



## **POL 141-C: Introduction to International Relations Spring 2015**

Instructor:

Adrian Florea

[aflorea@elon.edu](mailto:aflorea@elon.edu)

Course number: 50877

Time: TTh 12:25-2:05

Room: 355 Koury Business Center

Office: 203 Gray Pavilion

Office Hours (please sign up here):

TTh 10:30-12:00

### **Course Overview**

This course provides an introduction to the study of international relations (IR). We will cover key concepts and theories in IR, and we will discuss how history and empirical evidence inform theory development. We will address "big" questions regarding war, peace, and cooperation in the international system: Why do states sometimes choose to fight rather than peacefully resolve their disputes? Why do democracies tend to be less belligerent towards one another? Why is interstate warfare on the wane? Why are states able to cooperate in certain issues areas but not others? Although we will not be able to cover the entire range of issues in the IR scholarship, this course will prepare you to apply the analytical toolkit you will acquire to other key aspects of international politics. Upon completion of this course, you will have the foundation for taking upper-division courses in IR and the skills necessary to explain a variety of international phenomena.

The course will be roughly divided into four parts. The first part will cover key concepts in IR, such as the state, sovereignty, anarchy, and will offer an overview of the main approaches for studying international politics. The second part will discuss the nature and causes of military conflict in the modern (post-Westphalia) nation-state system. The third part will address the pathways that are conducive to cooperation among countries, particularly vis-à-vis security, economic, and environmental issues. Finally, the fourth part will survey contemporary issues in international politics, such as "new" forms of warfare, nuclear proliferation, and the rise of rebel actors.

# Requirements

## Required Readings

There is only one required textbook for this class which you may purchase at the Elon University bookstore (Belklibrary also has a copy on reserve):

Frieden, Jeffry A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2012. **World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions**. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton. (hereafter FLS)

In addition to the textbook, we will read several articles and book chapters which are posted on Moodle in pdf format. If you are unable to access them, please contact me as soon as possible at [aflorea@elon.edu](mailto:aflorea@elon.edu).

Familiarity with current events will greatly facilitate class interaction. Hence, I strongly advise that you follow current events by frequently accessing the online editions of the New York Times, BBC, CNN, France24, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Economist, Time, The Atlantic. You may also be interested in the discussions on the following political science blogs: The Monkey Cage, Political Violence @ a Glance, Why Nations Fail, Duck of Minerva.

Please note that, although this is an introductory course, it requires serious engagement on your part. The readings are mainly drawn from the academic literature. The advantage of this approach is that you will be exposed to the most relevant scholarly debates about international politics and you will be able to cultivate valuable analytical skills that will serve you beyond this class and beyond college. The other side of the coin is that the readings are a bit more challenging than what you generally find in many introductory courses. As a consequence, the reading material will demand substantial time commitment. In this class, we will emphasize concepts and theory rather than historical description of events. We will survey existing theoretical approaches that enable us to better understand the behavior of state and nonstate actors. At the same time, we will use historical cases to illustrate concepts and theories.

In this course, you will learn to become an active and critical reader. You will improve your comprehension of the readings only if you *take notes* on what you read and *write down questions* about the readings. When you go over the readings, try to think of answers to the following: What is the author's main argument? What does a specific concept mean and why is it important? What are the implications of the argument made by the author? What evidence does the author bring in to support her claim? Is there an alternative explanation for the author's evidence?

## Attendance

**Attendance** is required for this course. If you are late for class, you will not be able to sign the attendance sheet which means that you will be marked as absent. If you miss more than 3 classes over the course of POL 141-C, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. If you miss more than 4 classes, your final grade will be reduced by 15%. Beyond that, your final grade will be lowered by 20%. If you miss a class, you are responsible

for consulting class lectures on Moodle and getting additional notes from classmates.

## Participation

Your sustained engagement with the readings and class discussions is crucial to your taking something meaningful away from this course. Therefore, you are expected to be active in this class — **participation** (15% of your grade) is a strong indication of your intellectual engagement with the material. To ensure a fruitful interaction, I will ask you to offer your opinion on any of the required readings or on the topics discussed in class. The participation grade is based on your *involvement in class discussions* as well as your *reactions* (200-250 words) to the assigned readings. Every other week (starting with the second week of classes), at least 3 hours before class on Tuesday, you will be asked to post on Moodle your reactions to any reading for that week. A reaction is a comment/critique of the argument followed by a discussion question. Reactions posted after the deadline may be brought up during class discussions but will not receive any credit. While you write your reactions to the readings, I encourage you to post any links from news outlets that may be relevant to the reading material.

