

POLS 285:
Introduction to International Relations
Northern Illinois University
Fall 2017

Monday & Wednesday 11:00 - 12:15pm | Dusable Hall 461

Professor:

Dr. Ches Thurber

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Office Hours: Mon / Wed 9:00-10:30

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Course Description:

North Korea continues to develop its nuclear arsenal. Britain has voted to leave the EU. The Trump Administration want the U.S. to reconsider its role in global alliances, trade blocs, and environmental agreements. This class seeks to address why global cooperation can be so difficult even if most of the world shares similar goals of peace and prosperity. We will start by taking an historical approach, tracing major events in world history from the Peloponnesian War to the Cold War and examining how these events changed the way we think about how to overcome international conflict. We will then examine the ways in which globalization and development have created new opportunities and new challenges for international cooperation on issues from security to economic growth and from human rights to the natural environment. You will come away from the course with a set of analytic frameworks and a depth of historical knowledge that will enable you to better understand current issues in global politics and empower you to participate in the process of crafting solutions, whether that be as a future policymaker, an issue-advocate, or an engaged global citizen.

Course Format:

We will be meeting twice a week for 75 minute sessions. While some material will be presented in lecture, we will spend much of our time openly discussing the readings and topics assigned for each day. As such, it is essential that students come to class having completed the readings and participate in discussion every class period. Throughout the semester there will also be in-class exercises, free-writing activities, and simulations. Students should have paper and writing utensils available for these activities

Course Materials:

There is one required text for the course. It may be possible to utilize previous versions of this textbook, but students interested in doing so should consult the professor first. Additionally, students will need to purchase materials for the final simulation activity.

1. Henry R. Nau. *Perspectives on International Relations*, Fifth Edition. (Sage, 2017). **(PIR in Schedule)**
2. Michael Herzig and David Skidmore. *Nations: A Simulation Game in International Politics*. (Follow link on Blackboard, price is only \$3.50).

Evaluation:

1. *Class attendance, preparation and participation: (20%)*
The time we spend in class is for me the most important of this course. As such, punctual attendance is mandatory. But more important than just being present at a desk is that you are actively engaged. I expect that you have done the readings and that you try to participate in discussion each and every class section. Your class participation grade includes your participation in all simulation activities, including the final simulation to be held during the scheduled exam block.
2. *Map Quizzes, Reading Quizzes, Writing Activities: (15%)*
Over the course of the semester, two kinds of quizzes will be used in class. Map quizzes are scheduled in advance and require students to locate 5-10 countries on a blank map of a given continent. Reading quizzes will be unannounced and will consist of multiple choice questions based on the assigned reading for the day. There will also be un-announced in-class writing activities.

3. *Policy Memos: (30%)*

You will complete two short writing assignments over the course of the semester. These will be 2-page analytic memos addressing a current issue in international relations. You will be given a general topic area for each memo, but you will have considerable latitude as to the specific issue you choose to address. The main expectation of the policy memo is that you incorporate theory we discuss in class to analyze a contemporary global challenge. You will also be expected to offer some recommendations for what should be done to address this challenge. Each memo will be worth 15% of your final grade.

4. *Examinations: (35%)*

There will be two exams, both of which will be held during normal class hours. The midterm will count for 15% of your grade while the final will count for 20%. I will provide a list of possible exam questions one week before the exam. I encourage you to work with others to plan your answers in advance, but your work on exam day must be your own, produced without the assistance of books or notes.

Course Policies:

1. Successful completion of this course requires consistent, punctual attendance, completing the readings prior to the start of class, and active participation. If you must miss class due to a conflicting responsibility or an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact me to discuss the situation. I will generally require a short written assignment to be submitted in lieu of class attendance. Any more than 2 absences without prior notification and make-up work will affect your final grade.
2. If you think you need to delay taking an exam or submitting a written assignment, you should talk to me, generally at least two weeks before the exam/due date. Such extensions are never guaranteed, but will be based on university policy, exigency of the circumstances, and timeliness of the request (the earlier the better). Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization from me will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be assigned.
3. A missed quiz or writing activity is less serious in nature. If you miss a quiz, usually due to absence or tardiness, you will be given the opportunity to take a make-up 5 minutes before the next class. The questions may be different and the scoring system more difficult. Students who miss a writing activity are responsible for determining this on their own, locating the activity on Blackboard, and submitting it to the TA at the beginning of the next class. Failure to make-up quizzes or writing activities will result in a grade of 0.
4. Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit both of the policy memos for a higher grade. Revisions are due no later than two weeks following the return

of the original memo. Revisions should be substantive and significant, addressing each of the comments raised by the grader. Simply correcting typos or changing a few words will not receive credit and will likely rouse the ire of the professor! Grades may be improved up to half-way between the original grade received and 100 percent.

5. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the course. If you are unsure as to whether your approach for any given assignment may constitute plagiarism, please be sure to double check with the professor prior to handing in your assignment. Political Science department resources pertaining to plagiarism may be found at: <http://www.niu.edu/polisci/audience/plagiarism.shtml>
6. If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu. Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations.
7. I am committed to your success in this class – if you feel that you are not performing to your expectations, please come and see me. I am available to answer any questions you may have about course assignments, requirements or content. I generally answer e-mails within 24 hrs on weekdays, and would be happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you if you are unavailable during my posted office hours.

Letter Grade Distribution:

You will receive a percentage score for each assignment above that can be translated into a letter grade according to the scale below.

>= 93.00	A	77.00 - 79.99	C+
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 76.99	C
87.00 - 89.99	B+	60.00 - 69.99	D
83.00 - 86.99	B	<= 59.99	F
80.00 - 82.99	B-		

Tentative Course Outline:

Updates will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

Week 1: Introduction

Mon 8/28 Water Pricing Game

- PIR Preface
- BB: James Mattis on Reading

Wed 8/30 Approaches to the Study of IR

- PIR Introduction
- PIR Ch. 1: pp. 37-41

Key Questions:

- What made cooperation in the water pricing game so difficult? Are NIU students distrustful misanthropes?!? And what does this have to do with IR?
- How do different types of thinkers approach the study of international affairs? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these different ways of trying to learn the lessons of history?

Week 2: Thinking Analytically About IR

Mon 9/4 *Labor Day – No Class*

Wed 9/6 IR Frameworks

- PIR Ch. 1
- BB: Drezner, "Theories of International Politics... and Zombies"

Key Questions:

- How do different levels of analysis provide different explanations for Western intervention in Iraq? Syria? The DRC?
- What contemporary issues do the paradigms of IR explain well? What do they fail to address? How useful, if at all, are these frameworks in analyzing international relations?

Week 3: IR of Ancient and Early Modern Europe

Mon 9/11 The Peloponnesian War

- BB: Thucydides, Excerpts

Wed 9/13 Balance of Power in Europe and China

- BB: Nye, "From Westphalia to WWI"
- BB: Hui, "Insights from Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe"

Key Questions:

- What drove Athens and Sparta to war? Could war have been avoided?
- What commentary does Thucydides offer on the relationship between morality, democracy, and war?
- How did the concept and practice of the balance of power evolve in Europe over the 19th century?
- How does the Warring States period in China compare with Ancient Greece? 19th Century Europe? How similar/different are the lessons we might draw?

Week 4: Two World Wars

Mon 9/18 World War I: A Failure to Balance?

- PIR: Ch. 2
- *Map Quiz 1: Europe*

Wed 9/19 The Collective Security Experiment

- PIR: Ch. 3

Key Questions:

- What are some of the contending explanations for the outbreak of WWI?
- What lessons did global policymakers draw from the experience of WWI? What solutions did they envision to rid the world of the scourge of war?
- Why did the League of Nations experiment fail? Can the idealistic effort to resolve conflict through international laws and institutions be blamed for WWII?

Week 5: The Cold War

Mon 9/25 The Cold War

- PIR: Ch. 4

Wed 9/27 Cuban Missile Crisis Simulation

- BB: Simulation Materials

Fri 9/29 *POLICY MEMO #1 DUE AT 5 PM*

Key Questions:

- How did the creation of the post-war order reflect the “lessons learned” from the 30 years crisis?
- What are different explanations for the end of the Cold War?
- What happened in the Cuban Missile Crisis? Was cooperation more or less difficult than in the water pricing game?

Week 6: A More Global IR

Mon 10/2 Feminist IR Theory

- BB: Pevehouse and Goldstein "Gender Theories"
- BB: Tickner, "Man, the State, and War"
- *Map Quiz 2: East Asia*

Wed 10/4 Non-Western Perspectives

- BB: Grice, "Towards Non-Western Histories in IR Textbooks"
- BB: Blanton and Kegley, "World Politics and the Global South"
- BB: Henderson, "DuBois, Locke, and the Howard School's Challenge to White Supremacist IR Theory"

Key Questions:

- How much of IR has been biased by an overemphasis on male perspectives of European history?
- What kinds of questions have been ignored? What assumptions might prove false when we look more closely at other regions of the world? At the viewpoints of and experiences of women?

