

PSC 230: Introduction to International Relations

Spring 2022

Instructor: Sara Norrevik

Classroom: Bacon Hall 205

Class Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:00-12:50 pm

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 pm

Office: Bacon Hall, TBD

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores key theoretical arguments and concepts to the study of the International Politics. Our goal is to gain a better understanding of complex interactions between political actors in the world – individuals, states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and other actors. Historical and current events will be analyzed using classical and new theories in international relations. The primary objective is to discuss and explain international political phenomena, including conflict and cooperation, using major theoretical approaches to the study of international relations including Realism, Liberalism, Marxism, Constructivism and Feminism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Understand and apply key concepts and major theories to the study of international relations orally and in writing
2. Evaluate existing arguments about international relations and discuss their strengths and weaknesses
3. Understand major empirical contributions and shortcomings in international relations research
4. Develop consistent and coherent written and oral arguments about political phenomena
5. Demonstrate an improvement in applying social scientific reasoning

REQUIRED COURSE LITERATURE

One required book is used which is available at the campus bookstore. In addition, other readings will be assigned which are available online and/or posted on Blackboard (**). You are expected to read the assigned readings listed before attending class.

Grieco, J., G. J. Ikenberry, and M. Mastanduno. *Introduction to International Relations*. (2017). Macmillan Higher Education

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Haass, Richard. *The World*. (2020). Penguin US.

- Purchase is optional. Selected texts are provided by the Instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Participation 10% (participation and class discussions 5%; presenting a current event in class 5%): Every student will present a current issue of interest for international relations and present it to the class, including its relevance for IR-theory. Discussion of current events takes place on Wednesdays. For the session where you are scheduled to serve as leader you are expected to write a **1-page summary** of the readings assigned for that day and prepare **an original discussion question** based on the readings for the class to discuss. Reading summaries are due at the start of your discussion session, via email or hardcopy to the Instructor. Late submissions will not be accepted, unless you notify the Instructor with a valid reason. If you fail to attend class the day you are scheduled to serve as a discussion leader, you will not be allowed to reschedule unless proper documentation is provided (medical documentation, military duty, etc.).

II. Online Quizzes and Reactions 20% (total of 3 quizzes and 3 written reaction; each is worth 3.33% of your overall course grade). The quizzes are in multiple-choice format (10 questions focusing on material from class lectures and assigned readings) and available on Blackboard from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm on the dates listed in the course plan. You have 20 minutes to complete each quiz. No make-up quizzes unless proper documentation is provided (medical documentation, military duty, etc.). Online reactions are also available in Blackboard from 9.00am until 9.00pm. You are expected to write a 4-5 sentence reaction addressing a question posted by the Instructor.

III. SUNY MEU or UN Simulation, incl. draft resolutions and presentations 20% (simulation participation 10%; draft resolution 10%):

Students will engage in a 3-day simulation of an International Organization on an issue assigned by the instructor, alternatively, participate in SUNY Model European Union which is hosted at Buffalo State this year and welcomes 100+ students from the US Northeast and Europe. In both cases, each student serves as a delegate of a country, collaborating in groups of 4 (approximately) to represent that country. Information about the SUNY MEU is available on the [website](#) and provided by the Instructor, including the SUNY MEU Bluebook.

For the UN Simulation week 11: each delegate presents their country's position on the issue and engage in formal and informal debates with other delegates on **Day 1**. On **Day 2**, delegates continue to engage in debates and attempt to draft a resolution to address the issue at hand. On **Day 3**, working groups present their resolutions to the class. In addition to participating in the simulations, each student hands in a 1-2 page draft resolution on the issue, that is consistent with the policy positions held by their respective country. **Late submissions will not be accepted.** Draft resolutions should be sent to the Instructor by April 8th. Resolutions are presented in class and voted upon on April 11th and 13th. Further information on this assignment will be discussed in class and available on Blackboard.

IV. Two Exams 50 % (25% each). The First Exam will be given on Friday, March 11th. The Final Exam will be given during finals week. No make-up exams unless proper documentation is provided (medical documentation, military duty, etc.).

ASSESSMENT

The course requirements help to evaluate each student’s progress in satisfying the learning objectives of the course. The table below highlights the course’s learning outcomes and the relevant course assignments that measure the achievement of each outcome.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measure(s)
Understand and apply key concepts and major theories to the study of International Relations politics orally and in writing	Class discussions and current events presentation, IO Simulations, Exam 1, and Exam 2, Reactions, Quizzes
Evaluate existing arguments about international relations and discuss their strengths and weaknesses	Class discussions and current events presentation, Exam 1, and Exam 2, Reactions, Quizzes
Understand major empirical contributions and shortcomings in International Relations politics research	Class discussions and current events presentation, Exam 1, and Exam 2, Reactions, Quizzes
Develop consistent and coherent written and oral arguments about political phenomena	Current events presentation, IO Simulations, Exam 1, and Exam 2, Reactions, Quizzes
Demonstrate an improvement in applying social scientific reasoning	Class discussions and current events presentation, Exam 1, and Exam 2, Reactions, Quizzes

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Complete readings in advance of the assigned date!

Week 1 (Jan 31 – Feb 4): Course Introduction

- Read Course Syllabus
- Current Events presentation by Instructor
- Online assignment for Monday:

Watch video for an introduction to current issues in international politics:

- Ian Bremmer: State of the World 2021 | GZERO Media:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urDEnNyOTqA>

Week 2 (Feb 7–11): What is International Relations?

