

Introduction to International Relations
Lecture Syllabus
Fall 2011

Instructor: Vanessa A. Lefler
Office: 313 Schaeffer Hall
Phone: 319-335-2370
Email: vanessa-lefler@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 PM, or by appointment

Course Overview

The goals of this course are to introduce you to the central processes and perspectives in international relations and to place those concepts in a context where they can be applied to understanding global politics in action. The structure of the class begins with an exploration of the “building blocks” of international relations study: Who are the important actors in international relations? How does the structure of the international system facilitate or inhibit their actions? What factors explain events like World War II, the end of the Cold War or the recent collapse of international economic centers? The course then proceeds by engaging topics, including violent conflict, interstate cooperation and organization, political economy, and transnational issues of human rights and environmental politics.

Together, we will create a working outline that links the core concepts in international relations to these topics and develop an applied understanding of the forces that move contemporary global problems. By the end of the semester, students in this course should have a clearer comprehension of international relations and analytical approaches to studying political problems.

Required Reading

- Russett, B., Starr, H., and D. Kinsella. *World Politics: A Menu for Choice* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006)
- Additionally, you should be reading a daily news source for current events in international relations. These events will inform class discussions and form the base of the paper assignment for this course. News sources you might consider include:
 - [*The New York Times*](#)
 - [*BBC News: World*](#)
 - [*The Financial Times*](#)
- You may also use the international news RSS-feed application on the course website (icon.uiowa.edu) to access these news sources.

Course Expectations

Notifications: All course information will be shared on the course website (ICON). It is expected that you check this page regularly to keep track of assignments, discussion topics, and updates.

Grading: Your grade will be based on 8 short exercises (the lowest score will be dropped, leaving 7 scores), 3 hourly exams, and a paper assignment which includes a topic proposal, outline with annotated bibliography, and 10-page research paper. Deadlines and formats for each of these items, along with their point value, are summarized in the table below. You must complete all course work in order to pass this course.

Summary of Coursework			
<i>Obligation</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Point Value</i>
Exam #1	Week 6	Multiple choice and essay	50 points
Paper topic proposal	Week 4	Short (1 pg.) writing assignment	10 points
Paper outline and annotated bibliography	Week 7	3-page outline and annotated bib (5 sources)	15 points
Exam #2	Week 11	Multiple choice and essay	50 points
Analysis Paper	Week 14	10-page research paper	55 points
Exam #3	Finals Week	Multiple choice and essay	50 points
Short exercises	Various dates during section	Various, short answer	10 points each 70 points total
			TOTAL POINTS: 300

Exams (3 x 50 points = 50% Grade): There will be three, non-cumulative exams in this course. The exams will cover material assigned in readings and discussed in class. Each exam will consist of 20 multiple choice questions and one, short essay question.

Research Paper (approx. 27% Grade): You will be asked to write a research paper that explains the occurrence or outcome of a current event in international relations using the theories we study in class to analyze the subject. This assignment will be completed in three stages:

1. Paper topic proposal (250 words): Provide a brief introduction to the topic about which you want to write. The proposal should include your research question (e.g., Why did the protest movements in Egypt and Libya end so differently from one another?) and an initial answer in the form of a thesis statement (e.g., Though these governments of the two countries are similarly semi-authoritarian, the type of control that the different forms of government exert over the people allowed the protest in Egypt to end less violently than in Libya.). Additionally, you should explain what international relations theory is most appropriate to explain the event you have chosen.

2. Paper outline and Annotated bibliography (3 pages): The outline should fill out more of the details of your paper, based on your topic proposal. The outline should identify the central sections of your paper, paying particular attention to explanation being explored. Additionally, include an annotated bibliography that, in 2 or 3 sentences, summarizes the source and why it relevant for your project. You should have at least 5 sources, only 1 of which should be a website (e.g., un.org). Encyclopedias and dictionaries do not count toward the total of 5 sources.
3. Analysis Paper (8-10 pages): The final paper should expand on the paper proposal and outline to present a complete explanation for the occurrence or outcome of a recent event in international relations. The paper should be double-spaced, use a 12-point standard serif font (e.g., Times), 1-inch margins, use conventional construction, grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and follow [ASPA formatting and citation style](#).

More details on the research paper assignment and grading rubrics for each component are on the class website (ICON). This assignment requires your early attention, so read the assignment and begin thinking about your research topic as soon as possible. It is recommended that you start early and seek outside help (e.g., peer reviews, Writing Center, meetings with me) at each stage of the assignment.