Week 7: Midterm Week

Mon 10/9 Review Day

Wed 10/11 MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8: After the Cold War...Now What?

Mon 10/16 Back to the Future: The Endurance of Realpolitik

- BB: Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future" (skim)
- PIR: Ch. 5

Wed 10/18 End of History or Clash of Civs?

- PIR: Ch. 7 (to p. 333)
- BB: Fukuyama, "The End of History" (skim)
- BB: Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" (skim)

Key Questions:

- What different predictions did scholars make about global order after the Cold War? Whose predictions look most accurate a quarter of a century later?
- What implications has American hegemony had for international relations? Will this continue?

Week 9: Institutions and Integration

Mon 10/23 International Institutions

- PIR: Ch. 6
- *MAP QUIZ 3: Africa*

Wed 10/25 The EU and ASEAN

- BB: Pevehouse and Goldstein, "International Integration"
- BB: Glas, "Long-term Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia"

Key Questions:

- How do institutions help overcome the "dilemmas" that lead to conflict? Do they work?

- What are some examples of international organizations? In what ways are they effective? In what ways are they not?

Week 10: Globalization of the World Economy

Mon 10/30 International Trade

- PIR: Ch. 8, pp. 347-380
- BB: Rodrik, "Trading in Illusions"
- *MAP QUIZ 4: Central and South America*

Wed 11/1 Finance and Investment

- BB: Drezner, "The Irony of Global Economic Governance: The System Worked"
- PIR: Ch. 8, pp. 380-406

Key Questions:

- Why do most economists support freer trade policies? Why are such policies so politically unpopular?
- Are international economic institutions to blame for the financial crisis? Or do they present the best hope of preventing similar economic collapses?

Week 11: Development and Inequality

Mon 10/30 International Development

- PIR: Ch. 9, pp. 407-456
- *MAP QUIZ 4: Central and South America*

Wed 11/1 Dependency and Inequality

- PIR: Ch. 10
- BB: Radelet, "Progress in the Global War on Poverty"

Key Questions:

- What policies have states and international organizations pursued to promote global economic development? To what degree have they worked?
- How do legacies of imperialism and colonialism continue to affect the economies of less developed states? What do critics of the global economic order mean when they use the term "neo-colonialism"?

Week 12: Globalization of Violence

Mon 11/6 Proliferation of WMD

- BB: Pevehouse and Goldstein, "Weapons of Mass Destruction"
- BB: Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb"
- BB: CFR, "North Korea's Military Capabilities"

Wed 11/8 Civil War and Terrorism

- BB: Frieden et al, "Violence by Non-State Actors"
- BB: "The Rise of ISIS"
- BB: CFR, "Who's Who in the Syrian Civil War"

Key Questions:

- Are nuclear weapons a source of stability or instability today? To what length and through what means should actors seek to limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction?
- Why do actors employ terrorism? Is there a strategic logic to terrorism?

Week 13: People Power in IR

Mon 11/13 Human Rights

- Frieden et al, "Human Rights"
- *MAP QUIZ 5: Middle East*

Wed 11/15 NGOs and Nonviolent Action

- ERWP: Keck and Sikkink, "Activists Beyond Borders"
- BB: Chenoweth and Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works"

Key Questions:

- Do international laws and norms of human rights influence the behavior of actors in the international system? What laws and norms seem to be particularly powerful?
- Can individuals alter the behavior of states? What strategies can activists use to seek social and political change at the international level?

Fri 11/17 *POLICY MEMO #2 DUE AT 5 PM*

Week 14: Transnational Issues

Mon 11/20 The Environment, Health, and Criminal Networks

- BB: Mingst and Arreguin-Toft, "Transnational Issues"

Wed 11/22 *Happy Thanksgiving!*

Key Questions:

- How can international actors work to address the spread of communicable diseases? illicit criminal networks? cyber hacking?

Week 15: Final Thoughts on Power and Peace

Mon 11/27 The Future of Peace

- PIR: Conclusion
- BB: Jervis, "The Era of Leading Power Peace"
- BB: Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*

Key Questions:

- What are the long term trends in global conflict? What best accounts for these trends? Should we expect them to continue?

Wed 11/29 Final Exam Review

Week 16: Final Exam and Nations Simulation

Mon 12/4 Final Exam

Wed 12/6 Simulation Day 1

- BB: Simulation Materials

SIMULATION DAY 2: Wed December 13, 10:00am - 11:50am
