

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLI 2057, Section 3
Fall 2018

Course location: Allen 019
Course time: MWF, 8:30-9:20

Course instructor: Michael Toje
Contact: mtoje1@lsu.edu

Office: Howe-Russell 153B
Hours: MW, 1:30 pm – 3:20 pm
or by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Never before has the world been more interconnected than at the threshold of the 21st century: political decisions made in other countries affect us almost as much as decisions made in our own country. This class aims to draw a deeper understanding of the historical, cultural, and political contexts that shape international politics, namely to concepts, ideas, and theories in the field of IR, and their application and practice in the real world. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. The class consists of two parts: the first part explores theoretical, abstract approaches within the field, as well as the identity and nature of political actors on the world stage. The second part comprises studies of the strategies, outcomes and occurrences within international relations, with special attention to how the aforementioned political actors shape – and are shaped by – these phenomena.

Required Textbook:

Blanton, Shannon L., and Charles W. Kegley. 2017. *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 2016-17 edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

ISBN: 978-1305504875

Textbooks are available at the Bookstore, as well as through online book dealers. Try to find the most up-to-date version you can find, if you do decide to buy second-hand.

Course Requirements

The following several components make up the final grade:

- Current Events – Students will write four articles (2-3 pages each) throughout the semester that will critically analyze the events that transpire around us every day. Students must be able to apply the theories, paradigms, and concepts introduced in class in their articles due at the beginning of class at any point in the semester. Each article is worth 5%, for a total of 20% of your total grade.
- Climate Interactive – Students will negotiate their own version of the Paris Agreement. The exercise will comprise an in-class simulation held on the last week of the end of the semester and a 6-page synopsis, and counts for 25% of the final grade. Further details will follow in class.
- Midterm exam – One in-class exam will be given during the course, covering the concepts, ideas and theories covered in the first eight weeks of class. The midterm exam will be worth 20% of your overall score.
- Final Exam - The course will have a comprehensive final exam. The final exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

Final Grades

A+	100-97	B+	89.9-87	C+	79.9-77	D+	69.9-67	F	< 60
A	96.9-93	B	86.9-83	C	76.9-73	D	66.9-63		
A-	92.9-90	B-	82.9-80	C-	72.9-70	D-	62.9-60		

Assignment Policy

The instructor reserves the right to change the listed assignments. Students will receive a revised syllabus if the listing of course assignments changes.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student, and each student is expected to attend all classes, as participating in class lectures, discussions, and activities in an active and constructive manner deepens the student's understanding of international relations. Any student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what the student may have missed from class. The instructor will determine the validity of a student's reason(s) for any absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons and documentation.

Valid documentable reasons for absences include:

1. Illness
2. Serious family emergency
3. Special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips
4. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
5. Military obligations
6. Serious weather conditions
7. Religious observances

Disability Code

The Office of Disability Services assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help overcome barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are available for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need. Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities. Students should contact the office early to arrange the necessary accommodations. ~ LSU General Catalog

Late Work

Please avoid turning in late work. I realize life happens and that you may not always be able to submit your work on time. I will accept one unexcused late assignment at a deduction of 10% for each day it is late. Any additional unexcused late assignments will receive a deduction of 20% for each day they are late. An assignment is late when an assignment is not available, or incomplete, on the date it is due.

Academic Integrity

LSU set high academic and personal standards for its students when it adopted the Commitment to Community guidelines in 1995. All students are expected to read and familiarize themselves with the LSU Code of Student Conduct (especially Sec. 10) to know both what is expected from them and of the consequences for any offences. For more specifics, see the following website:

<https://www.lsu.edu/saa/>

Plagiarism and Citation Method

As a student at LSU, your responsibility is to refrain from plagiarizing another's academic property. To this end, you must utilize an appropriate citation method for all coursework. Ignorance of a citation method is no excuse for academic misconduct. One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the references function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. This program also has the ability to generate a reference or works cited page for the information you input. The version of Microsoft Word with these added features is available in most University computer labs.

Expectations of Written Work

All papers are to be college-level papers. This means that they are to be typed, spell-checked and edited, well written with a logical flow of thought, and correctly cited. LSU's Communication across the Curriculum center is a terrific resource for help with writing papers.

