
Spring 2023	Knox 109
PSC 102:	MWF
Introduction to International Politics	1–1:50pm

Professor E.V. McLean	elenamcl@buffalo.edu
Office Hours: MW 2–3pm	507 Park Hall
Graduate Assistant: Yohan Ha	yohanha@buffalo.edu

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 the international system 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 civil war and terrorism, 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 the following components:

- **Exams: 75% of the final grade.** There will be four, non-cumulative exams held on February 20, March 13, April 10, and May 5. 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: 10%.** 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.

- **Two Short Written Assignments: 15% total.** Both assignments will ask you to evaluate an example of an international situation that I will select from the news. Your essay should explain the events using the 3 I's framework. The assignments will be posted on UBlerns and will be due at 5pm on March 3 and April 28.
- **Bonus Collective Action Assignment: 3%.** I will provide instructions for this short assignment when we get to Week 12. This will be a practical illustration of the so-called collective action problem, which we will discuss during Week 2.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Measure
Understand the fundamental principles of international conflict and cooperation	Exams; short assignments
Identify principle forms and patterns in international interactions, both conflictual and cooperative	Exams; short assignments
Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and paradigms in the study of international relations	Exams; quizzes; short assignments
Explain key historical stages in development of the international system and state sovereignty	Exams
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; quizzes; short assignments
Understand diverse forms of conflict, including civil war terrorism societies, and their underlying causes	Exams; quizzes; short assignments
Understand current unique problems of some non-Western states related to their fragile sovereignty ("failed states"), governance, and humanitarian issues	Exams; quizzes; short assignments
Identify and analyze international institutions and other non-state actors in world politics	Exams; quizzes; short assignments
Apply the principles of international political economy in the areas of trade, financial and monetary relations	Exams; quizzes; short assignments

Course Policies

- 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 accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, located in 60 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by phone at (716) 645-2608 or by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform me during the first week of class about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations. For more information, visit [their website](#).
- Course Materials Copyright:
This syllabus, lecture slides and any handouts used in this course are copyrighted. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy and distribute course materials, unless I expressly grant permission. In addition, you may not record lectures or classroom discussions without my permission. Students who violate this policy will be required to complete an educational sanction about the value of intellectual property. More serious or repeat violations of this policy may be treated as acts of "academic dishonesty" under [the Academic Integrity Policy](#) or subject a student to disciplinary charges under [the Student Code of Conduct](#).
- Academic Integrity:
Students must be familiar with and abide by the university's policies and procedures on 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. For more detailed information, visit [UB's Office of Academic Integrity](#).
- 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. All grades will be posted on UBlerns.
- UB Portfolio:
If you are completing this course as part of your UB Curriculum requirements, please select an 'artifact' from this course that is representative of your learning and save it in a safe location with a clear title. Your final UB Curriculum requirement, UBC 399: UB Curriculum Capstone, will require you to submit these 'artifacts' as you process and

reflect on your achievement and growth through the UB Curriculum. Artifacts include homework assignments, exams, research papers, projects, lab reports, presentations, and other coursework. For more information, see [the UB Curriculum Capstone website](#).

- 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 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. 2021. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 5th edition. New York: W.W. Norton. (Note: This reading will be abbreviated as FLS.) An ebook version and online learning resources are available [online](#).

I expect that every student will do all the readings assigned for a given week before the week begins. In addition, I expect 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 adjust the following schedule during the semester. If such changes become necessary, I will post an announcement.

Week 1 (Jan 30–Feb 3): What is World Politics?

- FLS: Introduction & Chapter 1, pages xxvi–41
- Stephen Walt. 1998. [International Relations: One World, Many Theories](#).

Week 2 (Feb 6–10): Interests, Interactions, and Institutions

- FLS: Chapter 2, pages 42–91
- Stewart Patrick. 2014. [The Unruled World](#).

- Optional: [Freedom vs Security: Freedom at any cost?](#)

Week 3 (Feb 13–17): International Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 3, pages 92–143
- James Fearon. 1995. [Rationalist Explanations for War.](#)
- Optional: [Graham Allison. Is war between China and the US inevitable?](#)

Week 4 (Feb 20–24): Domestic Politics and Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 4, pages 144–193
- Kenneth Schultz. 1999. [Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform?](#)
- Optional: [Timothy Snyder. On Tyranny.](#)
- **Feb 20 – Exam #1**

Week 5 (Feb 27–Mar 3): International Institutions and Conflict

- FLS: Chapter 5, pages 194–244
- Michael Glennon. 2003. [Why the Security Council Failed.](#)
- Optional: [What is NATO?](#)
- **Mar 3 – Short Assignment #1**

Week 6 (Mar 6–10): Intrastate Conflict and Terrorism

- FLS: Chapter 6, pages 245–304
- Robert Pape. 2003. [The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.](#)
- Optional: [Benedetta Berti. The surprising way groups like ISIS stay in power.](#)

Week 7 (Mar 13–17): International Trade

- FLS: Chapter 7, pages 305–363
- Peter Sutherland. 2008. [How the WTO Boosts Economies and Opens Societies.](#)
- Optional: [Brexit: What trade could look like after the UK leaves the EU.](#)

- Mar 13 – Exam #2

Mar 20–25: Spring recess

Week 8 (Mar 27–31): International Finance

- FLS: Chapter 8, pages 364–405
- Georgia Keohane and Saadia Madsbjerg. 2016. [The Innovative Finance Revolution](#).
- Optional: [China's investment in Africa](#).

Week 9 (Apr 3–7): International Monetary Policy

- FLS: Chapter 9, pages 406–445
- Matthias Matthijs. 2020. [The Right Way to Fix the EU](#).
- Optional: [How Global Trade Runs on U.S. Dollars](#).

Week 10 (Apr 10–14): International Development

- FLS: Chapter 10, pages 446–483
- Tanisha Fazal. 2020. [Health Diplomacy in Pandemical Times](#).
- Optional: [Why is Singapore so rich?](#)
- Apr 10 – Exam #3

Week 11 (Apr 17–21): International Law and Norms

- FLS: Chapter 11, pages 484–519
- Sean Larkin. 2016. [The Age of Transparency](#).
- Optional: [Should We End Diplomatic Immunity?](#)

Week 12 (Apr 24–28): Human Rights

- FLS: Chapter 12, pages 520–563
- Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Erica Frantz, and Joseph Wright. 2020. [The Digital Dictators](#).
- Optional: [How British suffragettes fought for the vote](#).

- **Apr 28 – Short Assignment #2**

Week 13 (May 1–5): Environment

- FLS: Chapter 13, pages 564–607
- Mohamed Adow. 2020. [The Climate Debt](#).
- Optional: [The Hole – A film on the Montreal Protocol](#).
- Optional: [Climate Finance for Developing Countries](#).
- **May 5 – Exam #4**

Week 14 (May 8–12): What Challenges Lie Ahead?

- FLS: Chapter 14, pages 608–667
- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. [This is how democracies die](#).
- Optional: [Kishore Mahbubani. How the West can adapt to a rising Asia](#).