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

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 - 12:15pm | Dusable Hall 461

Professor:

Dr. Ches Thurber  
Office: 414 Zulauf Hall  
Email: cthurber@niu.edu  
Office Hours: Tue / Thu 9:00 - 10:30am

Teaching Assistant:

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Course Description:

This course offers a broad overview of security challenges facing policymakers and citizens in the 21st century. We will begin with a “traditional” approach to security studies, examining questions surrounding the causes of war, the art of strategy, and the logic of deterrence. We will then move on to address the complex threats posed to security in the 21st century: from nuclear proliferation to environmental conflict, from terrorism to transnational organized crime, and from cyberwarfare to nonviolent resistance. By the end of the course, students are expected to demonstrate not only a deep understanding of each of these concepts, but also an ability to place contemporary challenges in their broader historical contexts and to evaluate the costs and benefits of potential policy responses.

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 and role-plays. Audio-visual materials may also be used as appropriate.
Course Materials:

All readings will be made available on Blackboard.

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.

2. **Reading Quizzes: (5%)**
   Over the course of the semester, there will be 5-10 unannounced reading quizzes. They will consist of multiple choice questions based on the assigned reading for the day.

3. **Storify: (5%)**
   Over the course of the semester, students will build and maintain a "Storify" website focused on a specific theme or issue in contemporary international security. The topic will be related to that of the policy memo (below). Grades will be assigned on the quantity and quality of information posted on the site.

4. **Policy Memo: (35%)**
   You will complete a short writing assignment that you will work on over the course of the semester. It will be a 4-5 page analytic memo addressing a current issue in international security. 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. You will be required to submit multiple drafts, with each draft worth a portion of the overall grade.

5. **Examinations: (35%)**
   There will be two exams: a midterm will be held in class and a final exam will be held during the designated final exam period. 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 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 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 quiz and do not show up for a make-up will receive a 0.

4. 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

5. 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.

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;= 93.00</td>
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<td>83.00 - 86.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.00 - 82.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
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POLS 387: International Security  3  Spring 2017
Tentative Course Outline:
Updates will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

Week 1: Introduction

Tue 1/17  Water Pricing Game

Thu 1/19  Approaches to the Study of Security
- James Mattis on Reading
- Gavin, "Thinking Historically"
- Rovner, "Warring Tribes Studying War and Peace"

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 international security?
- How do different types of thinkers approach the study of international security? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these different ways of trying to learn the lessons of history?

Week 2: Security Frameworks

Tue 1/24  Conceptualizing 'Security'?
- Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?"

Thu 1/26  Trends in Global Security
- National Intelligence Council, "Global Trends 2013"
- Goujon, "A Simple Tool for Understanding the Trump Presidency"

Key Questions:
- What do we mean by "security" in the international system? Whose security do we mean and from what threats? How does the definition of security change depending on the actor involved?
- How are these differences manifested in the NIC, HSR, and Stratfor analyses?
Weeks 3-4: The Causes of War

Tue 1/31  Systemic Causes and Constraints
- Mearsheimer, From *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*
- Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War"

Thu 2/2  Strategic Dilemmas
- Oye, "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy"
- Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War"

Tue 2/7  Domestic Politics
- Russett, "The Democratic Peace"
- Levy, "Domestic Politics and War"

Thu 2/9  Leaders at War
- Kahneman and Renshon, "Why Hawks Win"
- Saunders, "What a President Trump Means for Foreign Policy"

Key Questions:
- How do major theories of war differ in their foundational assumptions about the nature of global actors and their interests?
- How do each of these theories fare against historical evidence over the course of the 20th century?
- How do the theories differ in the prescriptions they would provide to policymakers? Can these theories inform policy?

Week 5: Strategy and Ethics in War

Mon 2/13  MEMO FIRST DRAFT DUE AT 5 PM

Tue 2/14  Strategy
- Cassidy and Tame, "The Wages of War Without Strategy"
- Art, "The Four Functions of Force"

Thu 2/16  Ethics
- Excerpts from Thucydides, "The Peloponnesian War"
- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Ch. 1
Key Questions:

- How do we define "strategy"? Is it a useful concept in the analysis of security and war?
- What are the four functions of force? How does this help think about the relationship between policy, strategy and military action?
- How can democracies balance realist imperatives with values of transparency, rule of law, and universal human rights?

**Weeks 6-7: Strategy and Policy in the Nuclear Age**

**Tue 2/21** The Logic of Nuclear Deterrence

- Nichols, "No Other Choice: Why the US Dropped the Atomic Bomb on Japan"
- Smith, "Nuclear Deterrence: Behind the Strategic and Ethical Debate"

**Thu 2/23** Nuclear (Non)Proliferation

- NTI, "The Nuclear Threat"
- Miller, "U.S. Nonproliferation Policy is an Invisible Success Story"
- Waltz, "Nuclear Weapons: Why More May Be Better"

**Tue 2/28** Contemporary Debates

- Broad and Pecanha, "The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Simple Guide"
- Sanger and Broad, "Obama Unlikely to Vow No First Use of Nuclear Weapons"
- Friedman, "Ballistic Missile Defense and Reality"

**Thu 3/1** Review Day

Key Questions:

- What is the logic of deterrence theory? What assumptions must hold in order for deterrence to "work"?
- To what degree do we owe the post-WWII peace to nuclear deterrence? Is a world with more nuclear weapons necessarily a more dangerous one?
- What should US nuclear policy be today? What are the implications of upgrading the US nuclear arsenal? Building missile defense installations? Vowing no first-use? To what lengths should the US go to prevent other states from acquiring the bomb?
Week 8: Midterm Week

Tue 3/7  MIDTERM EXAM

Thu 3/9  Cuban Missile Crisis Simulation
  • CIA Documents

SPRING BREAK

Mon 3/20  MEMO SECOND DRAFT DUE AT 5 PM

Mon 5/1  MEMO FINAL DRAFT DUE AT 5 PM

Second Half Topics

• Civil Wars
• Terrorism
• Cyber and Space Warfare
• Humanitarian Intervention
• Environmental Conflict
• Criminal Networks
• Migration and Displacement
• Nonviolent Conflict

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 9, 10:00am - 11:50pm