Introduction: This course will provide students with a first look at international politics. It will introduce students to a vocabulary that they can use to explain interstate behavior. International Relations is an academic discipline which has historically siloed itself into different camps. One of the goals of this course is to provide students with a sampling of the benefits of viewing international dynamics from the perspectives of each of these camps.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes: The first section of the class will introduce students to basic concepts and theories which will be used as the basis of discussion for the rest of the semester. Students will be introduced to the benefits and drawbacks of differing perspectives of the causes of various features of the international system as well as a common vocabulary with which to discuss those features.

The second section of the class will introduce students to International Security. Students will be introduced to basic concepts that define conflict and cooperation between states.

The third section of the class will introduce students to International Political Economy. Students will be introduced to the origins of international economic institutions, the behavior of multi-national corporations (MNCs) and the role of foreign-direct investment, international trade, debt, and development in international politics.

The fourth section of the class will introduce students to international human rights, global norms, international law, and global environmental politics. It will provide an introduction to those topics and how they influence, and are influenced by, international politics.

The course will also provide students with an empirical grounding in current and historical international dynamics. We will discuss what the international system looks like today and how it got to be that way.

Student Expectations: Readings: The class will have one 3-hour lecture a week. Each week, there will be assigned readings. Students are expected to come to each lecture prepared to participate in a discussion about the reading assigned for that week. This is a class designed to be accessible to first year students, in any discipline, and the readings that are assigned will not exceed 100 pages a week, and for most weeks will be well below 100 pages. 100 pages is equivalent to 50 pages a lecture for a class that meets twice a week. Attempting to read all 100 pages the day of the lecture is not usually an effective strategy for most undergraduate students. Developing a time management strategy is one of the most important things you will learn at
university, and it will be necessary for you to complete the required readings in this class, and the other classes you will take as undergraduates. Picking a certain time and place where you will read each day, without distraction, can be a helpful way to improve your efficiency. For most of you, 10 hours will be more than enough time to complete 100 pages of reading. As you read more, you will find that the amount of time it takes you to complete the weekly readings will decrease. Effective reading involves learning how to scan texts to extract critical information, and effective note-taking.

Classroom Behavior: Students are expected to behave in a respectful and professional manner. Much of this class will rely on group-work with your peers and in-class discussion. You may not agree with the politics or beliefs of your peers; however, you need to be civil to one-another and create productive working relationships. You may find that working with people who have different political views sharpens your ability to think about your own beliefs and assumptions.

Technology: Technology is a great thing and makes a lot about being a student easier. However, there is a growing body of evidence that laptops and cell-phones do not help you during lectures. Technology of any kind, laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc. are not allowed during the first half of each class. They will be allowed during the second, more participatory part of class.

Honor Code: Cheating is obviously not allowed. Weekly writings will be checked for plagiarism. It can be tempting to plagiarize work if you run out of time, or feel you need to get a good grade on an assignment or test for which you are not prepared. However, the consequences of being caught cheating can be very high, from failing that assignment, to being expelled from the university. Please don’t cheat, it isn’t worth the stress that you’ll get caught, and if you get caught, it won’t be worth the consequences. Students are encouraged to read the Full Honor Code, which serves as a contract and guideline for what will occur in the case of honor code violations.

Attendance: There is not a participation grade component for this class. However, there is a weekly quiz grade and a group project grade. These grade components will rely on student attendance. You are expected to attend class. While lecture slides will be posted online, these serve as a supplement to the lecture, and are not a substitute for the lecture. You are encouraged to get notes from your group members if you miss a lecture.

Required Textbook:


There is one required textbook for the course, students are expected to purchase the textbook in time to complete the readings for the first week of class.
Assignments and Grading Rubric:

Weekly Quizzes: 15%
Group Projects: 15%
Exams: 45%
Cumulative Final: 25%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quizzes**: Weekly quizzes will be short quizzes about the week’s readings. Questions for the quizzes will be posted each class, and students will be given 24 hours to complete those quizzes. Students cannot make-up midterms.¹ Midterms will be multiple-choice tests on the lectures and readings for the previous 4 weeks. Group projects will vary, for the first 10 weeks of class they will be writing assignments, for the next 4 weeks group project grades will be based on an interactive simulation.

**Exams**: Exams (midterms and the final) are scantron based, students need to bring a scantron and a #2 pencil to each exam.

**Group Projects**: Periodically throughout the semester students will be expected to complete group projects. These will be announced as the semester progresses. Students will be assigned to groups at the beginning of the semester and are encouraged to get to know their fellow group-members. Pending unusual circumstances, all students will receive the same grade for a given project.

