Politics 214

International Politics

There are several important schools of thought about how best to describe, explain, and evaluate world politics. Liberal scholars observe that international politics is marked by significant cooperation—in trade, for example, and in response to common challenges like climate change. Liberals argue that shared ideas about democracy, free markets, and human rights bind states and peoples together, mitigating the potential for war. Realists argue international politics is all about states in pursuit of power. Most realists predict states will be relentless in their quest to accrue natural resources, technology, money, and arms, and to develop strategic alliances with other states. What results is endless competition and regular war. Finally, feminists and postcolonial scholars charge realists and liberals with being simpleminded about power. They note that scholars are too often oblivious to how race, class, and gender hierarchies structure international relations.

In *International Politics*, we will use these theoretical perspectives to analyze some of the most important issues in world politics today. In addition to studying the causes and likelihood of conflict, we will consider the increasing speed of globalization, heightening inequalities in the international political economy, the continuing threat of nuclear proliferation, the emerging threat of drone warfare, and the expanding international human rights system, among other topics.

This course has several Student Learning Outcomes. At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

(a.) understand major theoretical perspectives in the subfield of International Relations;
(b.) use theoretical perspectives to analyze events, processes, and institutions in world politics;
(c.) evaluate the strengths and limitations of different theoretical and policy perspectives; and
(d.) speak competently and write persuasively about your analysis of world politics.

Obtaining these outcomes is our shared responsibility. I will work hard, and I expect you to do the same. Willamette's policy on credit hours states that each hour of time in class requires 2-3 hours of work outside of class. This means that for *International Politics* you should plan to spend 6-9 hours working outside of class each week.

I look forward to meeting each of you and invite you to stop by my office hours early in the term. I will hold office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00, and on Fridays from 12:30 until 1:30. Stop in with questions or just to introduce yourself.

Readings

A number of readings for the course are posted on the WISE site. In addition, you will need to obtain the following books, which are available at the bookstore. Please get the specified editions.

Requirements

There are 1000 points possible in this course. There are three course requirements:

**Quizzes** (5 x 40 points). I will give six unscheduled and unannounced quizzes, and I will drop your lowest score. Questions will be based on the assigned reading for the day the quiz is given, and may include short answer, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, map identification, and multiple choice questions. Quizzes can only be made up for excused absences. Be aware that a make-up quiz may have different questions than the original quiz. Unless there are extremely compelling extenuating circumstances, I will not administer a make-up quiz more than one week after it was given to the class.

**Essays** (175+200+225 points). You will write three 5-7 page short essays. These are due in class on **February 15**th, **March 18**th, and **April 25**th. In these essays, you will present and support an argument that integrates and applies material from readings and lectures. I will provide topics as well as more detailed guidance and grading standards two weeks before each essay is due.

**Participation** (200 points). Your attendance at every class session is required. This means arriving several minutes early, so that you are settled and ready to begin promptly at 11:30 pm. There are no “free” unexcused absences. If you are ill, or if some other emergency prevents you from attending class, email me immediately. If you need to miss class due to a University sanctioned activity or religious observance, email me at the beginning of the semester or as far as possible in advance of the date in question. I reserve the right to request documentation for absences that you would like excused. In extreme cases, excessive absences could result in a failing grade in the course.

In addition to attendance and timely arrival to class, you will receive credit for your attentiveness during lecture and discussion; regular, informed, and respectful contributions to discussion; and the completion of in-class assignments. Most class sessions will include lecture and discussion, as well as individual and group activities. It is crucial that you come to every class having completed and digested all of the assigned readings, and that you are prepared to participate actively.

Many of us are not used to talking in front of a large group, which is precisely why it is important to practice. If you find this difficult, let me know at the beginning of the term and we will think together about how to make it easier. Those of you who tend to be more talkative should be aware of how much you are speaking relative to others. The class should not be a dialogue between a small number of students and me, and we may need to tolerate occasional silences to avoid establishing that pattern.

Before class, put away anything that might distract you or others, including but not limited to laptops, phones, music players, crossword puzzles, soduku, food, etc. Needless to say, you can expect to receive a significantly lower participation grade if you use class time to text-message, read the newspaper, pass notes, etc.

**Grades**

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Standards:

A-range  Grades in the A-range are earned by work that is outstanding in every respect. Essays advance a clearly articulated argument that is especially nuanced, creative, or insightful, and provide excellent support with reference to course materials, going beyond points discussed in class. Essays clearly demonstrate detailed knowledge of the theories and the issues in world politics under consideration, as well as the ability to use theory to analyze issues. The writing is not only logically organized and meticulously edited, but particularly lucid and persuasive. Contributions to class discussion are informed, thoughtful, and respectful, advancing the conversation and encouraging participation from others. The highest participation grades are reserved for those who have no unexcused absences.