Group Work and Unauthorized Assistance

Each student must complete all work without assistance from a classmate or group, unless stated explicitly by the instructor so that the instructor can assess individual performance on each assignment. If the students have a group- or partner-based project assigned, each student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. When in doubt, e-mail the instructor or ask during class. Seeking clarification is the sole responsibility of the student. Assuming group or partner based work is acceptable without permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

Special notices

1. Please do not use cellphones during class time. Laptops and tablets are permissible for taking notes in class, though students should take note of the growing body of literature that indicates that students who use longhand note-taking actually remember and understand more compared to students who relied on their computers or on online lectures (*The Scientific American*)
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>
2. If students have a simple question that could have been answered by reading and fully understanding the syllabus, I will charge students one quarter, dropped into my coffee mug, for answering. I will be lenient on what constitutes a "simple question," but do keep this penalty in mind. This fine does not apply to questions about or clarifications of the syllabus, or of course for any question, comment or concern regarding anything outside the syllabus.

Important Semester Dates

Aug 28 (Tuesday) – Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of "W"
Aug 29 (Wednesday) – Final date for adding courses for credit and making section changes
Sep 3 (Monday) – Labor Day holiday
Oct 4 – Fall holiday begins
Nov 2 (Friday) – Final date for rescheduling final exam dates, and for dropping classes
Nov 21 (Wednesday) – Thanksgiving holiday
Nov 28 – Dec 2 (Wednesday – Sunday) – Concentrated Study Period
Dec 3-8 (Monday – Saturday) – Final Exam Week

Course Schedule

PART 1

Week 1: Aug 20-24
Chapter 1

Intro to International Relations and the Science of Politics

- State, nation, actor
- Power
- Primer on terms

The science of politics

- Empiricism and bias
- Hypothesis testing
- Levels of analysis

Week 2: Aug 27-31
Chapter 2

Theories/Paradigms

- Realism
- Liberalism
- Constructivism
- Other theories (Marxism and feminism)

(This week – final day for adding or dropping courses)

Week 3: Sep 5-7
Chapter 3

Decision-making in IR

- Rational choice theory
- Nature of leadership
- Bureaucracies
- Constraints, foreign and domestic

(no class Monday – enjoy Labor Day!)

Week 4: Sep 10-14
Chapter 4

Great Power Competition

- Hegemony and global leadership
- World Wars
- Cold War
- Competition in the 21st century

Week 5: Sep 17-21
Chapter 5

Global South

- Colonialism and independence
- Sources of underdevelopment
- Is the gap closing or widening?

Week 6: Sep. 24-28
Chapter 6

The Global Community

- Nonstate actors
- IGOs
- Regionalism
- Cartels, crime and terrorism

Week 7: Oct 1-3
No assigned readings

Catch-up, midterm review, midterm exam

(no class Friday – enjoy fall break!)

PART 2

Week 8: Oct 8-12
Chapter 7

War...

- Causes
- Interstate
- Intrastate
- Extrastate

Week 9: Oct 15-19
Chapter 8

...The Continuation of Politics by Other Means?

- Military capabilities, public capacities
- Diplomacy, gunboat and otherwise
- Alliances and balance of power
- ABC/NBC and MAD

Week 10: Oct 22-26
Chapter 9

Quest for Peace

- Disarmament and arms controls
- International organizations and collective security
- International law
- The spread of norms and institutions

Week 11: Oct 29-Nov 2
Chapter 10

Trade, pt. 1

- Bretton Woods system
- Financialization and fiat currency
- 2008 Great Recession

Week 12: Nov 5-9
Chapter 11

Trade, pt. 2

- Globalization and the world market
- Free trade or fair trade?
- (Neo)liberalism, (neo)mercantilism

Week 13: Nov 12-16
Chapter 13

Human rights and development

- Prosperity and how to measure it
- Rights: Protecting the least among us
- Challenges to enforcement

Week 14: Nov 19
Chapter 12

Global Demography

- Migration and immigration
- The information age
- A new pandemic?

(no class Wednesday or Friday – happy Thanksgiving!)

Week 15: Nov 26-30

Climate Simulation

- Simulation (Monday and Wednesday)
- Simulation debriefing (Friday)
- Exam review (Friday)

Finals week: Dec 3

Final exam, papers due

- Final exam: Monday 4, 10:00 am to noon
- Climate change synopsis due Tuesday 7, 6:00 am