
Spring 2019

Knox 109

PSC 102:

TTh

Introduction to International Politics

3:30–4:50pm

Professor Elena V. McLean

507 Park Hall

Office Hours: TTh 1:30–3:30pm

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Course Description & Objectives

This course will expose you to many of the problems and issues of world politics and the main theories that scholars believe explain the events we witness. We will discuss the nature of the international system, the causes and effects of international conflict, and the difficulties faced by countries in establishing international cooperation. In addition to the traditional focus on war and peace, we will consider political dimensions of the international economy, the role of international organizations, the worldwide trends toward democratization and economic interdependence, and prospects for global development. The purpose of this course is to provide a theoretical and historical basis for analyzing and understanding international politics. It is not primarily a current events or a history course, but current and historical events will be discussed. You will be encouraged to develop your analytical skills and to clarify your own views regarding policy options in world politics. The course should prepare you for more advanced classes in international relations and help you to think critically and analytically about current events. You should leave this course feeling that you are a more informed citizen of the world.

General Educational Requirements

This course is designed to deliver learning outcomes that satisfy the SUNY General Education Requirements in the Social Sciences and Other World Civilizations.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, a student should be able to:

- understand the fundamental principles of international conflict and cooperation;
- identify principle forms and patterns in international interactions, both conflictual and cooperative;
- demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and paradigms in the study of international

relations;

- explain key historical stages in development of international society and state sovereignty;
- discuss foreign policy issues common to both Western and non-Western societies, as well as those prevalent primarily in non-Western states such as problems of economic development;
- understand diverse forms of conflict, including global terrorism and nonconventional warfare in non-Western societies, and their underlying causes;
- understand current unique problems of some non-Western states related to their fragile sovereignty (“failed states”), governance, and humanitarian issues;
- identify and analyze international institutions and other non-state actors in world politics;
- apply the principles of international political economy in the areas of trade, financial and monetary relations.

Outcome Assessment

Your course grade will be based on two components:

- **Exams: 80% of the final grade.** There will be four, non-cumulative exams held on February 21, March 14, April 11, and May 2. Specifics about each exam will be discussed later in the semester, but you can expect each exam to cover the material from both lectures and assigned readings that came before the exam. If you miss an exam without notifying me in advance, you will get zero points for that test. In computing your grade, I will average your three highest exam scores and weight them equally (1/3 each), thus dropping your lowest exam score. There will be no final exam.
- **Pop-up Quizzes: 20% of the final grade.** Given the size of this class, formal classroom participation can be very difficult to evaluate. While interaction and participation will likely be an integral element of your upper-level courses, at the introductory level, it is more important that we assess your understanding of introductory political concepts. Thus, I will give several short quizzes during the semester without prior notice. The quizzes will be based on the readings assigned for that week. Note that I will not be taking attendance. Instead, I will use the quizzes as my means of determining your approximate rate of attendance: if I notice that you routinely miss quizzes, I will presume your attendance to be lackluster. Your grade will not be directly reduced as a result of poor attendance. However, if you habitually miss class, you should expect to fail the course because you will fail on the quiz component, and you will miss material that is covered on the exams.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Measure
Understand the fundamental principles of international conflict and cooperation	Exams
Identify principle forms and patterns in international interactions, both conflictual and cooperative	Exams
Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and paradigms in the study of international relations	Exam 1; quizzes
Explain key historical stages in development of international society and state sovereignty	Exam 1
Discuss foreign policy issues common to both Western and non-Western societies, as well as those prevalent primarily in non-Western states such as problems of economic development	Exams 3 & 4; quizzes
Understand diverse forms of conflict, including global terrorism and nonconventional warfare in non-Western societies, and their underlying causes	Exam 2; quizzes
Understand current unique problems of some non-Western states related to their fragile sovereignty (“failed states”), governance, and humanitarian issues	Exams 3 & 4; quizzes
Identify and analyze international institutions and other non-state actors in world politics	Exam 1; quizzes
Apply the principles of international political economy in the areas of trade, financial and monetary relations	Exams 3 & 4; quizzes

