalis, Chapters 1 & 2	
M 1/29	The Cold War	President Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida"	Blackboard
W 1/31	The post-Cold War era	Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 72, no.3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.	Catalog
F 2/2	Power in world politics	Vitalis, Chapter 3	
M 2/5	Power in world politics	Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, "Power in International Politics." <i>International Organization</i> 59, no.1 (January 2005): 39-75.	Catalog
W 2/7	Levels of analysis	Owen Temby, "What Are Levels of Analysis and What Do They Contribute to International Relations Theory?" <i>Cambridge Review of International Affairs</i> 28, no.4 (2015): 721-742.	Catalog 1st journal entry due
F 2/9	IR theory: Realism	Vitalis, Chapter 4 Thucydides, <i>The History of the Peloponnesian War</i> (The Melian Dialogue)	Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
M 2/12	IR theory: Liberalism	Vitalis, Chapter 6 Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." <i>International Organization</i> 51, no.4 (Autumn 1997): 513-553.	Catalog
W 2/14	IR theory: Institutionalism	Toni Erskine, "Coalitions of the Willing and Responsibilities to Protect: Informal Associations, Enhanced Capacities, and Shared Moral Burdens." <i>Ethics & International Affairs</i> 28, no.1 (Spring 2014): 115-145.	Catalog
F 2/16	IR theory: Marxism	Vitalis, Chapters 5 & 7 World Bank, World Development Indicators maps	Blackboard
M 2/19	IR theory: Constructivism	Vitalis, Chapter 8 Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." <i>International Organization</i> 46, no.2 (Spring 1992): 391-425.	Catalog
W 2/21	IR theory: Gender	Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." <i>Signs</i> 12, no.4 (Summer 1987): 687-718.	Blackboard
F 2/23	IR theory: Post-positivism	Vitalis, Chapter 9 Arlene Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World." <i>Millennium</i> 32, no.2 (2003): 295-324.	Catalog
M 2/26	Comparing IR theories	Vitalis, Conclusion	2nd journal entry due

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
W 2/28	Cooperation and conflict in the international system	President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya"	Blackboard
F 3/2	International regimes and hegemony	John Ikenberry, "A World of Our Making"	Blackboard Test # 1 due
M 3/5 - No class			
W 3/7 - No class			
F 3/9	Hegemony and international law	Geir Ulfstein and Hege Fosund Christiansen, "The Legality of the NATO Bombing in Libya." <i>International and Comparative Law Quarterly</i> 62, no.1 (January 2013): 159-171.	Catalog
M 3/12 - No class (spring break)			
W 3/14 - No class (spring break)			
F 3/16 - No class (spring break)			
M 3/19	Conflict and war in the international system	Project Ploughshares, <i>Armed Conflicts Report 2017</i>	Blackboard
W 3/21	Conflict and war in the international system	Kalevi J. Holsti, <i>The State, War, and the State of War</i> , Chapter 6	Blackboard
F 3/23	The international political economy	This American Life, "Continental Breakup" (podcast)	Blackboard
M 3/26	IPE: Trade and US leadership	The BBC, "TPP: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?"	Blackboard 3rd journal entry due

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
W 3/28	IPE: North-South relations	Christina R. Sevilla, "The WTO's North-South Conflict: A Dangerous New (Old) International Economic Order?" <i>The National Interest</i> 74 (January 2003): 121-125. James Traub, "The African Century"	Catalog Blackboard
F 3/30 - No class			
M 4/2	IPE: Debt	Enda Curran and Chris Anstey, "China's Debt Battle Has Global Growth at Stake"	Blackboard
W 4/4 - No class			
F 4/6 - No class			
M 4/9	IPE: Globalization	Joshua E. Keating, "Fast Food Nations" <i>Foreign Policy</i> , "The Most Dynamic Cities of 2025"	Blackboard Blackboard
W 4/11	IPE: Globalization	Daniel Prince, "The Dark Web: What It Is and How It Works"	Blackboard Test # 2 due
F 4/13	IPE: Financial crises	Dan Mitchell, "These Were the 6 Major American Economic Crises of the Last Century"	Blackboard
M 4/16	IPE: Financial crises	Frontline, "Money, Power, and Wall Street: Part One" (video)	Blackboard
W 4/18	Non-state actors and transnational networks	Sonja K. Pieck, "Transnational Activist Networks: Mobilization between Emotion and Bureaucracy"	Blackboard 4th journal entry due
F 4/20	Non-state actors and transnational networks	Zeynep Tufekci, "Twitter and Tear Gas: How Social Media Changed Protest"	Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
M 4/23	Transnational indigenous activism	Nigel Crawhall, "Africa and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"	Blackboard
W 4/25	Transnational indigenous activism	Pamela Martin and Franke Wilmer, "Transnational Normative Struggles and Globalization: The Case of Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia and Ecuador." <i>Globalization</i> 5, no.4 (2008): 583-598.	Catalog
F 4/27	Global ecopolitics	Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"	Blackboard
M 4/30	Global ecopolitics	Jonathan Ellis, "The Paris Climate Deal: What You Need to Know"	Blackboard
		Jennifer Hansler, "As Syria joins Paris Climate Agreement, US Stands Alone"	Blackboard
W 5/2	Thinking about the future	Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds A New Agenda for International Studies." <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> 58, no.4 (December 2014): 647-659.	Catalog
		Eliot A. Cohen, "How Trump Is Ending the American Era"	Blackboard
		Deborah Avant, "Gap Half Full?"	Blackboard
F 5/4	Review for final exam	<i>No reading</i>	5th journal entry due
F 5/11 Final exam due by 10:00am			