An effective reaction is one that demonstrates an excellent understanding of the readings, an in-depth engagement with the texts, and an ability to apply the claims of the readings to examples beyond those mentioned by the author. A less effective reaction is one that misses to engage with the readings, misreads the major claims, is confusing, vague, or general, and provides off-examples.

## Argumentative Paper (3/5)

The **argumentative paper** (3-4 pages in length; 15% of your final grade) will ask you to describe the strengths/weaknesses of one of the theories covered in the first part of the class, and apply it to a recent event (for example, the Russian invasion of Crimea). To be clear, this assignment requires that you: select a theory and discuss its expectations vis-à-vis the actors' behavior; identify the main strengths or weaknesses of the theory; briefly explain whether the theory is well- or poorly-equipped to account for a recent event. At least two weeks before the paper is due, I will post on Moodle information on writing social science papers. You will have the opportunity to workshop your draft with your peers the class before the paper is due. I also encourage you to come see me to discuss your draft, and to visit the Writing Center for additional assistance. A well-crafted assignment often goes through several drafts — re-writing is a key ingredient to success in higher education.

The argumentative paper is due in hard copy at the beginning of class on March 5. For each hour your paper is late, there will be a penalty of 5% of your grade. If you submit your paper more than 6 hours after the deadline, you will not receive any credit for it. For your own protection, I encourage you to have frequent backups of your documents — Dropbox is one option for backing up your work. “Lost paper” and “computer crash” claims will not be considered if you are unable to produce at minimum an advanced draft of your paper. All papers must also be uploaded on Moodle on the day

they are due.

Paper guidelines (please note that failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in a 10% penalty for your grade):

- Your paper will not be shorter than 3 pages or longer than 4 pages (don't forget to include page numbers)
- Please use Times New Roman, 12-point font, and double-space your papers
- You may print your papers double-sided
- Please staple (not clip) your paper together
- If you use other sources beyond the class readings, they will be integrated in the body of your papers (you'll provide full documentation of these sources in a bibliography; please note that the bibliography will not count towards the page limit). For instance, you may use the following style—(Nye 2004, 32-34)—which includes the author's name, year of publication, and page numbers. You may use any style you prefer as long as you are consistent. The Belk Library provides some useful information on citation styles.
- You may not use Wikipedia as a source.

Your grade for the argumentative paper will be based on my assessment of the following questions:

- Does the paper meet the requirements? Is the thesis clear?
- Is the paper well-organized? Does it flow in a logical manner?
- Are the arguments clearly supported by the evidence?
- Does the conclusion summarize the paper effectively?

The requirements are not met if you commit the following substantive errors (each of which may result in a loss of anywhere from 5% to 10% from your paper grade):

- Theory/concept(s) are incorrectly defined
- Key points or arguments are misrepresented
- Key points or arguments are oversimplified
- Claims are made without proper documentation in the text
- Circular (or tautological) arguments are made
- The paper is poorly organized
- The paper is descriptive rather than analytical

## **Midterm (3/19)**

The **midterm** (20% of your grade) will include a combination of multiple choice, concept identification/definition, and short essay questions. Make-up exams will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances (medical or family emergencies) and only when proper documentation is provided.

## **Policy Memo (5/12)**

For this assignment, you can work individually or with a peer. The **policy memo** (5-6 pages in length; 25% of your grade) will ask you to select a current issue threatening international or regional stability, and craft a strategy for the United States to tackle the respective threat. You may choose from a variety of topics, such as nuclear proliferation, civil warfare in the Middle East, the spread of radical Islam, Russia's neoimperialist ambitions, state breakdown in Libya, Afghanistan, or Iraq, North Korea's aggressiveness, territorial disputes in the South China sea, growing anti-Americanism in parts of Latin America, resource wars in Africa, climate change and conflict etc. This assignment will allow you to apply the theories and concepts covered in class in productive ways (i.e., with direct application to real world situations). The structure of your policy memo should mirror policy documents produced by respectable think-tanks, such as the International Crisis Group or the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Columbia International Affairs Online provides a list of think-tanks that produce policy memos.

