

**SS 301: Intro to International Relations
(42405)
T/th 9:30-11:00 MEZ 1.120**

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Course Description:

This course will serve as a broad introduction to international relations topics and research. The course will be framed around a series of questions or topics, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Is there an order to the international system? If so, what are the determinants of that order?
- Why do wars occur? If war is costly in terms of lives and resources, when and why do governments fail to solve their differences by other means?
- How has globalization changed the landscape of international politics? What aspects of globalization are most important for understanding contemporary trends in national and international politics?
- What role do international institutions and international law play in facilitating cooperation and order in the international system?

The course will analyze these questions through the lens of modern social scientific approaches, meaning we will spend time thinking rigorously about theoretical relationships and evidence-based approaches to adjudicating between multiple explanations. In that vein, students will be exposed to common research strategies employed by modern international relations scholars, ranging from qualitative historical and case study accounts to statistical analysis to experimental methods. Likewise, students will be exposed to a variety of theoretical approaches, including formal models of interstate interactions (i.e. game theory), psychological explanations of foreign policy-making, and ideational or sociological approaches to understanding the international system.

This course may be used to fulfill the social and behavioral sciences component of the university core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

Course Grading:

The course will consist of the following grades:

25% class participation

25% midterm

25% final

25% 4-6 page analytical essay

Class participation: This is a Plan II honors course and smaller than typical lecture themed intro to international relations classes so I will try to foster and encourage discussion. We will discuss and debate current topics like U.S. foreign policy toward nuclear proliferation, U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, or Russian intervention in Ukraine and Syria. We will do so in a professional and respectful way; I encourage students to challenge one another's arguments but the discussion should always be focused on the substance and content of the arguments (i.e. ad hominem arguments or unfounded generalizations will not be considered valid forms of argumentation). I will take notes after each class about who participated and the quality of that participation and assign participation grades at the end of the semester accordingly. Please come see me if you'd like to know how you are doing throughout the semester in terms of participation.

Midterm and final: We will have two short answer and essay-based, in class exams. Please bring blue books on exam days. I will provide more details prior to exam dates. The final exam will be on the last day of class.

Analysis paper: at the end of each of the three topical sections of the class (security, international political economy, international cooperation and organizations) I will hand out a paper prompt with a list of essay questions you can answer. You will then write a 4-6 page analysis paper, drawing on readings and arguments we've examined in class. These will be due one week after I hand out the prompt.

Readings: All readings will be posted on canvas, unless hyperlinked on the course outline. Hyper-linked articles should be accessible from campus networks. If accessed off-campus you may be subject to a monthly limit to articles from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, or other outlets. There will be three types of readings:

(a) current events/new articles. These will mostly be commentary or blog-like posts that address and bring analysis to bear on a contemporary problem in international relations, such as "what do we do about North Korea?;" "what's the deal with U.S. non-participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement?;" "What's the deal with withdrawing from the Iran nuclear agreement?;" or "what's this business about China being a currency manipulator and how are they cheating us in trade?" The core of the course will be learning concepts and theories of international relations, but in many ways international relations is a practical field and ultimately we care about how these concepts and theories

help us think about and find answers to real world problems. Some will read and think about those problems.

(b) scholarly research articles. Most of these will bore the heck out of you. But I like to assign some research articles because in many undergraduate international relations courses students get very little idea about how political science professors actually occupy their time. Yes, we care about applying insights and knowledge to real world problems. However, much research is “basic research,” in the sense it is not prescriptive, but rather seeks to understand basic principles about how the political world works. In international relations, this might mean reading an article that attempts to systematically examine typical premises and arguments about interstate relations and then examine their observable implications for the onset or conduct of war. Or it could mean trying to conduct a systematic, scientific analysis of whether and how international organizations matter for state behavior. Or it could mean examining how public opinion is shaped with respect to foreign economic policy. All of these exercises help build the corpus of knowledge about the forces behind international relations, and I will assign some examples throughout the semester.

(c) The foundational reading will be from a textbook in the process of being written by UT-Austin Professors Pat McDonald, Rob Moser, and myself for a new, online platform with Pearson books, titled *Opening the Global System: An Introduction to International Relations*. I will post draft modules (chapters) from this project on canvas. For you, there are a couple upsides. First, no textbook to buy! Second, the textbook is intended for an introduction to international relations course, but includes information and insights from cutting edge scholarship. There’s lots of interactive figures and charts and maps that are pretty cool to play with. Downside, it is in production this semester, so the assigned modules you’ll be reading are in draft form to be put into the online format.

Technology in the classroom: NO TEXTING DURING CLASS. You may use devices for class purposes – taking notes, looking up information, etc. But please be respectful and minimize distractions for your classmates. I have a responsibility to maintain a learning environment free of unreasonable distractions so if devices begin to cause any problems, I will issue a warning. After this warning, I reserve the right to ban electronic device usage for individuals who abuse them or otherwise distract their peers.

Religious holy days: A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Students with Disabilities: Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You may find out more information on the Services for Students with Disabilities website:

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/> and/or <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-ssd/>

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>.

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students: All students should be familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html> .

University of Texas Honor Code: "As A Student Of The University Of Texas At Austin, I Shall Abide By The Core Values Of The University And Uphold Academic Integrity."

COURSE OUTLINE (this is a list of topics and the order in which we will cover them; I have purposely not provided dates so that we have flexibility for how much time we spend on each topic. However, I will do my best to keep you updated on what I want you to have read before each class period)

I. SECURITY AND CONFLICT

Topic 1: Introduction and the International System

Introduction and thinking theoretically:

Modules 1-3 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

Theory and IR:

R. Harrison Wagner. 2007. *War and the State: the Theory of International Politics*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press. Ch. 1.

