

POLI 2057: Introduction to International Politics

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:20pm Spring 2015

100 Dodson

Instructor

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description: This course is an introductory lecture in international relations, a subfield of political science. No previous coursework or background in international relations or political science is required. The general purpose of the course is twofold: the first is to provide students with the current theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches utilized in the study of international relations, including the approaches used in more specific areas such as conflict and international political economy. The second goal of the course is to expand students' knowledge of international affairs and institutions, including historical and contemporary issues of significance. These two purposes are not mutually exclusive, and as such there will be a large degree of interplay between them, including the use of the theoretical frameworks presented to contextualize and interpret current events.

General Education: This course counts as part of the General Education curriculum at LSU, the purpose of which is described as follows on the Faculty Senate website (<http://www.cae.lsu.edu/genedhome/>):

The general education of LSU students spans the four years of undergraduate study. In courses designated as general education, students begin a process of developing competencies or essential learning outcomes which continues through their study in upper-level elective courses and courses in the major field of study. LSU's General Education Component represents a conviction on the part of the faculty that LSU graduates will be able to communicate effectively through multiple media; will have a basic appreciation of historical, cultural and philosophical complexity; will be aware of the economic, political, cultural, and linguistic factors which inform global interdependence; will be able to identify and solve important problems through research-based inquiry which employs scientific and mathematical methods, and appropriate technology; and will have the requisite abilities and motivation to participate effectively in the civic life of communities.

Required Text: Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, *International Relations*, 10th edition (Full)

In addition to the selections from the textbook above, additional supplementary readings will be made available on *Moodle* or in Middleton library. As this course is also focused on current events in international politics, students are expected to remain abreast of the state of current international affairs through the utilization of newspapers, periodicals, and other sources of international news. This information may be utilized in class and subject to unannounced quizzes. A list of suggested sources is provided on the course *Moodle* page.

Course Requirements: The structure of the class will be a mix of lecture as well as group discussion. To help facilitate the class discussion, it is imperative that students come prepared to each class having read that week's material and having familiarized themselves with current events. In addition to two exams and an unspecified number of quizzes, each individual will participate in a group project on global affairs. The details of this project are provided below.

A few notes on participation:

1. All students are expected to participate in class discussions. Students uncomfortable speaking in front of the class are encouraged to come to office hours to discuss the material. Participation in office hours as well as the Course Forum (on Moodle) will count towards the class participation grade.
2. Many of the issues and approaches utilized in international relations are subject to debate. Students are therefore encouraged to question the material in a thoughtful and respectful manner. No student will be penalized for presenting an argument which questions the material presented; all perspectives are welcome, although they are also fair game for class discussion and debate.
3. In order to facilitate class discussion and preserve an environment in which all students are encouraged to participate, please keep your class contributions directed at the material and arguments presented and not at fellow class members. Comments of a personal nature directed against fellow students will not be tolerated.

Grading Policy: The grading breakdown is as follows:

Class Participation: 10%

Group Project on Global Affairs: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Mid-term Exam: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

A: 90-100% C: 70-79% F: 59% or below
B: 80-89% D: 60-69%

For the course grade, the calculated final percentage will be rounded up to the nearest integer. Missed quizzes may not be made-up; however, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Missed exams may not be made up without appropriate documentation of a medical emergency. If you feel that an error has been made in the grading of your assignment, a written submission specifying the contested question(s) and/or issue(s) as well as the detailed reason why you feel an error has been made, including supporting documentation, should be given to the course instructor prior to scheduling a meeting to discuss the issue. Only grading issues pertaining to the substance or format of an argument or factual error on the part of the instructor will be considered eligible for review.

General Statement on Academic Integrity:

Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

Plagiarism and Citation Method:

As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats (links are also provided on the course *Moodle* page).

Group work and unauthorized assistance:

All work must be completed without assistance unless explicit permission for group or partner work is given by the faculty member. This is critical so that the professor can assess your performance on each assignment. If a group/partner project is assigned, the student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. You might have a project with group work and a follow up report that is independently written. When in doubt, e-mail the faculty member or ask during a class session. Seeking clarification is your responsibility as a student. Assuming group/partner work is okay without permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

Students requiring special accommodation: Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225) 578-5919.

Course Outline & Reading Schedule

Week 1: January 15

Course Introduction

Week 2: January 20 & 22

The Evolution of the International System: *IR*, Chapter 1, pages 26-38

The Elements of International Relations: *IR*, Chapter 1, pages 3-23

Week 3: January 27 & 29

Rationality & Game Theoretic Approaches: *IR*, Chapter 2, pages 75-79

Power Politics: *IR*, Chapter 2, pages 43-75

Supplementary Reading: Rice, Condoleeza. 2008. "Rethinking the National Interest".
Foreign Affairs 87(4): 2-26.

Week 4: February 3 & 5

Power Politics (continued)

Alternatives to Power Politics: *IR*, Chapter 3, pages 85-110

Supplementary Reading: Rubin, James P. 2008. "Building a New Atlantic Alliance".
Foreign Affairs 87(4): 99-110.

Week 5: February 10 & 12

Alternatives to Power Politics (continued)

Foreign Policy and Domestic Decision Making: *IR*, Chapter 4

Week 6: February 19

*****No Class February 17 due to Mardi Gras Break*****

International Conflict: *IR*, Chapter 5

Week 7: February 24 & 26

International Conflict (continued)

Military Force and Terrorism: *IR*, Chapter 6

Week 8: March 3 & 5 - Mid-semester examination period

March 3: Military Force and Terrorism (continued)

March 5: Midterm Exam

Week 9: March 10 & 12

International Organization: *IR*, Chapter 7

The North-South Gap: *IR*, Chapter 12

International Development: *IR*, Chapter 13

Week 10: March 17 & 19

International Trade: *IR*, Chapter 8

Week 11: March 24 & 26

International Integration: *IR*, Chapter 10

Supplementary Reading: *The Economist*. 2008. "Commons Sense". August 2: 76.