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 1, pp. 2-30

Week 3 (Feb 14–18): Emergence of the Global State-centric System

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 2, pp. 32-74
- Bildt, Carl. 2019. Remembering the Miracle of 1989” *Project Syndicate* **
- **Friday, February 18th – Online Reaction #1**

Week 4 (Feb 23–25): Theories of International Relations

NOTE: NO CLASSES FEB 22nd – PRESIDENT’S DAY

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 3, pp. 76-111
- **Friday, February 25th – Online QUIZ #1**

Week 5 (Feb 28–March 4): Framing International Relations: International Laws and Organizations

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 5, pp. 148-192

Week 6 (March 7 –11): War: A Persistent Features of International Relations?

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 6, pp. 194-233
- **March 11th – FIRST EXAM in Blackboard**

Week 7 (March 14–18): How to Achieve Peace?

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 7, pp. 236-264
- **Friday, March 18th – Online Reaction #2**

Week 8 (March 21–25): Technology and Weapons of Mass Destruction

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 8, pp. 266-302 (Instructor will advise on focused readings)
- Wolfsthal, Jon. 2017. “How to Reason With a Nuclear Rogue,” Foreign Policy**
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/12/north-korea-nukes-icbm-test-nuclear-weapons/>
- About William Perry’s project to end nuclear
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/01/william-perry-nuclear-weapons-proliferation-214604>
- Video “Bill Perry’s Nuclear Nightmare” (6 minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUuOskX3z7U>

Week 9 (March 28– April 2): SPRING RECESS

NO CLASSES

Week 10 (Apr 4–8): Simulation of an International Organizations: Model European Union

- NOTE: Regular classes April 4th and 6th. The class on April 8th is substituted with SUNY MEU participation.
- Backgrounder on the EU: Council on Foreign Relations, “[How Does the European Union Work?](#)”
- Video: “[The Origins of European Integration](#)” (TEPSA video)

- Students engage in negotiations to simulate an International Organization during Week 10 and Week 11. They can join the SUNY Model European Union (SUNY MEU) which takes place on campus April 7-9; alternatively, do an in-class simulation of the United Nations General Assembly. For both options, students form groups of 2-4 students to represent a country and draft resolutions that advance their country's preferences, participate in negotiations, and vote on a final resolution.
- Students who participate in SUNY MEU (April 7-8) are not required to attend classes the following week (April 11-15).

SUNY MEU READINGS

- Course material provided on the SUNY MEU website: <https://ieuss.buffalostate.edu/sunymeu-2022-suny-buffalo-state>
- SUNY MEU Bluebook *provided by the Instructor*
- SUNY MEU Schedule:
 - Thursday, April 7: 1-3pm conference check-in
 - Thursday, April 7: 3pm – opening ceremony & banquet, organizing meetings
 - Friday, April 8: Model EU meetings all day
 - Friday evening: Student event
 - Saturday, April 9: Model EU meetings all day
 - Saturday evening: 7pm closing ceremony & banquet
- More information to follow in class

Week 11 (April 11-15): Simulation of an International Organizations: United Nations

- NOTE: Students who participate in SUNY MEU are not required to attend classes this week
- For students participating in the UN simulation, a resolution is drafted collaboratively in groups of 2-4 and sent to the Instructor by April 11th. Student debate resolutions in class and vote on a final resolution in class.

UN READINGS

- The World: A Brief Introduction (Haass), pages 270-279 *provided by the Instructor*
- United Nations Charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>
- More information to follow in class

Week 12 (April 18–22): International Political Economy

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 9, pp. 310-353
- **Friday, April 8th – Online QUIZ #2**

Week 13 (April 25-29): States and Markets in the World Economy; Dilemmas of Development

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 10, pp. 356-390 and pp. 392-343
- [“As cash fades, will bitcoin keep protest alive in the surveillance age?”](#) by Alex Gladstein.
- **Friday, April 15th – Online Reaction #3**

Week 14 (May 2–6): Contemporary Challenges in IR: Non-State Actors

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 12, pp. 434-462

Week 15 (May 9–13): Global Environmental Politics

- Grieco et al.: Chapter 12, pp. 434-462
- Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162:1243–1267. **

Online assignment for Friday:

- Watch The 11th Hour (Netflix)

Week 16: Final Exam Date WEDNESDAY MAY 18

Exam available online May 18th, between 9.00am - 9.00pm. Students have 60 minutes to complete it.

GRADING POLICY

Grade	Percentage
A	93.0% -100.00%
A-	90.0% - 92.9%
B+	87.0% - 89.9%
B	83.0% - 86.9%
B-	80.0% - 82.9%
C+	77.0% - 79.9%
C	73.0% - 76.9%
C-	70.0% - 72.9%
D+	67.0% - 69.9%
D	60.0% - 66.9%
E	59.9 or below

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to fully adhere to the academic integrity regulations set forth by the SUNY Buffalo State. Any violation of the regulations will result in appropriate disciplinary action as set forth in University policy. Additional information regarding University policy is available at:

<http://academicstandards.buffalostate.edu/>.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to follow the University Classroom Conduct regulations. **Cell phone use during class time will not be tolerated (in-class use can result in a grade reduction).** Additional information

regarding classroom etiquette is available at: <http://academicaffairs.buffalostate.edu/viii-student-conduct>.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination law that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. The legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

Any student who requires accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability is invited to make his or her needs known to the instructor and to the director of the Student Accessibility Services Office, Butler Library 160, (716) 878-4500.

TUTORING RESOURCES

Buffalo State offers a wide array of FREE tutoring services. Check out the Academic Commons website for details: <http://academiccommons.buffalostate.edu/tutoring>