For this assignment, you need to rely on at least **10** scholarly resources beyond the required readings (journal articles, books, book chapters, policy reports etc.) which will help you analyze the issue of your choice. Please note that you will not be able to use Internet resources, such as Wikipedia or online editorials/blog posts. The purpose of this assignment is to develop your analytical skills and to build a foundation for writing more advanced research papers. Ideally, your policy memo will include the following sections:

- A map of the area you are focusing on (half a page)
- A title and an executive summary (half a page)
- A background of the contentious issue with information about: the onset of the dispute; the actors involved; the local and broader strategic context in which the issue unfolds, including its relevance for U.S. interests (1 page)
- An assessment of current U.S. efforts at addressing the issue and of the factors that have prevented its resolution (1 page)
- A detailed set of recommendations for solving the conflict. The policy suggestions should speak to larger debates in international politics, and should offer plausible courses of action (2 pages)
- A conclusion summarizing the issue and the main policy prescriptions (1 page)
- A bibliography (does not count towards the page limit)

Please communicate to me the topic for your memo by April 14 at the latest. You will have the opportunity to workshop your draft with your peers the class before the memo is due. I also encourage you to come see me to discuss your draft, and to visit the Writing Center for additional assistance. The policy memo is due in hard copy at the beginning of class on May 12. For each hour your paper is late, there will be a penalty of 5% of your grade. If you submit your paper more than 6 hours after the deadline, you will not receive any credit for it. All memos must also be uploaded on Moodle on the day they are due.

Policy memo guidelines (please note that failure to comply with any of these guidelines may result in a 10% penalty for your grade):

- Your paper will not be shorter than 5 pages or longer than 6 pages (don't forget to include page numbers)
- Please use Times New Roman, 12-point font, and double-space your papers
- You may print your papers double-sided
- Please staple (not clip) your paper together
- Your 10 sources will be integrated in the body of your papers (you'll provide full documentation of these sources in a bibliography; please note that the bibliography will not count towards the page limit). For instance, you may use the following style—(Nye 2004, 32-34)—which includes the author's name, year of publication, and page numbers. You may use any style you prefer as long as you are consistent. The Belk Library provides some useful information on citation styles.
- You may not use Wikipedia or online editorials/blog posts as sources.

Your grade for the policy memo will be based on my assessment of the following questions:

- Does the memo meet the requirements? Is the selected issue relevant to the broader U.S. security interests?
- Is the memo well-organized? Does it have a coherent structure?
- Are the policy prescriptions clear? Does the author engage with theories and concepts of international politics?
- Does the conclusion summarize the policy prescriptions effectively?

The requirements are not met if you commit the following substantive errors (each of which may result in a loss of anywhere from 5% to 10% from your paper grade):

- Theory/concept(s) are misrepresented or oversimplified
- Claims are made without proper documentation in the text

- Circular (or tautological) arguments are made
- The memo is poorly organized
- The memo does not offer clear policy prescriptions
- The memo is descriptive rather than analytical

### **Final Exam (5/18)**

The **final exam** (25% of your grade) will be cumulative, and will include a combination of multiple choice, concept identification/definition, and short essay questions. On May 12, I will direct you to a study guide that includes a range of questions—some of which may appear in the exam. Make-up exams will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances (medical or family emergencies) and only when proper documentation is provided.

### **Important Dates**

March 5—Argumentative Paper due  
 March 19—Midterm  
 March 24, 26—No class (spring break)  
 April 14—Policy Memo topic due  
 April 28—No class (SURF day)  
 May 12—Policy Memo due  
 May 18—Final Exam (8-11am)

## **Course policies**

### **Grade assignment**

Grades are assigned on the following point scale: A=94-100; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=63-66; D-=60-62; F=59 and below. You are entitled to an explanation of your grades. If you wish to challenge your grade, you must write a detailed memo explaining why you think you deserved a better grade. Once the memo has been received, an appointment will be scheduled to discuss the matter in detail.

**Grade Overview:**

Participation—15%

Argumentative Paper—15%

Midterm Exam—25%

Policy Memo—25%

Final Exam—25%

**Classroom civility**

Please refrain from using a laptop, tablet, or smartphone at any time during class. Not only is this a source of distraction for your peers, it is also detrimental to your own learning experience. For example, research (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) has consistently shown that the use of laptops hinders learning. If you have a documented disability, you may of course use any electronic device that is necessary.

Incivility will not be tolerated. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions, think freely and openly, and be critical towards the readings and lectures. In interactive environments, it is absolutely natural for students to approach topics from different perspectives and belief systems. You may challenge the instructor's, authors', and your peers' ideas, but derogative statements will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behavior in class includes (but is not limited to): (a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Please raise your hand and wait to be called on. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors. (d) Using raised tones, engaging in arguments with other students, and being aggressive. Failure to abide by these common-sense principles may result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

**Academic Conduct**

By remaining enrolled in this class, you agree to abide by Elon's Honor Code. Please make sure you become familiar with the Honor Code; if you have questions about how it applies to this course, do not hesitate to contact me. On the Argumentative Paper and Policy Memo assignments, you are required to sign the Honor Pledge, "On my honor, I will uphold the values of Elon University: honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect." Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. The Writing Center provides useful resources for avoiding plagiarism.