The International System and Great Power Politics

China:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/04/21/the-gulf-states-are-turning-to-asia-in-a-big-way-heres-why-it-matters/?utm_term=.c5c4b9453f60

Russia:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/02/what-do-we-know-about-russias-grand-strategy/?utm_term=.285dd429df34

U.S. Grand Strategy

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/17/trump-has-no-long-term-foreign-policy-vision-heres-how-thats-hurting-america/?utm_term=.7784a304401c

Robert J. Samuelson. "Trump's extraordinary surrender of power." *The Washington Post* 9 July 2017.

Topic 2: War I – Rationalist Models and Information Problems

Modules 7-8 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

Fearon, James D. 1995. Rationalist Explanations for War. *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.

Signaling Intentions and North Korea:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/21/here-are-5-takeaways-from-trumps-startling-nuclear-threats-against-north-korea/?utm_term=.2301ebe816e9

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/16/the-big-problem-with-north-korea-isnt-that-we-cant-trust-them-its-that-they-cant-trust-us/?utm_term=.0161de128c02

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/04/26/trump-is-trying-to-send-north-korea-a-message-leaders-can-signal-but-its-hard-to-pull-off/?utm_term=.ca9e5ed9ce3e

Alliances and uncertain commitments:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/31/allies-cant-rely-on-america-like-they-used-to-and-not-just-because-of-trump/?utm_term=.4d51c302ad5f

Topic 3: War II – Commitment Problems, War Termination, and Civil War

Modules 9, 10, and 12 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

Powell, Robert. 2006. “War as a Commitment Problem.” *International Organization* 60(1): 169-203.

Preventive war and North Korea:

David E. Sanger. “Talk of Preventive War Rises in White House Over North Korea.” *New York Times* 20 August 2017

Regime Change as solution to commitment problems? Iran:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/31/some-in-d-c-want-regime-change-in-iran-good-luck-with-that/?utm_term=.1833b75d2f75

Russia and commitment problems in Europe:

<http://www.vox.com/2016/2/9/10949894/russia-europe-war-map>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/08/why-russia-is-far-less-threatening-than-it-seems/?utm_term=.379ef7743d24

Syria – commitment problems in civil wars:

<https://www.vox.com/2016/2/10/10958878/syria-truths>

<https://www.vox.com/2015/11/2/9643658/syria-obama-lost>

******* EXAM 1*******

II. INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Topic 1: Globalization and Trade

Modules 25-27, 33 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

Euro crisis:

Background on the Euro Crisis: <http://www.cfr.org/eu/eurozone-crisis/p22055>

Globalization and populism

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/14/globalisation-the-rise-and-fall-of-an-idea-that-swept-the-world>

<http://voxeu.org/article/economics-populist-backlash>

Brady, David W. 2016. "Globalization and Political Instability." *The American Interest* 11(6).

China and trade

Sester, Brad W. "China's WTO Entry, 15 Years On." Council on Foreign Relations blog 18 January 2017.

Matthews, Dylan. "How Obama's Tire Tariffs Have Hurt Consumers." *The Washington Post* 23 October 2012.

"China loses its WTO Appeal against U.S. Tire Tariffs." *Reuters* 5 September 2011

Non-economic sources of trade preferences:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/16/americans-views-of-trade-arent-just-about-economics-theyre-also-about-race/?utm_term=.56530abd1f31

Trade Disputes:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/07/26/the-u-s-filed-a-wto-dispute-to-save-jobs-by-increasing-imports-from-china-heres-why-the-wto-helps-u-s-companies/?utm_term=.147e8534a9f6

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/07/will-trumps-unilateral-trade-approach-work-history-says-no/?utm_term=.1ae953027c4

Topic 2: Exchange Rates and Capital Flows

Modules 27-28

Topic 3: Global Poverty and Development

Module 30 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

III ORDER AND COOPERATION

Topic 1: Global Governance and International Organizations

Module 20 and 29 in McDonald, Chapman, Moser

Brexit:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/26/one-year-after-the-brexit-vote-britains-relationship-with-the-e-u-is-unlikely-to-change-much-heres-why/?utm_term=.3ac12447960f

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/06/30/brexit-might-undermine-europes-democratic-order/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/06/29/no-brexit-is-not-the-end-of-the-liberal-world-order/>

NATO:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/06/will-trump-commit-to-natos-article-5-once-and-for-all-for-europe-its-a-big-question/?utm_term=.2d7e74a9cb97

Paris Agreement:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/03/what-was-the-paris-climate-agreement-and-what-else-do-you-need-to-know-about-climate-politics/?utm_term=.7b951e3ecc95

Iran Nuclear Deal:

<https://www.vox.com/2015/4/2/8336219/iran-nuclear-deal-plain-english>

Topic 2: International Law and Norms

Modules 21-22 from McDonald, Chapman, and Moser

Staton, Jeff and Will Moore. 2011. "Judicial Power in Domestic and International Politics." *International Organization* 65(3):553-587.

ICC Controversy:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/12/19/the-trials-and-tribulations-of-prosecuting-heads-of-states-kenyatta-and-the-icc/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.49bb6295ceaa

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/21/is-this-the-end-of-the-international-criminal-court/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.607872ea4a95

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/01/20/people-like-the-international-criminal-court-as-long-as-it-targets-other-problems-in-other-countries/?utm_term=.5684ffc824be

International Investment Law:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/11/30/investors-have-controversial-new-rights-to-sue-countries-heres-why-this-matters-for-the-u-s/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.b3b68031f3f1

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/03/should-corporations-be-able-to-sue-foreign-governments-the-u-s-could-owe-billions/?utm_term=.ea9b3aee2b87

******FINAL EXAM******