B-range  Grades in the B-range are given for good, complete essays, and for regular attendance and constructive participation. Essays advance a clear thesis, and provide support for it, demonstrating good understanding of theories and of world politics. Essays are logically organized and well edited—they are generally free of grammatical, punctuation, and formatting errors. Grades in the upper B-range can be outstanding with respect to content but somewhat weaker in terms of the writing or vice versa. Participation grades in the B range are given for regular, competent participation. In comparison to participation that is awarded an A grade, participation that receives a B grade tends to be inconsistent with respect to quantity or quality, or may reflect multiple unexcused absences.

C-range  Grades in the C-range are given for work that meets minimal requirements. Essays engage the topic and course materials, but are weak in terms of content or presentation. For instance, arguments may be ill defined or poorly supported. Essays might struggle to make use of readings, providing few citations and only superficial or erroneous coverage of major arguments, theories, concepts, and issues. The organization and writing may hinder rather than contribute to the overall persuasiveness of the essay. For example, essays may be marred by grammatical errors or awkward phrasing. Participation grades in the C-range are given for many unexcused absences, a pattern of dominating the conversation, or a pattern of disengagement (failing to bring readings to class, tuning out, using class time to send text messages, chat, or exchange notes, etc.).

D-range  Grades in the D- and F-range do not meet minimal requirements. Essays in the D-range often lack a clearly identifiable thesis, and may be significantly underdeveloped, either failing to meet the minimum page length requirement, adequately engage the topic, or use course materials. The writing is often marred by typos, grammatical errors, or awkward phrasing. Participation grades in the D-range are given for rude, disrespectful, or dismissive remarks, or disruptive behavior. Participation grades in the D-range are also given for poor preparedness, which includes failing to bring readings to class and to have completed the readings. Failing grades are given for excessive absences, missing assignments, or egregious misconduct including but not limited to plagiarism.

Late essays: If an essay is submitted late on the same day it is due—in other words, if it is turned in between the time class ends and midnight—there will be a deduction of 5 points. If it is turned in the following day, there will be a deduction of 10 points, and for each additional day, there will be an additional 10-point deduction. So, for example, an essay turned in at 5:00 pm on the day it is due would lose 5 points. An essay turned in the next day would be penalized 10 points; an essay turned in the following day would be penalized a total of 20 points, and so on. I will cap the late penalty at 65% of the total value of the paper.

This late policy has one important limitation. If assignments are missing at the end of the final exam period (i.e. May 11th), I will calculate your grade with a zero for those assignments, even if this results in a failing grade in the class.
Professional Conduct

Participation in a scholarly community requires communicating respectfully and with an open mind. You do not need to agree with everything that others say. What I do ask is that you offer comments, critiques, and questions courteously, while remaining open to discovering the shortcomings of your own position. When I respond to you in class and in your written work, you can expect me to treat you with this same respect and openness.

I expect professionalism not only in class and office hours but also in our conversations over email. Please begin emails with a standard greeting (e.g. “Hi Professor McCracken,”). Then explain the purpose of the email (e.g. “I’m having trouble understanding the concept of the security dilemma”), and what steps you have already taken to resolve the issue (e.g. “I’ve read the definition of the term on p. 36 in the book by Mearsheimer, but I still don’t understand the difference between a security ‘dilemma’ and a security ‘problem’”). Abbreviations like those used in text messages are not appropriate in this context.

Policy on Plagiarism

It is your responsibility to protect your integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct carry steep penalties, beginning with a failing grade on the assignment in question. **I will report the incident to the dean and further action may be taken.** If you are uncertain about how to quote or reference sources in your papers, see me. Also consult the student handbook for clarification and examples. You should carefully read about academic expectations and policies related to plagiarism and cheating online at: [http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/resources/policies/](http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/resources/policies/).

Policy on Accommodations

I am committed to providing an equitable learning experience for all students, and I am happy to provide accommodations to this end. Please communicate with the Office of Disability Services at the very beginning of the semester and provide me with a letter from them on academic accommodations by the third week of class. For information about campus policies, please see pp. 4-5 of the student policy manual: [http://www.willamette.edu/dept/campuslife/policies/index.html](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/campuslife/policies/index.html) and also see [http://www.willamette.edu/dept/disability/](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/disability/).
Class Calendar

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on WISE, and will need to be downloaded. Do the reading prior to class on the day it is listed. Note: this schedule is subject to adjustment.

