

Political Science 110

Introduction to International Relations

Class Hours: MWF 3-3:50
Office Hours: TTH 2-3 or by appointment

Instructor: Brian Lai
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Ordered Books:

RSK= Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella. 2000. *World Politics: The Menu for Choice 6th Edition*. Boston:Bedford/St. Martins.

Nye= Joseph S. Nye, Jr. 2000. *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History 3rd Edition*. New York:Longman.

It has been almost a decade since the end of the Cold War. Over that time, there have been dramatic changes in the international environment, ranging from the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the end of apartheid in South Africa, the rise of civil and ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the horn of Africa, the integration of Western Europe, the vast increases in technology, and the rise in global trade.

This class will introduce you to basic concepts and fundamental theories of international relations which will help you understand, analyze, and evaluate the international environment and the actions of states within that environment. The second goal of this class is to improve your analytical skills. Class assignments will give you a chance to evaluate competing arguments and determine which one is more compelling and why. Finally, this class will improve your understanding of the complex environment that leaders of states face and provide some insight into the foreign policies of states.

Requirements:

50%: 3 Non-Cumulative Exams (15%,20%,15%)

15%: 6-8 page paper

10%: Four Map Quizzes

10%: Attendance and Participation

15% Group Projects

Policies:

Exams (50%):

There will be three non-cumulative exams for this class. The exams will be based on the readings, lectures, and discussions in class. Students who wish to do well on these tests should read the assigned material and attend class.

February 14: Exam 1 (15%)

March 28: Exam 2 (20%)

April 30: Exam 3 (15%)

Requests to take the exams at other than the scheduled times must be made in advance and will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. If a student fails to take an examination, the

decision to allow a makeup and the penalty associated with that makeup, if granted, is completely at the discretion of the instructor.

Research Paper (15%):

Students are required to turn in a final paper. This paper should be **6-8 pages double spaced 12 pt Times New Roman font with page numbers**. A minimum of five sources are required for this paper. Two of these sources must be either a published book or academic journal article. This paper is due by **April 16**.

This paper should examine a current international crisis and which of any factors discussed in class best explain and predict a state's actions in that crisis. Students will pick an international crisis after World War II and one state in that crisis by **February 5th**. Students should focus on one dominant explanation for a state's actions in that crisis. Students are required to turn in a one page outline of the international crisis, the state, and the explanation for a state's actions in that crisis by **April 2nd**. The paper should broadly examine the following questions. What did the state do in the international crisis? Which theory of international relations best explains and predicts that state's actions and why? (These questions should help you think about a paper topic, they should **not** serve as an outline for the paper.) Students are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor about their paper in a timely fashion.

Key Dates:

February 5: The name of the international crisis and state need to be given to the instructor

April 2: A one page outline of the international crisis, the state, and the explanation for a state's actions are due to the instructor

April 16: Paper is due. Students have until 11:59 pm to email the paper to me.

Late papers and assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for each day past the due date with exceptions given for extraordinary circumstances such as illness or family crisis. In such instances, a letter from the college office is required.

Map Quizzes (10%):

There will be four map quizzes given throughout the semester.

January 24th- Europe

February 5th: Africa/Middle East

March 2nd: Asia

April 18th: Americas

Maps of each area will be given at the beginning of the semester. In addition, all maps are posted on the class LearnLink site. Students may retake any map quiz until they score at least 85%. Students are not required to retake any of the quizzes.

Attendance and Participation (10%):

CLASS ATTENDANCE. Attendance will be taken each class. **Each student is allowed one unexcused absence without it affecting their participation grade.** A percentage of this portion of the grade will be deducted each time a student has an unexcused absence after the initial one. Attendance is excused in the event of illness, family crisis, or sanctioned university

event such as athletic competition; an absence is considered excused only if the student has a letter from the college office or other appropriate documentation.

While this class will primarily be based on a lecture format, there will also be an emphasis on class participation. Students should thus come prepared to answer questions based on the readings. Students should be able to assess the arguments that the authors introduce and determine if they find those arguments compelling and be able to back up their assessments. **In addition, students are encouraged to follow international events either in the New York Times(web or print) or CNN.com. Major international events that occur during the semester will be discussed in class and included in the exams.**

Group Projects (15%): (More information will be given out about these projects)

Students will be placed in groups of 6-7 people. Each group will examine one state in the current international system. Twice during the semester, each group will report on how their particular state's actions are explained by the concepts and theories recently covered in class. In addition, twice during the semester, each group will be assigned to question the presenting group about their explanation and application of the concepts covered in class to the actions of their state. Each group will present twice and pose questions twice.