Week 12: March 31 & April 2

Global Finance and Business: *IR*, Chapter 9

Week 13: April 7 & 9 – Spring Break

No class meetings

Week 14: April 14 & 16

April 14: Flex day for remaining material from preceding weeks

April 16: Film, "Life and Debt"

Week 15: April 21 & 23

Group Presentations

Week 16: April 28 & 30

April 28: Group Presentations

April 30: Final Exam Review Session

Week 17: Final Exam Week, No Class

Final exam will be administered based on the schedule set forth by the registrar

Wednesday, May 6th 12:30-2:30pm

Guidelines for Group Project on Global Affairs

Working in a group of 4-5 students, each class member will participate in a group project relating to current events in a specific geographic region (detailed below). The project should focus on a topical international issue involving at least two countries, with one or more of the countries being located in the group's specified region. The regions are as follows:

Global Regions

Africa
Central America
Central Asia
Eastern Europe
Japan/Pacific

Middle East
Russia & China
South America
South-East Asia
Western Europe

Think of the project as a briefing to policy makers who must make a decision regarding potential courses of action; provide all the information that you think would be necessary to make an informed decision, and also keep a focus on the theoretical and policy materials discussed in class. An in-class discussion of the issue will follow the presentation. Questions which would be useful to consider would include:

- What is the issue of contention/interest and who are the actors involved?
- What is the history of the issue/actors?
- What are the suggested potential resolutions or outcomes for the issue?
- Does the United States have a position relating to the issue? If so, what is that position?
- How does this issue relate to the materials we have studied in class? (i.e. theories, problems, etc)

All groups are encouraged to discuss the topic they are considering addressing with the course instructor prior to beginning work.

As a collaborative endeavor, the joint effort of the group is what will be evaluated and each participating student will receive the grade assigned to that group for all graded elements. Group membership and the assigned region will be determined after the add/drop period has passed in a manner which will be outlined in class. Each group will also have their choice of which type of material they would like to produce; available choices are a group paper and accompanying in-class presentation, or a multimedia project. Each option is discussed in more detail below.

Option A: Group Paper and Accompanying In-Class Presentation

If this option is chosen, the group must submit a type-written 10-12 page paper (double spaced with 1" margins) that discusses the material presented to the class by the class session in which they are scheduled to present. These papers will be uploaded to the course website on *Courseweb*, and the materials from the presentations and papers may be used on the Final Exam

The presentations should be approximately 8 minutes in length and utilize any necessary visual aids (including Powerpoint). Presentations which exceed 8 minutes will be stopped at the 9 minute mark and a half-letter grade will be deducted from the final presentation grade.

The presentations and papers will jointly constitute 15% of each student's final course grade (7.5% for the paper, and 7.5% for the presentation). The presentation grade will evaluate issues such as preparation, clarity, and thoroughness, while the paper will assess the substance of the argument, use of primary and secondary sources, and the technical execution of the paper. All cited material must be properly attributed to the original source; a half-letter grade deduction may be taken for each instance of an unattributed quotation or use of original material. Papers which engage in plagiarism will be given an "F" and students reported to the university.

All presentations utilizing Powerpoint or other computer related files must be emailed to the instructor by 10pm on the day preceding the presentation. All papers must be also be submitted to the instructor in .pdf format for posting to the course website and for possible utilization of plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin.

Option B: Multimedia Project

If this option is chosen, the group must submit a multimedia based project of no longer than 8 minutes for presentation in class. Each minute in excess of 8 will result in a half-letter grade deduction from the final project grade. The projects must be uploaded to Moodle by 10pm on the night preceding the in-class screening.

The project must focus on the key issues and questions detailed above, as with option A. The group has a wide variety of options to choose from when it comes to the type of media they choose to utilize, but it must cover the necessary material and require no input or action on behalf of the audience. The project submission must also be entirely self-contained, meaning that it includes all necessary elements such as narration and visuals. The overall concept is that the audience participation will be limited to beginning the presentation, and a student accessing the presentation file from home will have the same experience as those students viewing it when it was screened in class. For example, a video which is done in the manner of a “60 Minutes” style segment on the group’s chosen issue would be appropriate, but a website which is created by the group is not. All projects will be posted online for other students to reference, in addition to being shown in class. Projects will be assessed on the accuracy of the information, creativity of concept, and technical execution in accordance with a rubric which will be distributed in class. All cited material must be properly attributed to the original source; a half-letter grade deduction may be taken for each instance of an unattributed quotation or use of original material. Papers which engage in plagiarism will be given an “F” and students reported to the university.

If you have a question about the appropriateness of a particular project I encourage you to clear it with me prior to beginning. The project will constitute 15% of each group member’s final course grade. There are a number of resources online regarding what materials, software and equipment are available to students at LSU as well as technical guides on how to use them. Two such resources I would suggest groups considering this option consult are:

Lynda.com: <http://grok.lsu.edu/categories.aspx?parentcategoryid=1604>

Gear 2 Geaux: LSU Overview:
<http://grok.lsu.edu/categories.aspx?parentcategoryid=2558>