

PLSC 14: Introduction to International Relations

Summer 2023 (06/28/2023 - 08/09/2023)

Class time: Mo Tu We Th Fr 9:35AM - 10:50AM, Willard Bldg 167

Instructor Information

Angel M. Villegas Cruz

214 Pond Lab

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Office Hours: Tu 1:00 - 2:00 PM, Th 1:00 - 2:00 PM, and by appointment

Course description

This course is an introduction to the basic theories, concepts, actors, institutions, events, and issues in international relations or international politics. There are two main features of the course. First, the course introduces international relations theory and its attendant concepts such as the international system, approaches to studying the international system, anarchy, interdependence, international economic relations, and international institutions. These concepts provide a framework for us to understand how international relations work. Second, the course examines historical and contemporary issues in international politics, such as the causes and consequences of major armed conflicts in the world, the Cold War and its legacy, international trade and regional economic integration, contemporary security issues, U.S.-China competition and its implications, and the direction of American foreign policy.

The specific goals of the course include, but are not limited to guiding students in:

- Demonstrating familiarity with the main terms and concepts undergirding the study of international relations and the international system as a whole
- Developing a broad understanding of the so-called “grand theory” approaches used to study international relations as well the various “middle range” theories that have come to further define the field
- Understanding the main actors and institutions associated with historical and current international politics
- Becoming familiar with current events as they pertain to international relations and international politics

Course Requirements

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Attendance and Participation	10%	---
First Examination	20%	July 7 th (in CANVAS during class time)
Second Examination	20%	July 19 th (in CANVAS during class time)
Third Examination	25%	July 31 th (in CANVAS during class time)
Fourth Examination	25%	August 11 th (in CANVAS during class time)

1. Attendance and Participation:

For each class meeting, you will receive a participation score between 0 and 10. The students are expected to read the assigned materials beforehand and be ready to participate in class discussions. Students who make frequent and high-quality contributions to the discussion will earn 10 points, students who make at least some relevant contribution will earn 9 or 9.5 points, and students who are present but silent will earn 8.5 points. Because some days will have more opportunities to participate than others, I will do a slight curve of the participation averages at the end of the semester.

Students will receive a 0 for each unexcused absence. Excused absences will be dropped from the course grade. To have an absence excused, you must contact me with a valid excuse within one week after the absence. I will determine the validity of excuses at my own discretion and may require documentation. Valid excuses generally include physical or mental illness, family emergencies, university-sponsored activities, and career-related activities. Furthermore, I will drop your lowest two participation scores at the end of the semester, which essentially means you can have two “free” absences without needing a valid excuse.

If you arrive after I take attendance, it is your responsibility to let me know after class that you were present. One or more points will be deducted from the daily participation score of students who come in late, leave early, have side conversations, or engage in other disrespectful behavior. If you have a valid reason for arriving late or leaving early on a particular day, please let me know.

2. Examinations

The exams will mostly feature multiple choice and true/false questions. There might be some short open questions. The exams will be administered in CANVAS. Each exam will cover the material since the previous exam; none will be cumulative. All exams are based on in-class lecture and discussions as well as the course readings. I do not give study-guides or hold reviews for the exams. Material for the exams is drawn heavily from in-class work, so just studying the book will not be sufficient.

Students are expected to take the exams at the specified times on the assigned days. A make-up exam will only be given if a student contacts me prior to the exam and provides a valid excuse with documentation. Otherwise, you will receive a 0 if you miss an exam.

Recommended readings

- Book
 - Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz. 2016/2019/2022. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions*, 3rd Edition, 4th Edition, or 5th Edition. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. (5th edition ISBN: 978-0-393-87223-1)
- Articles

- Acharya, Amitav. “Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies.” *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647-659.
- Henderson, Errol A. “Disturbing the peace: African warfare, political inversion and the universality of the democratic peace thesis.” *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1 (2009): 25-58.
- Masters, Jonathan. “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia.” Council on Foreign Relations [<https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflictcrossroads-europe-and-russia>]
- Weiss, Jessica Chen. “The China trap: US foreign policy and the perilous logic of zero-sum competition.” *Foreign Affairs* 101 (2022): 40.