The presenting group will have 6-8 minutes to present their case. Following their presentation, there will be a 10 minute question and answer section led by the group assigned to question the presenting group. Finally, there will be a short 2 minute section for other members of the class and the instructor to ask questions. The presenting group is required to post a short outline of their presentation to LearnLink 24 hours before the presentation time to give the other group some time to prepare questions.

A students' grade for this part of the course will be based on a grade given by the instructor and a grade given by the other members of the group. At the end of the semester, each student is to submit a grade to the professor for each member of his or her group. The average of the group members' grades for a student will be 50% of this section's grade. My evaluation of the group's performance will make up the other 50% of the grade. My evaluation will be based on a group's understanding of their state and the state of the group they are assigned to question, as well as the materials covered in class. Group members must work together and each member in the group should have a chance to speak in the presentation or question and answer section.

Finally, these group projects are not zero-sum. The goal of the group projects is for students to examine if and how states and their actions are explained and predicted by different models and theories of international relations. Groups are not in competition with each other. Students should present logical arguments in a calm and rational manner.

LearnLink:

A Learnlink Conference has been set up for this class. I will post the syllabus, updates, world maps, and class outlines to this conference. In addition, groups are required to post their short outlines to this conference. I will also post exam review questions from both the readings and lectures. Finally, students may post general questions about the class, readings, lectures, exams, or the paper to this site and I will answer these questions on the site.

I. Levels of Analysis and Theories of International Politics

January 17- Syllabus Handed Out

January 19 Introduction to International Relations: What is international relations? How do we study it? Why is it important?

Readings: RSK Chapter 1
Nye Chapter 1

January 22- NO CLASS

Wednesday January 24th: Europe Map Quiz

January 24, 26: The Scientific Study of International Relations: How do we know what we know?

Readings: RSK Chapter 2-3
Nye Chapter 2

January 29: Group Presentation Day: Groups will introduce their states and the key actors of the state

January 31-February 2, Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism

Readings: RSK Chapters 4-5

February 5: Group Presentation Day: How does the international system affect your state and its actions?

Monday February 5th: Africa Map Quiz

February 7,9 Rational Choice, Psychological Biases, and Public Opinion

Readings: RSK Chapters 6-7

February 12: Group Presentation Day: How do individual leaders and/or public opinion affect your state and its actions?

February 14: Exam 1

II. Explaining International Conflict

February 16, 19 Why War? Diversionary Theory

Readings: RSK Chapter 8

February 21, 23 Democratic Peace,

Readings: Nye Chapters 3-4

February 26: Group Presentation Day: What explains your state's most recent military dispute?

February 28 Ethnic Conflict

Readings: RSK Chapter 9

March 2 : Asia Map Quiz and Group Presentation Day: How has democracy affected your state's foreign policy?

March 5,7 International Organizations and Alliances

Readings: Nye Chapters 5-6

March 9-March 16 NO CLASS

March 19,21,23 Conventional and Nuclear Deterrence

Readings: RSK Chapters 10-11, TBA

March 26: Group Presentation Day: How have international organizations and alliances affected your state's foreign policy?

March 28: Exam 2

III. International Political Economy

March 30, April 2 Intro to IPE and Trade Policy

Readings: RSK Chapter 12

April 4,6, 9 Trade Policy and Monetary Policy

Readings: RSK Chapter 13

Nye Chapter 7

April 11: Group Presentation Day: What explains your state's international trading policies?

April 13: Regional Organizations and The Commons

Readings: RSK Chapter 14

RSK Chapter 16

April 16: NO CLASS, PAPERS DUE

April 18: Development

Readings: RSK Chapter 15

April 20: Americas Map Quiz and Group Presentation Day: What explains your state's international monetary policy?

April 23,25 Development

April 27: Group Presentation Day: What policies should your state take in regards to its economic development.

April 30: Exam 3