

PLS 160 Introduction to International Relations

Tue Thu : 10:20 AM-11:40 AM

Olds Hall 111

Professor: **Andrew Kerner**

Email: kerneran@msu.edu

Office South Kedzie Hall 332

Office hours: Mondays 10-11 am, or by appointment

Join URL: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/99135492810>

Teaching Assistant: Soyeon Park

Email: sympark@msu.edu

Office hours: Monday 10:00—11:00 am

Join URL: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/96306614827>

Teaching Assistant: Fariha Tabassum

Email: tabassu3@msu.edu

Office hours: Friday 9:00 -10:00 am

Join URL: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/99265727279>

Overview

This is an introductory course in international relations. It provides a background to help you understand contemporary world politics, and a basis for continuing on to higher-level international relations courses at Michigan State. The class will introduce students to the main theoretical traditions and topics in the field. We will study the state system, the causes of international conflict and violence, and various aspects of international economic relations. Narrower topics will include: the nature of sovereignty and its relationship to international institutions, military alliances, wars, trade agreements, the role of multinational corporations, and international finance.

Textbook and other course resources

Textbook: Frieden, Jeffrey A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2009. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton. 5th edition

It is important that you get a version of the textbook that includes access to Inquizitive, though that can also be bought separately through the D2L course website.

The textbook readings will be occasionally supplemented with academic and newspaper articles. Those articles will be uploaded in advance to the course D2L website into the “non-textbooks reading” folder

To get everyone started I have uploaded the first few weeks of reading to the course D2L website, but you will need to purchase the book for reading beyond that. Those pdfs are in the “textbook pdfs” folder.

Lectures:

This is a lecture-based course, and (once we get back to campus) we will have lectures 2/week for 80 minutes each. Those lectures will almost exclusively be used to cover material that you will read about in the textbook.

At least for the beginning of the semester we will swap out live lectures for recorded videos that you can watch on your own at your own pace. That aspect of the course will be asynchronous.

The class time that would have been used for lectures will now be a discussion section led by me. It’s a great time to ask clarifying questions about the material, and I will go over the slides from the videos. Attendance at these sessions will be optional, but strongly encouraged.

Exams

This course will have a midterm and a final. Both exams will feature a mix of multiple-choice questions and short essays. The exams are non-cumulative. The midterm will relate to the material from the first half of the course (theoretical approaches to IR, causes of war) and the final will relate to material from the second half (international economic relations).

News Discussions

At five points during the semester, we will replace lecture with a discussion section. During these days we will discuss a relevant-to-the-course article in smaller groups. All students are responsible for submitting a short paper (roughly 1 page) for each discussion section that describes the articles and how they relate the underlying concepts.

The honors section will constitute one group, and the remainder of the course will be divided into two groups, each one with their own TA to lead sections. The TA-led sections will be held over zoom using links that will be emailed to you, and which are available on the D2L site.

The honors section group will be professor-led and will take place in the classroom (once in-person instruction resumes and will be zoom-based prior to that). The honors assignment will emerge from these discussion sections. More details on the honors assignment will be provided during the initial discussion section.

Grading

Grades will be based on three things:

- discussion section attendance/participation (15%)
- discussion section papers (5 papers) (35%)
- midterm exam (25%)
- final exam (25%)

The points earned for each of the four components noted above will accumulate into a final grade. Based on those weightings you will then earn a grade between 0%-100%, which will be converted to a final grade based on the following scale:

- 4: 90%-100%
- 3.5: 85%-89%
- 3: 80%-84%
- 2.5: 75%-79%
- 2: 70%-74%
- 1.5: 65%-69%
- 1: 60%-64%
- 0: <59%

Grades are inclusive of the lower bound and exclusive of the upper bound, such that a 90 will yield a 4, and an 89.99999 will yield a 3.5, an 85 will yield a 3.5 and 84.99999 will yield a 3, and so on.

Extra Credit

The edition of World Politics that I have assigned comes with access to a program called “InQuizitive”, which is a publisher-administered learning aide that allows you to quiz yourself on the material as you go. “Passing” inquisitive requires you to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of chapter’s material to garner 1500 points in the quizzes. InQuizitive allows you to wager points based on your own confidence level. The more you wager the more you gain more for correct answers, but you also lose more for incorrect answers. The maximum wager is 100 points, so the minimum number of questions you need to correctly answer is 15.

For extra credit, students can take and pass the inquisitive quizzes. The course’s modules roughly correspond with specific chapters of the book, so each module roughly corresponds with an InQuizitive section. To the extent that the InQuizitive section goes beyond what is assigned, the student is responsible for the extra material.

I will award an extra ½ point to the final average for every passed InQuizitive chapter.

The irony of this extra credit assignment, of course, is that it is also a study aid. The more extra credit you earn via InQuizitive, the better you will do on the quizzes and exams, and the less you will need the extra credit. Still, it's a nice insurance policy to have and a good way to make sure you are learning at the right pace.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty. All students are expected to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct, especially the provisions pertaining to academic honesty. No student in this course may claim ignorance of these regulations. Accordingly, violations of academic honesty - even allegedly "borderline," "minor," or "ambiguous" transgressions - will NOT be tolerated.