**Disability**

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please speak with me as early as possible, and contact the Office of Disabilities Services. All discussions will remain confidential.



## **Email Policy**

The best way to communicate with me beyond class and office hours is via email. Please allow 24 hours for a reply. You should expect slower responses between 8pm and 8am on any weekday, and during the weekend (Friday, 5pm through Monday, 8am). Please treat the emails that you send me as confidential, professional documents. Be sure to have a clear subject line and to sign your first and last name in the email.

## **Schedule**

### **Week of 2/3–2/5: Constructing and Evaluating Theories of International Politics**

- Course introduction
- FLS: Introduction and Chapter 1
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1. (Moodle)
- FLS: pp. 154–168

### **Week of 2/10 –2/12: The State and Sovereignty**

- FLS: pp. 42–47
- Krasner, Stephen D. 1999. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1. (Moodle)
- Krasner, Stephen D. 2005. Building Democracy After Conflict: The Case for Shared Sovereignty. *Journal of Democracy* 16(1): 69–83. (Moodle)

### **Week of 2/17–2/19: Contending Perspectives on International Politics: Realism**

- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill. pp. 79–106. (Moodle)
- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. pp. 29–54. (Moodle)

### **Week of 2/24–2/26: Contending Perspectives on International Politics: Liberalism and Constructivism**

- Moravcsik, Andrew. 2010. *Liberal Theories of International Relations: A Primer*. (Moodle)

- Snyder, Jack. 2004. One World, Rival Theories. *Foreign Policy* 145: 53–62. (Moodle)

### **Week of 3/3–3/5: Causes of War**

- Argumentative Paper Workshop
- FLS: Chapter 3
- Levy, Jack S., and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 14–54. (Moodle)
- FLS: Chapter 4

### **Week of 3/10–3/12: Civil Wars and Terrorism**

- FLS: Chapter 6
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97: 343–61. (Moodle)
- Levy, Jack S., and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 186–204. (Moodle)

### **Week of 3/17–3/19: International Cooperation: Security and Human Rights**

- FLS: Chapter 5
- FLS: Chapter 12

### **Week of 3/31–4/2: International Cooperation: Trade**

- FLS: Chapter 7

### **Week of 4/7–4/9: International Cooperation: The Environment**

- FLS: Chapter 13
- Kahl, Colin H. 2006. *States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1. (Moodle)

### **Week of 4/14–4/16: The Wealth and Poverty of States**

- Library Workshop (tentative date)

- FLS: Chapter 10
- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Publishers. Preface, Chapters 1 and 13. (Moodle)

### **Week of 4/21–4/23: “New” vs. “Old” Wars**

- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. “New” and “Old” Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction? *World Politics* 54: 99–118. (Moodle)
- Melander, Erik, Magnus Öberg, and Jonathan Hall. 2009. Are “New Wars” More Atrocious? Battle Severity, Civilians Killed and Forced Migration Before and After the End of the Cold War. *European Journal of International Relations* 15: 505–36. (Moodle)

### **Week of 4/30: Rebel Actors**

- Andreas, Peter. 2004. The Clandestine Political Economy of War and Peace in Bosnia. *International Studies Quarterly* 48: 29–51. (Moodle)
- Marten, Kimberly. 2007. Warlordism in Comparative Perspective. *International Security* 31: 41–73. (Moodle)
- Byman, Daniel, and Charles King. 2012. The Mystery of Phantom States. *The Washington Quarterly* 35: 43–57. (Moodle)

### **Week of 5/5–5/7: Nuclear Proliferation**

- Posen, Barry R. 2006. We Can Live With a Nuclear Iran. *The New York Times*, February 26.
- Kroenig, Matthew. 2012. Time to Attack Iran. *Foreign Affairs*.
- Allison, Graham. 2013. Will Iran Get a Bomb—or Be Bombed Itself—This Year? *The Atlantic*, August 1.
- Ganguly, Sumit. 2014. The Spread of Nuclear Weapons May Prevent War. *Vox Magazine*, August 21.
- Policy Memo Workshop

### **Week of 5/12**

- Final Exam Review Session

*Disclaimer:* I reserve the right to amend the readings to better accommodate the course needs. All modifications will be communicated in class and via email.