Introduction

January 18. Welcome
No Reading.

January 20. Origins of International Politics
Read: Stuart Elden. “Why is the World Divided Territorially?”*
Try: http://www.jetpunk.com/quizzes/how-many-countries-can-you-name.php

Part I. Liberal Approaches to International Politics

January 22. Introduction to Liberalism
Read: Thomas Friedman. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, pp. 3-28.

January 25. What’s Globalization? What Drives It?
Read: Friedman. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, pp. 44-72.

January 27. Why Do States Cooperate?
Read: Friedman. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, pp. 73-100.

January 29. Introduction to Neoliberalism
Read: Lisa Martin, “Neoliberalism.”*

February 1. How Does Globalization Challenge Sovereignty?
Read: Friedman. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, pp. 101-142.

February 3. Why Don’t Democracies Fight Each Other?

February 5. Can the Globalization System Go Green?
Read: Friedman. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, pp. 276-305.

February 8. Can States Cooperate to Solve Climate Change?

February 10. Can You Solve Climate Change?
Follow the link below to play an online simulation. Bring notes to class on your successes and challenges, and on what this scenario taught you that Victor, Kennel, and Ramanathan missed. We will discuss what you learned.
Play: http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/hottopics/climatechange/climate_challenge/
February 12. Writing Workshop
There is no assigned reading. Bring a draft of the first 2 pages of your essay for a peer-review exercise.

February 15. Review
There is no assigned reading to give you additional time to complete your essay. We will discuss your essays in class.
Due: Essay #1

Part II. Realist Approaches to International Politics

February 17. Introduction to Realism

February 19. Why Do States Compete?
Read: Mearsheimer. Tragedy of Great Power Politics, pp. 29-54.

February 22. What is Power?
Read: Mearsheimer. Tragedy of Great Power Politics, pp. 55-82.

February 24. How Do States Get Power?

February 26. Are Realists Right? Examining the Historical Record
If your last name begins in A-J, read #1. K-P should read #2. Q-Z should read #3.

February 29. Why Does War Break Out?

March 2. How Do Nuclear Weapons Change World Politics?

March 4. Who Wants a Nuclear Iran?
Read: (1) Kenneth Waltz. “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb” Foreign Affairs.*
(2) Mohammad Javad Zarif, “What Iran Really Wants” Foreign Affairs.*
View: http://www.cfr.org/interactives/CG_Iran/index.html#/iran's-nuclear-program/

March 7. Is China’s Rise Bad for the U.S.?
Explore: http://www.gapminder.org/labs/gapminder-china/

March 9. New Issues in International Politics: ISIS
Read: Stephen Walt, “ISIS as Revolutionary State,” Foreign Affairs.*
March 11. New Issues in International Politics: Cyberwar

March 14. Writing Workshop
There is no assigned reading. Bring a draft of the first 2 pages of your essay for a peer-review exercise.

March 16. New Issues in International Politics: Drone Warfare
Read: (1.) Daniel Byman. “Why Drones Work,” Foreign Affairs.*
(2.) Audrey Kurth Cronin. “Why Drones Fail,” Foreign Affairs.*

March 18. Review
There is no assigned reading to give you additional time to complete your essay. In class we will complete the film Fog of War.
Due: Essay #2

March 21-March 25. Spring Break
No Class

Part III. Critical Approaches to International Politics

March 28. Introduction to Feminist Theories

March 30. Introduction contd.

April 1. Can Feminists Explain Realpolitik?
Read: Lauren Wilcox, “Gendering the Cult of the Offensive.”*

April 4. How Does Globalization Relate to Militarization?
http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/

April 6. What Is Hierarchy?

April 8. Is Demilitarization Possible?

April 11. How Does the “Global” Shape the “Local”?

Read: TBA
April 15. New Issues in Global Politics: Human Rights Activism

April 18. New Issues in Global Politics: Humanitarian Intervention
Read: Mamdani. *Saviors and Survivors*, pp. 271-300.*

April 20. Student Scholarship Recognition Day
No Class.

**Part IV. Conclusions**

April 22. Writing Workshop
*There is no assigned reading. Bring a draft of the first 2 pages of your essay for a peer-review exercise.*

April 25. Review
*There is no assigned reading to give you additional time to complete your essay.*
Due: Essay #3

April 27. From States to Civilizations?
Read: Samuel Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations.”*

April 29. Clash of Civilizations in Critical Perspective
Read: Edward Said, “Clash of Ignorance.”*

May 2. The Importance of Theory