

POL130: Introduction to International Relations

Instructor: Summer Forester
Email: sforeste@purdue.edu
Office: Mann Hall, Room 166

Course Description

This course is an introductory survey into the theories and practice of international relations. This course will introduce you to the factors that have been and continue to be influential in the development of the international system we live in today. More specifically, the course is designed to provide you with an understanding of the fundamental concepts, theories, and debates in international relations. We will grapple with questions like: What causes war? Why and how has war changed over time? Who has power in the international system, and why? Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply to all humans? These questions, among many others, motivate scholars of international relations. As such, we will examine the theories, methodologies, and debates that shape the answers to pressing questions of international relations.

Course Goals

This course introduces you to the theories and practices of international relations, helping you make sense of the major trends that are shaping our world. Over the course of the semester, you should expect to develop: (1) a working knowledge of the theories used in international relations and an ability to both defend and critique their utility, (2) an understanding of the levels of analysis through which different issues can be considered, and (3) an ability to apply international relations theories and concepts to real-world events. Moreover, if you are an active and will participant in this course, then you can expect to hone your analytical reading, writing, and reasoning skills over the course of the semester. The course structure and requirements are designed to help us achieve these goals.

The course is divided into two parts:

- Part I: Concepts and Theories in International Relations
- Part II: Issues in International Relations

This will be a reading, writing, discussion, and student-engagement intensive class designed to develop your critical thinking skills. To this end, you should expect to:

- Discuss, raise questions, and present oral and written arguments on the existing theoretical perspectives of international relations
- Summarize and evaluate international events according to theoretical perspectives
- Role-play actors in international politics and formulate/construct policies in specific circumstances of world affairs

Required Texts

There is one required textbook for the course:

Keith L. Shimko. 2013. *International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies*. 4th ed. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Other articles and materials will be made available to you electronically through Blackboard. I may also use other materials like movies, news clippings, documentaries, and podcasts that will illustrate various themes that we are exploring in the course.

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is provisional and subject to change depending on the needs of the course and the surrounding world. Should any changes to the syllabus be made, I will email you and remind of you the changes in class.

Course Requirements

Reading Notes	10
IR Journal	15
Simulation	15
Midterm	20
Class Participation	10
Final paper:	
-Topic selection	5
-Outline	5
-Rough Draft	10
-Final Draft	15
<u>Total paper points</u>	<u>30</u>
Total Class Points	100

Reading Notes (10 points):

Due date: on the day of the class pertaining to the reading

Each week you will receive a copy of notes summarizing the week's assigned readings, but some key terms and concepts will be missing from the notes. As you read, you will fill-in the missing content to create a complete set of notes.

IR Journal (15 points):

Due date: final week of class

During the first week of the course, each of you will sign up to come to my office. During this meeting, you will select an international event, conflict, or situation to follow over the course of the semester. Each week, you will read and comment on three pieces of media (newspaper/magazine articles; blog posts; videos from news outlets; etc), connecting them to the theories, concepts, and/or questions that we are exploring in class. Be sure to properly cite the materials, providing copies of the media material (or links to videos, etc). I will provide you feedback on your journal entries early in the course so that you can continually improve your

responses. You will be responsible for keeping up-to-date with the news in your country and providing an overview of current events for your colleagues from time to time during the course.

Blank Panther Simulation (15 points)

See syllabus for simulation dates.

How would the world respond to the emergence of Wakanda, a militarily strong, wealthy African state? In this simulation, you will be divided into different nations (including a Wakanda contingency) and we will hold a UN general meeting to debate whether or not Wakanda can join the UN Security Council. As we get nearer to the simulation, we will discuss the details of the simulation in greater detail.

Class Participation (10 points):

You are expected to come to class prepared. This means that you have not only read, but have also given serious thought to what you have read. Attentive and critical reading is the absolute best way to prepare for class, quizzes, papers, and exams. Of course, in order to participate in class, you have to attend class. You will learn so much if you attend class every day, and I expect you to do so. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered or announcements made that day. This class is driven by student discussion and interaction; thus, attendance is critical. I look forward to getting to know you.

Final Paper (30 points total):

Due date: Final day of class

You will submit 4 - 5 page analytical paper on the issue that you tracked over the course of the semester in your IR journal. You will work closely with your colleagues and me to organize the structure of your paper and then edit drafts of your work. You will submit your paper in four stages: first, you will submit your topic and five academic sources that address this topic. Second, you will submit an outline of your paper. Then, you will submit a rough draft of your paper, before submitting your final paper during the last week of class. As part of your final paper grade, you will submit copies of feedback that you provided to members of your writing group, copies of the feedback that your writing group provided you, and a short memo of how you addressed your reviewer comments. I will provide a detailed rubric for each section of this assignment.

Course Policies & Expectations

Seeking assistance: Students should *not hesitate to seek assistance* from me. Assistance is best sought *before* rather than after assignments and exams. If you have concerns about the material or course, please make use of office hours. If you have a particular question that requires a straightforward response you may email me, but questions about difficult material, assignments, or concerns you have with the course are usually best addressed in person – whether in office hours or during class itself.