Course Policies

- **Technology Policy:**
The use of laptop computers, tablets, cellphones, smartphones, or any other electronic device is prohibited during lectures and exams. I put this policy in place because there is ample evidence that the use of electronic devices distracts not only the user, but those around him/her. If you would like to request an exception to this policy for medical or other reasons, please contact me as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements.
- **Exam/Quiz Attendance:**
There are no excused absences for exams and quizzes short of a **documented** medical emergency or a formal UB-sanctioned athletic event for members of UB's athletic teams. If you are a member of a UB athletic team, speak with me within the first two weeks of class if you will be missing classes during the semester because of team activities. If you miss an exam or a quiz for any other reason, you will get zero points.
- **Accessibility Resources:**
If you require classroom or testing accommodations due to a disability, please contact Accessibility Resources, located at 25 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by phone at (716) 645-2608 or by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform me as soon as possible about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations. For more information, visit <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>
- **Course Materials Copyright:**
This syllabus, lecture slides and any handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts," I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.
- **Academic Integrity:**
Cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the course and possibly further punitive action. You may find more information about academic dishonesty at: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>
- **Grade Disclosure:**
All personal information concerning students' performance in this course is governed by federal privacy legislation, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). No grades or status information can be provided to students by telephone or email.
- **Grading Scale:**

		93–100% =	A	90–92.9% =	A-
87–89.9% =	B+	83–86.9% =	B	80–82.9% =	B-
77–79.9% =	C+	73–76.9% =	C	70–72.9% =	C-
67–69.9% =	D+	63–66.9% =	D	0–62.9% =	F

Note that I will not use a curve when calculating grades. There will be no extra credit assignments or make-up exams.

Reading Materials

The following book is assigned for the course:

- Frieden, Jeffrey, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz. 2018. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 4th edition. New York: W.W. Norton. (Note: This reading will be abbreviated as FLS.)

I expect that every student will do all the readings assigned for a given week before the week begins. In addition, I encourage you to read on the regular basis at least one of the following news sources: the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, the Economist, or a comparable publication.

Course Schedule

Note that I reserve the right to change the following schedule in order to ensure that we spend adequate time on each topic. If such changes become necessary, I will make an announcement in class.

Week 1 (Jan 28–Feb 1): What is World Politics?

- FLS: Introduction & Chapter 1, pages xxiv–41

Week 2 (Feb 4–8): Interests, Interactions, and Institutions

- FLS: Chapter 2, pages 42–87

Week 3 (Feb 11–15): International Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 3, pages 88–137

Week 4 (Feb 18–22): Domestic Politics and Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 4, pages 138–185
- Feb 21 – Exam #1

Week 5 (Feb 25–Mar 1): International Institutions and Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 5, pages 186–235

Week 6 (Mar 4–8): Intrastate Conflict and Terrorism

- FLS: Chapter 6, pages 236–293

Week 7 (Mar 11–15): International Trade

- FLS: Chapter 7, pages 294–345
- Mar 14 – Exam #2

Mar 18–22: Spring recess

Week 8 (Mar 25–29): International Finance

- FLS: Chapter 8, pages 346–385

Week 9 (Apr 1–5): International Monetary Policy

- FLS: Chapter 9, pages 386–423

Week 10 (Apr 8–12): International Development

- FLS: Chapter 10, pages 424–461
- Apr 11 – Exam #3

Week 11 (Apr 15–19): International Law and Norms

- FLS: Chapter 11, pages 462–497

Week 12 (Apr 22–26): Human Rights

- FLS: Chapter 12, pages 498–539

Week 13 (Apr 29–May 3): Environment

- FLS: Chapter 13, pages 540–583
- May 2 – Exam #4

Week 14 (May 6–10): The Future of International Politics

- FLS: Chapter 14, pages 584–637