Short Exercises (7 x 10 = approx. 23% Grade): Eight (8) exercises covering various aspects of the material will be assigned throughout the semester. Some will be assigned as “take home” exercises and others will be conducted in class. Each exercise is worth 10 points and your lowest score will be dropped. If you miss an in-class exercise, contact your instructor as soon as possible to arrange another time to complete the assignment. Make-up opportunities will be granted to those who have informed that instructor in advance of their inability to attend class.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class meeting, having read all of the assigned readings, given thought to the discussion topics for the day, and prepared to contribute to the class dialogue. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend class, you must inform the instructor in advance in order to be excused. Ultimately, it is your choice to come to class, but be aware that attendance and participation provide the basis for any decision to bump marginal grades up to the next category (e.g., from a B+ to an A-).

Policies and Conditions

Grade Complaints: Grade complaints will only be taken 24 hours after an assignment has been returned. Complaints should be submitted in writing and explain the particular discrepancy and recommend an appropriate recourse. The instructor maintains the right to add or subtract points on work that is submitted for reconsideration.

Academic Honesty: A copy of the University's policies on academic misconduct and complaint actions is attached and available on the the course website. Read and become familiar with these policies. Students caught violating conditions of academic honesty will fail this course and

be reported to university authorities. It is recommended that you retain all notes and drafts of your coursework until two weeks after grades are received in order to protect your work.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should notify the instructor as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of any student with a disability who requests a reasonable accommodation to contact Student Disability Services. Student Disability Services will arrange with the student and instructor a plan to ensure the student has the opportunities for full participation in the class.

Course Outline

INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Introduction

- Introduction, Course Syllabus
- First Day Quiz

FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Week 2: Studying International Relations

- *READ: RSK Chapters 1 & 3*
- What is international politics?
- Who are the important actors in international relations?

Week 3: Theoretical Foundations

- *READ: RSK Chapter 2*
- *Optional Reading: Maliniak, D., Oakes, A., Peterson, S. and M.J. Tierney. 2011. "International Relations in the US Academy." International Studies Quarterly, 55: 437-464.*
- What are the major theoretical perspectives in international relations?
- How relevant are these perspectives to explaining policy in IR? How relevant are they to understanding research in IR?

MAN, THE STATE, AND WAR

Week 4: The International System, Power, and Proliferation

- *READ: RSK Chapter 4*
- ***DUE: Research Paper Proposal at the beginning of class.***
- What is power?
- How does the structure of the international system affect the prevalence of war and peace?
- How might the current international system be characterized? How does that explain international conflict, the use of international organizations, and economic stability?

Week 5: The State as an Actor

- *READ: RSK Chapter 5*
- What defines a state? What assumptions are necessary to think of the state as an actor in international relations?

Week 6: Inside the State – Domestic Institutions and Individuals

- *READ: RSK Chapters 6 & 7*
- How does the structure of a state's domestic institutions affect international relations?
- What are alternative theories that explain decision-making in IR?

- **Exam #1: Weeks 1-6**

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND COOPERATION**Week 7: The Security Dilemma**

- *READ: RSK Chapter 9*
- **Paper Outline and Annotated Bibliography Due at the beginning of class.**
- What role do nuclear weapons play in the present era? Are they essential for a state's power, or are they merely symbolic of it?

Week 8: Violence – Between and Inside States

- *READ: RSK Chapter 8*
- What factors explain the use of military force among states? Within states?
- What source of violence is most deserving of policy makers' attention?

Week 10: International Organizations

- *READ: RSK Chapter 10*
- What is the relationship between states' sovereignty and their participation in international organizations?
- Are international organizations relevant to explaining outcomes in world politics?

Weeks 10: Peace and Transnational and Non-governmental Actors

- *READ: RSK Chapter 11*
- What is the Democratic Peace?
- Why does violence occur in the presence of peaceful alternatives and incentives to negotiate?

Week 11: Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Development

- *Review: RSK Chapter 11*
- *In Class video: Srebrenica: A Cry from the Grave*

- **Exam #2: Weeks 7-11**

PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**Week 12: International Political Economy**

- *READ: RSK Chapters 13 & 14*
- What are the basic principles of political economy? How are these factors important to other aspects of states' influence that we have already discussed?
- What are the consequences of interdependence, particularly regional integration, in the economic "health" of the international system?

Week 13: International Law and Human Rights

- *READ: RSK Chapter 15 and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>)*
- *Review: RSK Chapter 10*
- From where do human rights originate?
- What remedies does the international system provide to victims of human rights violations?

Week 14: Terrorism and Security

- *Review: RSK pages 223-227*
- *READ: Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism." Comparative Politics, 13(4): 379-399.*
- ***Analysis Paper Due at the beginning of class.***
- What makes terrorism different from other sources of violence?
- Does Crenshaw's 1981 explanation of terrorism differ from the way that we may think about terrorism now?

Week 15: Environmental Politics

- *READ: RSK Chapter 16*
- Whose responsibility is it to manage environmental changes that affect states? What about those that affect the international system? Are these two questions separable?

Week 16: Finals Week

- **Exam #3: Weeks 12-16**