All the articles (not the book) will be available on CANVAS unless otherwise indicated on the syllabus.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned based on percentages students score on exams in the following manner:

A = 93% or better	A- = 90 – 92.9%	
B+ = 88% to 89.9%	B = 83% to 87.9%	B- = 80% to 82.9%
C+ = 78% to 79.9%	C = 70% to 79.9%	
D = 60% to 69.9%	F = 0% to 59.9%	

Office hours

I will be available to answer questions about class or about international relations more broadly via e-mail and/or by office hours. The office hours and locations are listed below. These office hours are “open” in that any student can walk in whenever they wish. Since these office hours are open, they are not a good forum for talking about personal issues students might have that affect their ability to perform in class – other students might be present or might appear at any moment. If a student wishes to express personal concerns, please contact me via e-mail to set up a private meeting.

Hours: Tu 1:00 - 2:00 PM, Th 1:00 - 2:00 PM, and by appointment
Location: 214 Pond or Zoom

Note: *This syllabus, like our course, should be seen as an evolving experience, and from time to time changes might become necessary. As the instructor, I reserve the right to modify this syllabus, with the stipulation that any changes will be communicated to the entire class clearly and in writing.*

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Disability Accommodations Statement

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines at (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services Statement

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS) (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395
- Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses (<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)
- Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

- Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

Statements for Long-term Absences

During your enrollment at Penn State, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify your professor so you can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at StudentCare@psu.edu. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Course Outline (Note: All dates and readings are subject to change)

Wednesday, June 28, 2023: Introduction and Lecture 1: Actors in IR – FLS Chapter 1

Thursday, June 29, 2023: Lecture 2: Realism – FLS Introduction

Friday, June 30, 2023: Lecture 3: Liberalism – FLS Introduction

Monday, July 3, 2023: Lecture 4: Introduction to Game Theory – FLS 86-91

Tuesday, July 4, 2023: Independence Day - No Classes

Wednesday, July 5, 2023: Lecture 5: Global IR

- Read “Acharya, 2014” Article in CANVAS

Thursday, July 6, 2023: Lecture 6: International Law and Norms – FLS Chapter 11

Friday, July 7, 2023: First Exam (in CANVAS during class time)

Monday, July 10, 2023: Lecture 7: Human Rights – FLS Chapter 12

Tuesday, July 11, 2023: Lecture 8: Collective Action and the Environment – FLS Chapter 13

Wednesday, July 12, 2023: Lecture 9: International Trade – FLS Chapter 7

Thursday, July 13, 2023: Lecture 10: International Financial Investment – FLS Chapter 8

Friday, July 14, 2023: Lecture 11: Foreign Direct Investment – FLS Chapter 8

Monday, July 17, 2023: Lecture 12: International Monetary Relations – FLS Chapter 9

Tuesday, July 18, 2023: Lecture 13: Economic Development – FLS Chapter 10

Wednesday, July 19, 2023: Second Exam (in CANVAS during class time)

Thursday, July 20, 2023: Lecture 14: What is War, what is Power? – FLS Chapter 3

Friday, July 21, 2023: Lecture 15: Bargaining and War – FLS Chapter 3

Monday, July 24, 2023: Lecture 16: Diversionary War – FLS Chapter 4

Tuesday, July 25, 2023: Lecture 17: Interest Groups and War – FLS Chapter 4

Wednesday, July 26, 2023: Lecture 18: Democratic Peace – FLS Chapter 4

Thursday, July 27, 2023: Lecture 19: Racism and IR

- Read “Henderson 2009” Article in CANVAS

Friday, July 28, 2023: Lecture 20: Civil Wars – FLS Chapter 6

Monday, July 31, 2023: Third Exam (in CANVAS during class time)

Tuesday, August 1, 2023: Lecture 21: Terrorism – FLS Chapter 6

Wednesday, August 2, 2023: Lecture 22: Alliances – FLS Chapter 5

Thursday, August 3, 2023: Lecture 23: Diplomacy

Friday, August 4, 2023: Lecture 24: Russia-Ukraine War

- Read Masters, Jonathan. “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia.” Council on Foreign Relations [<https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflictcrossroads-europe-and-russia>]

Monday, August 7, 2023: Lecture 25: US-China Relations Part 1 – FLS Chapter 14

Tuesday, August 8, 2023: Lecture 26: US-China Relations Part 2

- Read “Weiss 2022” Article in CANVAS

Wednesday, August 9, 2023: Lecture 27: Course Overview

Thursday, August 10, 2023: Study Day - No Classes

Friday, August 11, 2023: Fourth Exam (in CANVAS during class time)