

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD POLITICS
PSCI 488
Fall 2024

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course on world politics which will focus on the evolution of international politics and the problems that characterize it today. We will address a variety of issues including terrorism, human rights, environment, increasing gap of wealth between the global north and global south, globalization and the causes of war and peace in an effort to evaluate the complexity of the world around us. These issues are familiar parts of our everyday lives, but they are also profoundly international phenomena, outcomes of forces and processes both within and outside the borders of the United States. The purpose of this course is to help students gain a broader understanding of these phenomena by providing them with the analytical skills and tools needed to understand and analyze the dynamics of international affairs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To define the key concepts and theoretical approaches necessary to have a comprehensive grasp of international studies.
- To identify the role and behavior of states and non-state actors in world politics as well as to identify the links and relationships among these actors.
- To become aware of the importance and role that individuals play in the global community.
- To develop students' reading, writing, oral and analytical skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Charles W. Kegley, Shannon L. Blanton. 2020. *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 17th edition. Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-0357141809.
- John G. Stoessinger. 2010. *Why Nations Go to War*, 11th edition. Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-0495797180

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

The class will be a mix of lectures, debates, and group activities. An outline of the reading schedule is provided in this syllabus. Students are required to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. In addition to the assigned readings, we may also discuss current political events since developments in world politics occur daily.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Participation: Attendance is vital to your success in class. More than 3 unexcused absences will automatically drop your final grade by one letter grade (e.g. if the student earned a “B” in the course, the final grade would be a “C”). Acceptable excuses include health and family emergencies. Participation points are earned through your contribution to class discussions and debates. If you’re not in class, you can’t earn participation points.

Homework Assignments: Instructions regarding the homework assignments will be communicated to the students in class on weekly basis.

Exams: There will be two midterm exams. Both exams will consist of two parts: multiple choice questions and essay questions. Exams won’t be cumulative. Study guides will be available on D2L. The exam dates can be found on course schedule.

Conflict Analysis Paper: Regarding the conflict analyses assignment, each student is required to pick a conflict case from the *Why Nations Go to War* book and complete an analysis of the conflict from the perspective of the International Relations theories covered in class. A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for this assignment can be found on D2L. Each student will present their case to the class in week 7 to get feedback before final submission deadline.

Debates: Throughout the semester, we will have two debates regarding topics on world issues. Everyone will receive a performance grade for each debate based on participation. This will require a) being present in class during the debates; b) participate in the discussion with thoughtful comments. If you miss the class on a debate day, your performance grade will automatically be “0”. The debate dates can be found on the course schedule.

Map Quizzes: According to the latest National Geographic Society survey, 63% of Americans in the 18-to-24 age group cannot find Iraq or Saudi Arabia on a map of the Middle East and 75% cannot find Iran or Israel. This class is firmly situated within the subfield of International Relations and as such, it is imperative that students have, at a minimum, a basic understanding of world geography. This course thus requires students to be familiar with major countries and geographical features. There will be 5 map quizzes based on five geographic regions in the world. The quiz dates can be found on the course schedule.

Final Project: As a final project, students are required to complete a service-learning assignment relevant to world politics. This is a semester-long project which should not be left to the last few weeks of classes. Students will need to identify an issue/problem/question in world politics and work on it throughout the semester. The service-learning format will be explained in class. Each student will make a brief preliminary presentation regarding his/her project on Week 11 to get feedback from me which will be followed by final presentations during the last week of classes. Final projects are due **December 12, 11.59 pm.**

Format Requirements: All assignments must be double-spaced, typed and written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. Sources for each assignment must include books, academic articles and news pieces. All sources must be cited properly and listed in a bibliography or in footnotes/endnotes format. Regarding citations, you may use any academically accepted format.

GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Attendance & Participation	10%
Homework Assignments	10%
Midterm Exams	30% (15% each)
Conflict Analysis Paper	15%
Debates	10% (5% each)
Map Quizzes	5%
Final Project	20%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. You are required to request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline late extension requests will not be granted. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other’s perspectives and opinions during class discussions. Any behavior that disrupts the class or impedes other students’ ability to fully engage with the course will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult with me during my office hours.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

- 8/27** Introduction to the course/Overview of the syllabus
- 8/29** Understanding World Politics Blanton & Kegley Ch. 1

Week 2

- 9/3** Theories of International Relations-Realism & Liberalism Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2
- 9/5** Theories of International Relations (continued)
Europe Map Quiz

Week 3

- 9/10** Theories of International Relations-Constructivism Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2
- 9/12** Theories of International Relations (continued)

Week 4

9/17 Theories of International Relations-Feminism & Marxism Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2

9/19 Theories of International Relations (continued)

Latin America and the Caribbean Map Quiz

Week 5

9/24 The Threat of Armed Conflict to the World Blanton & Kegley Ch. 7

9/26 The Pursuit of Power vs. The Quest for Peace Blanton & Kegley Ch. 8, 9

Week 6

10/1 **Debate 1**

10/3 **Exam 1**

Week 7

10/8 **Conflict Analysis Presentations**

10/10 **Conflict Analysis Presentations**

Week 8

10/15 Great Power Relations and Rivalries-World War I

Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2

Stoessinger C. 1

10/17 Great Power Relations and Rivalries (continued)

Middle East Map Quiz

Week 9

10/22 Great Power Relations and Rivalries-World War II

Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2

Stoessinger Ch. 2

10/24 Great Power Relations and Rivalries (continued)

Week 10

10/29 Great Power Relations and Rivalries-Cold War Blanton & Kegley Ch. 2

10/31 Great Power Relations and Rivalries (continued)

Asia Map Quiz

Week 11

11/05 **No Class – Election Day**

11/07 **Preliminary Project Presentations**

Week 12

11/12 Debate 2

11/14 Exam 2

Week 13

11/19 Globalization Blanton & Kegley Ch. 12

11/21 Human Rights Blanton & Kegley Ch. 13

Week 13

11/26 Environment Blanton & Kegley Ch. 14

Africa Map Quiz

11/28 No Class - Thanksgiving

Week 15

12/3 Final Project Presentations

12/5 Final Project Presentations

Week 16

Finals Week

Final Projects Due December 12, 11.59 pm.