**Early Group Projects**: Initial group projects will be smaller activities that will occur in class and during the week for the first 6 weeks of class.

**Simulation**: The simulation is a group project that will occur in the second-half of each class during the second-half of the semester. Groups will be set in advance, and during each class, the groups, which will represent actors in a crisis, will argue for why certain actions should occur, and why the other groups’ actions should not occur. Argumentation will be evaluated based on the veracity of empirical facts used to support arguments, and the congruence of those arguments’ assumptions with the theory we will learn in class. Each group will have objectives, and their ability to accomplish those objectives will determine their grade for the simulation. More information will be provided after week 6.

**Extra Credit and Make-ups**: This course offers extra credit in a few forms. First, the final grade will replace your lowest midterm grade (when the final grade is higher than at least

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¹ See exceptions noted under: “Extra Credit and Make-up”
one midterm grade). So, for example, a student who receives a 70, 85, and 85 on midterms, who then gets a 90 on the final, would then have a 90, 85, and 85 on the midterms, in addition to having a 90 on the final. Students will also be allowed to drop their lowest weekly quiz grade, and their lowest weekly writing grade. However, students will not be allowed to make-up missing assignments. Exceptions will be made for medical emergencies or deaths in the immediate family per university policy. See footnote for sports/religious observance. Requests must be made within the first two-weeks of class.²

Disability Accommodation: If you have special needs and require an academic accommodation, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). All appropriate assistance will be provided in accordance with university policy. Please make sure documentation of a disability is on file with ODS.

Communication: I will try to respond to emails within 24 business hours of an email being sent. I seldom check my email over the weekend. If I do not respond within 24 hours, please send me a reminder email, as I may have missed the original email. If you have a question that takes longer than a paragraph to answer, please schedule a meeting or a phone call.

Schedule: Number of pages for each reading in parentheses, all readings are tentative and subject to change

Part 1: Introduction

Week 1, Jan. 22: A brief history of world politics
  • World Politics: Introduction and Chapter 1 (33)

Week 2, Jan. 29: Basic Concepts
  • World Politics: Chapter 2 (36)

Week 3, Feb. 1: Three Camps: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism
  • Keohane. 1986. “After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy” (Excerpt, tbd)
  • Wendt. 1999. “Social Theory of International Politics” (Excerpt, tbd)

Week 4, Feb. 8: Part 1 capstone, Exam 1 (first half of class)

² Mason policy for make-up exams: “It is Mason’s policy to encourage its faculty to make a reasonable effort to allow students to observe their religious holidays or to participate in university-sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate athletics, forensics team, dance company, etc.) without academic penalty. Absence from classes or exams for these reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the absence. Students who miss classes, exams, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance or for participation in a university activity will be provided a reasonable alternative opportunity, consistent with class attendance policies stated in the syllabus, to make up the missed work. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty, within the first two weeks of the semester, with the dates of major religious holidays on which they will be absent, and the dates for which they are requesting an excused absence for participation in any university-sponsored activity scheduled prior to the start of the semester, and as soon as possible otherwise. Students requesting an excused absence for participation in a university-sponsored activity must provide their instructor with a letter from a university official stating the dates and times that participation in the activity would result in the student missing class.” For more information about university policies, see: http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/.
Part 2: Conflict and Cooperation

Week 5, Feb. 15: Wars and Uncertainty

- World Politics: Chapter 3 (41)
- (me only: a brief history of warfare, how it has changed over time)

Week 6, Feb. 22: Institutions and War

- World Politics: Chapter 5 (39)

Week 7, Mar. 1: Nonstate Actors and War

- World Politics: Chapter 6 (42)

Week 8, Mar. 8: Part 2 capstone, Exam 2

Part 3: International Political Economy

Week 9, Spring Break

Week 10 has 2 chapters from the book, please begin over Spring Break if you have the time

Week 10, Mar. 22: International Trade, Investment, Debt, and MNCs

- World Politics: Chapter 7 (42)
- World Politics: Chapter 8 (35)

Week 11, Mar. 29: International Monetary Relations

- World Politics: Chapter 9 (32)

Week 12, Apr. 5: Development: Rich/Poor Divide

- World Politics: Chapter 10 (38)

Week 13, Apr 12: Part 3 Capstone, Exam 3

Part 4: Global Dynamics

Week 14, Apr 19: International Law
• World Politics: Chapter 11: (28)

Week 15, Apr 26: Human Rights and Global Environment
• World Politics Chapter 12: (37)
• World Politics Chapter 13: (34)

Week 16, May 3: Midterm 3/Capstone

Final Exam: Thursday, 5/10/2017