Attendance: Daily attendance is taken seriously for this class, and unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. After your third *unexcused* absence, you will lose 1% from your final overall class grade for each class missed. For an absence to be considered *excused*, it must be

related to a University-sponsored activity or a properly documented personal/family emergency or illness. It is your responsibility to provide official documentation.

Should an absence occur (unexpected or expected), students are responsible for obtaining the course materials missed (i.e. notes, activity outlines, etc.) from a classmate. Should additional clarification of course material be needed, students may then contact me.

Please note that unexcused absences, late arrivals, early departures (without prior approval), and any rude or disruptive behavior (texting, sleeping, inappropriate computer usage, etc.) may also reduce your grade.

Cell phones: Please silence your cell phones and keep them out of sight during class.

Laptops: Laptops will not be permitted in this course unless you gain special permission from the professor. This is a discussion-centered course and so students should be focused on speaking as much as writing. A pen and paper should suffice for taking notes. **PROTIP:** studies have demonstrated the advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. Students who take notes by hand do better on exams than students who take notes on a computer (even when the internet is disabled).

Disability: Students with disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

Use of Blackboard: This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard will be used to distribute course readings, materials, and to communicate and collaborate online. Students also will turn in assignments through Blackboard. You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are not an excuse for late or unfinished assignments.

Use of email: Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your @purdue.edu email for university and course-related information and announcements.

Policy on academic honesty: Purdue University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Academic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. In this class, students are encouraged to work with other students if it helps them master course material, but exams and assignments must represent an individual's own, original contributions. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them.

Academic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of academic work or a career. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information, please see: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>.

Assessment:

In this course, final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

93-100% = A 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+ 67-69% = D+
90-92% = A- 83-86% = B 73-76% = C 63-66% = D
80-82% = B- 70/72% = C- 60-62% = D 59% and below =F

At the end of the semester, a course average of 89.5 will be rounded up to a 90, a 79.5 up to an 80, a 69.5 up to a 70, and a 59.5 up to a 60. *Do not expect rounding to go beyond this point.*

Thus, a course average of 88.8 is a B+, a 79.2 is a C+, a 68.9 is a D+, and so on.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to raise a student's grade to reflect extraordinary improvement and effort if earned. From time to time, I will update the online gradebook as a courtesy to students. Grades will be posted online only after papers and exams have been turned back in class.

University Wide Emergency Procedures: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting your professor via email (sforeste@purdue.edu).

Course Schedule

Part I: Concepts and Theories of International Relations

Week 1

Introduction to Course & International Relations

Reading:

1. Shimko, Introduction for the Student: Why Study International Relations?
2. "Gendered Lenses on World Politics," excerpt from *Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium*, A. S. Runyan and V. S. Peterson (available on blackboard)

Week 2

Change and Continuity in International History

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 1
2. Bonus content: Excerpts from *On Writing*, S. King

Assignment Due: Paper topic and five academic sources

Week 3

Contending Perspectives on International Relations, Realism & Liberalism

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 2
2. Excerpt from *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, D. Drezner (available on blackboard)

Week 4

Contending Perspectives on International Relations, Marxism, Constructivism

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 2
2. Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K (2001). "[Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics.](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, pages 391 – 416.

Week 5

Contending Perspectives on International Relations, Feminism

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 2
2. Tickner, J. Ann. 1992. "Engendered Insecurities: Feminist Perspectives on International Relations." In *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*, J. Ann Tickner. New York: Columbia University Press, Ch.1

Assignment due: Paper outline

Week 6

Power Politics

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 3
2. Goddard, Stacie and Daniel H. Nexon, (2016). "The Dynamics of Global Power Politics: A Framework for Analysis," *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 1 (1), Pages 4 – 18, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogv007>

Week 7

War and Democracy

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 4

Week 8

Human Nature

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 5
2. Excerpt from *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics*, Caron Gentry and Laura Sjoberg (2015)

Part II: Issues in International Relations

Week 9

The IMF, Global Inequality, and Development
Globalization and Sovereignty

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 7
2. Shimko, Chapter 8

Week 10

International Law

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 9
2. Daphne Eviater, November 3, 2014: "Does International Law Matter,"
<https://www.justsecurity.org/16999/international-law-matter/>

Week 11

International Terrorism

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 12

Assignment Due: Full Draft of Final Paper

Week 12

The Global Commons

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 13
2. Trombetta, Maria Julia (2008), "Environmental Discourse and Climate Change: Analysing the Discourse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21 (4): 585 – 602.

Week 13

UN and Humanitarian Intervention & *Black Panther* Simulation Introduction

Reading:

1. Shimko, Chapter 10
2. "Wakanda, Afrofuturism, and Decolonizing International Relations Scholarship,"
<http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2018/02/06/wakanda-afrofuturism-and-decolonizing-international-relations-scholarship/>

Week 14

Black Panther simulation

Week 15

Journal presentations, final discussions, and concluding thoughts
Readings TBD

Assignment Due: IR Journals