

OBERLIN

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

POLT 120: Introduction to International Politics Fall 2014

Professor: Adrian Florea
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Section: 01; Course number: 1107
Time: TR 9:30-10:50am, Wilder 101
Office: Rice 207
Office Hours (please sign up here):
Tuesdays 11:15am-1:15pm and 3pm-4pm
Thursdays 11:15am-1:15pm

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 Oberlin College bookstore (the Mudd library also has a copy on reserve):

Frieden, Jeffry A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2013. **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 Blackboard in pdf format. If you are unable to access them, please contact me as soon as possible at aflorea@oberlin.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 POLT 120, 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 Blackboard 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 weekly *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 Blackboard your reactions to the readings 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.

Quizzes (9/23; 10/16; 11/6; 11/25)

There will be four **quizzes** during the term, of which the lowest score will be dropped (hence, your best three quizzes will count towards the overall quiz grade). The quizzes will cover both class lectures and the readings for the respective week. Quizzes (**15%** of your grade) will include short answer questions. It is highly recommended that you take extensive notes on the readings. I am less interested in testing your memory of dates, minor actors, or secondary points; instead, I am more interested in testing your ability to understand the concepts and the theory. Please note that there will be no make-ups for unexcused absences or lateness.

Argumentative Paper (10/2)

The **argumentative paper** (3-4 pages in length; **20%** 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 Blackboard 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 in Mudd 101A 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 October 2. 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 Blackboard 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
- 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 Oberlin College 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

Policy Memo (12/11)

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 reputable 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 (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

Please communicate to me the topic for your memo by November 4 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 in Mudd 101A for additional assistance. The policy memo is due in hard copy at the beginning of class on December 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 Blackboard 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
- 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 Oberlin College 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 (12/19)

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 December 11, I will provide you with 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

September 23—First Quiz
 October 2—Argumentative Paper due
 October 16—Second Quiz
 October 21, 23—No class (fall recess)
 November 4—Policy Memo topic due
 November 6—Third Quiz
 November 25—Fourth Quiz
 November 27—No class (Thanksgiving break)
 December 11—Policy Memo Due
 December 19—Final Exam (9:00-11:00am)

Course policies

Grade assignment

Grades are assigned on the following point scale: A+=97-100; A=93-96; A-=90-92; 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%

Quizzes—15%

Argumentative Paper—20%

Policy Memo—25%

Final Exam—25%

Classroom civility

Arriving late for class, using smartphones/tablets in class, packing up bags prior to the end of class are disruptive activities. You may use a laptop for taking notes, but please refrain from browsing the internet or checking email. 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 Oberlin's Honor Code which states that "all work that students submit is expected to be of their own creation and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. When students write and sign the Honor Pledge, they are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information, nor assisted others in these actions." 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 each assignment you complete, you are required to sign the Honor Pledge, "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. The College of Arts and Sciences and the Mudd Library provide 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 Disability Services. All discussions will remain confidential.

Email Policy

The best way to communicate with me beyond class and office hours is via email. I will make every effort to respond promptly to your messages. However, 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 professional documents. Be sure to have a clear subject line and to sign your first and last name in the email.

Schedule

Week of 9/2–9/4: Constructing and Evaluating Theories of International Politics

- FLS: Introduction and Chapter 1
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1. (Blackboard)
- FLS: pp. 154–168
- Walt, Stephen M. 2005. The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations. *Annual Review of Political Science* 8: 23–48. (Blackboard)

Week of 9/9 –9/11: The State and Sovereignty

- FLS: pp. 42–47
- Spruyt, Hendrik. 2002. The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State. *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 127–49. (Blackboard)
- Krasner, Stephen D. 1999. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1. (Blackboard)
- Krasner, Stephen D. 2005. Building Democracy After Conflict: The Case for Shared Sovereignty. *Journal of Democracy* 16(1): 69–83. (Blackboard)

Week of 9/16–9/18: Contending Perspectives on International Politics: Realism

- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill. pp. 79–106. (Blackboard)
- Nye, Joseph S., and David A. Welch. 2013. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*. Chapter 2. (Blackboard)

- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. pp. 29–54. (Blackboard)
- Kennan, George. 1947. The Sources of Soviet Conduct. *Foreign Affairs* 26: 566–82. (Blackboard)

Week of 9/23–9/25: Contending Perspectives on International Politics: Liberalism and Constructivism

- Moravcsik, Andrew. 2010. Liberal Theories of International Relations: A Primer. (Blackboard)
- Wendt, Alexander. 1992. Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics. *International Organization* 46: 391–425. (Blackboard)
- Legro, Jeffrey W., and Andrew Moravcsik. 1999. Is Anybody Still a Realist? *International Security* 24: 5–55. (Blackboard)
- Snyder, Jack. 2004. One World, Rival Theories. *Foreign Policy* 145: 53–62. (Blackboard)

Week of 9/30–10/2: Causes of War

- Argumentative Paper Workshop
- Clausewitz, Carl von. 1989 [1832] *On War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1. (Blackboard)
- FLS: Chapter 3
- Levy, Jack S., and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 14–54. (Blackboard)
- FLS: Chapter 4

Week of 10/7–10/9: Civil Wars and Terrorism

- FLS: Chapter 6
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97: 343–61. (Blackboard)
- Levy, Jack S., and William R. Thompson. 2010. *Causes of War*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 186–204. (Blackboard)
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2007. *Civil Wars*. In *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. pp. 416–34. (Blackboard)

Week of 10/14–10/16: International Cooperation: Security and Human Rights

- FLS: Chapter 5
- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2004. Interstate Peacekeeping: Causal Mechanisms and Empirical Effects. *World Politics* 56: 481–519. (Blackboard)
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2012. International Regimes for Human Rights. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 265–86. (Blackboard)
- FLS: Chapter 12

Week of 10/28–10/30: International Cooperation: Trade

- FLS: Chapter 7
- Rodrik, Dani. 2001. Trading in Illusions. *Foreign Policy* 123: 54–62. (Blackboard)
- Milner, Helen V. 2005. Globalization, Development, and International Institutions: Normative and Positive Perspectives. *Perspectives on Politics* 3: 833–54. (Blackboard)

Week of 11/4–11/6: 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. (Blackboard)
- Salehyan, Idean. 2008. From Climate Change to Conflict? No Consensus Yet. *Journal of Peace Research* 45(3): 315–26. (Blackboard)

Week of 11/11–11/13: The Wealth and Poverty of States

- Library Workshop
- 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. (Blackboard)

Week of 11/18–11/20: “New” vs. “Old” Wars

- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. “New” and “Old” Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction? *World Politics* 54: 99–118. (Blackboard)

- Malešević, Siniša. 2008. The Sociology of New Wars? Assessing the Causes and Objectives of Contemporary Violent Conflicts. *International Political Sociology* 2: 97–112. (Blackboard)
- 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. (Blackboard)

Week of 11/25: 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.

Week of 12/2–12/4: Rebel Actors

- Andreas, Peter. 2004. The Clandestine Political Economy of War and Peace in Bosnia. *International Studies Quarterly* 48: 29–51. (Blackboard)
- Menkhaus, Ken. 2007. Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping. *International Security* 31: 74–106. (Blackboard)
- Marten, Kimberly. 2007. Warlordism in Comparative Perspective. *International Security* 31: 41–73. (Blackboard)
- Byman, Daniel, and Charles King. 2012. The Mystery of Phantom States. *The Washington Quarterly* 35: 43–57. (Blackboard)

Week of 12/9–12/11:

- Policy Memo Workshop
- 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.