Above all, that means that there will be no communication between students during the exams.

It also means that every word of every essay you write is presumed to be yours. Language that is excessively similar across exams will be potentially considered as plagiarism, as will language that is copied verbatim from the internet.

Common-Sense Civility. Here are some examples:

- Please do not be late for class.
- Turnoff your cell phones and put them in your bag/purse.
- Be respectful of other students' opinions and questions.
- Use laptop computers SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF TAKING NOTES. It is much, much, much more obvious than you think when you are using your computer to do anything but take notes. It is also extremely distracting

SCHEDULE OF READINGS & LECTURES/VIDEOS

| Date | Topic | Reading (5 th edition page numbers in parentheses) | Video # |
|---|---|--|--------------|
| Tuesday, January 11, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Syllabus ● Class logistics | None | none |
| Thursday, January 13 (lecture optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Levels of Analysis ● Realism, Liberalism & Constructivism | xx_ xxxvi (xxxii-xxxiii) | Videos 1 - 4 |
| Tuesday, January 18, (no lecture) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actors, Interests, and Interactions ● Cooperation and Bargaining | 42-67 (45-65) | Videos 5 - 6 |
| Tuesday, January 18 | Introductions and Inquizitive | None | Discussion 0 |
| Thursday, January 20, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public Goods & Coordination ● Institutions | 57-78 (59-81) 82-87 (86-91) | Videos 7-9 |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------|
| (lecture optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x2 Games: Prisoner's Dilemma, Stage Hunt, Chicken | | |
| Tuesday, January 25, | Ukraine, Russia, and the US through the various "isms" | Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia U.S., Russia Agree to Keep Negotiating to Defuse Ukraine Crisis https://www.wsj.com/articles/blinken-to-meet-russias-foreign-minister-amid-ukraine-border-crisis-11642752344?mod=world_major_1_pos8 | Discussion 1 |
| Thursday, January 27, (lecture optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to War • Intro to the bargaining model | 88-96 (92-103) | Videos 10-11 |
| Tuesday, February 1, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compellance and deterrence | 96-102 (103-107) | |
| Thursday, February 3, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War from incomplete information/ Credibility • War from commitment problems • War from Indivisibility | 103-130 (107-140) | |
| Tuesday, February 8, | Ukraine, Russia, the US through the lens of the bargaining model | TBD | Discussion 2 |
| Thursday, February 10, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National vs Particularistic Interests • Leaders, Rally Around the Flag Effects • Interest Groups | 138-168 (144-174) | |
| Tuesday, February 15, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Peace | 168-183 (175-187) | |
| Thursday, February 17, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliances | 189-205 (194-215) | |
| Tuesday, February 22, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Security Organizations • The UN | 205-212 (216-226) | |
| Thursday, February 24, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Security Council • UN Peacekeeping | 212-233 (223-241) | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|--------------|
| Tuesday, March 1, | Review | | |
| Thursday, March 3, | Midterm | | |
| Tuesday, March 8, | Spring Break | | |
| Thursday, March 10, | Spring Break | | |
| Tuesday, March 15, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade introduction • Trade Barriers • Comparative Advantage | 294-306 (305-318) 340-345 (358-363) | |
| Thursday, March 17, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopler-Samuelsoon • Ricardo Viner | 306-312 (319-327) | |
| Tuesday, March 22, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Institutions and Trade | 318-330 (336-347) | |
| Thursday, March 24, | What happened to the Trans-Pacific Partnership? | What's Next for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)? https://www.cfr.org/background/what-trans-pacific-partnership-tpp | Discussion 3 |
| Tuesday, March 29, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Money, • Exchange Rates and Interest Rates • Exchange Rate Regimes and Domestic Politics | 386-402 (406-422) | |
| Thursday, March 31, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gold Standard & Mundell Fleming | 402-406 (423-428) | |
| Tuesday, April 5, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bretton Woods, • Post Bretton Woods • the Euro | 406-411 (428-433) | |
| Thursday, April 7, | How did the Turkish Lira get so messed up? | TBD | Discussion 4 |
| Tuesday, April 12, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to international Finance | 348-360 (364-379) | |
| Thursday, April 14, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt Crises • the IMF | 360-370 (379-389) | |
| Tuesday, April 19, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDI • MNCs | 371-376 (390-395) | |
| Thursday, April 21, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Risk and FDI | 377 (396) Jensen 1040-1043 Kerner 73-82 | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|--------------|
| | | | |
| Tuesday, April 26, | Is ISDS good for clean energy? | Shadow Courts for fossil Fuels Want a Green Makeover https://prospect.org/environment/shadow-courts-for-fossil-fuels-want-a-green-makeover/ | Discussion 5 |
| Thursday, April 28, | REVIEW | | |
| Friday May 6 | Final Exam Olds Hall 111 7:45-9:45 AM | | |