

PLS150

Introduction to International Relations

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Professor

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Course Description

This course is a broad introduction to International Relations (IR) as a discipline. We will study major paradigms and theories that have been developed throughout past decades. The goal is to acquaint students with key concepts and arguments of the discipline in preparation for upper-level courses in IR and/or other related disciplines. Starting from the major theories and perspective of IR, this course will survey major questions on world politics, including war and peace, international organizations, international political economy, and globalization issues. In doing so, students will develop their own critical understanding of the world politics across substantive topics.

Course Format

This course is redesigned for an asynchronous online course, in which students should complete assigned tasks on their own pace with given deadlines. All lectures and materials are available on the course Moodle. To complete each week's topic, students must pass a quiz at the end of each week. Quiz questions cover both assigned readings as well as lectures.

In order to facilitate online learning, this course incorporates a web-based simulation. Students should participate in the online simulation throughout the semester, in which 7-10 students form a group and play Statecraft IR Simulation. Details on the simulation will be distributed during the first week of the course.

Course Learning Objectives

The course has three objectives. First, students will learn and get familiarized with the field of international relations. Second, students will improve their abilities to observe and evaluate contemporary world politics through different lens of IR theories and concepts. Finally, students are to learn and practice different methods of conveying their critical understanding of international politics in written and verbal forms. To achieve those objectives, the course employs multiple approaches of learning, including lectures, discussions, presentations, and simulation.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand key concepts and theories of IR as a subfield of political science (PLO1)
- Develop a critical evaluation of ongoing and/or past issues of world politics (PLO2)
- Write their own evidence-based arguments (PLO3)
- Apply relevant concepts and theories to explain international relations (PLO4)
- Listen to and be tolerant of different ideas (PLO5)
- Use appropriate methods of collecting, organizing and interpreting evidence for their original arguments (PLO 6)

Textbooks

Students will be required to read assigned chapters and articles to understand each week's lectures and quizzes. This course uses the following book as the main textbook. Articles are available at the course Moodle.

- Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse. *International Relations* (edition 10th or later). Pearson.

The following books (any editions) are recommended to enhance students' understanding of the IR literature in general.

- Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. Waveleand Press (ISBN: 978-1577666707).
- Thomas C. Schelling. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Harvard University Press (ISBN: 978-0674840317).
- David A. Lake. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton University Press (ISBN: 978-0691026978).
- Daniel W. Drezner. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Princeton University Press (ISBN: 978-0691163703).

Course Requirements

This course is designed for a self-paced online course. Students should work on their own schedule to complete all modules and required evaluations (i.e. exams, quizzes, and writing assignments) to earn attempted credits.

- **Module completion (10%)** This is the basic requirement of the course and equivalent to class attendance. Although the course is asynchronous, students are expected to finish one module per week. To complete a module, all lessons and quiz should be completed by Saturday. If you completed a module past Saturday, it will be marked for 'late completion,' which you earn only *50% of the mark*. Note that you must complete all modules before the exam (e.g. modules 1 through 6 should be completed prior to exam 1). If you have an incomplete module, you *may not access the exam*. At the end of the semester (23 April), a student's overall completion rate will be computed. If the overall completion rate is below 80%, your final grade will be *penalized by two letter grade deduction*.
- **Comprehension quizzes (15%)** Each module includes a comprehension quiz, available at the end of the module. Students must finish all lessons to take the quiz. Quiz questions cover both lesson videos/texts and required readings.
- **Exams (15+15%)** There will be two online exams via Moodle. The exam is to ensure that students should complete all lessons and understand assigned materials. Exam questions cover both lectures and required readings. Students must take each exam during the assigned time window. A missed exam will receive *zero point*. There will be *no make-up exam*.
- **Simulation (15%)** In this course, students are required to create their student account at <https://ir.statecraftsim.com> before the beginning of the simulation. The fee will be paid by the University. On a weekly basis each team will have a discussion session and coordinate the team's strategies and decisions for the following week. Once the simulation begins, students must submit a memo of at least 300 words for each turn, which reflects the student's own thinking of his/her country's situation, including anticipated challenges, the student's position-specific responsibilities, and possible solutions. These memos will be your ongoing journal for the simulation experience. More details about the simulation will be available on the Moodle.
- **Writing assignments (15%+15%)** Students should submit two essays. One essay is a current event essay, in which students pick a recent issue/episode in world politics and write about own questions and answers related to the chosen event. The other essay is a simulation analysis report, in which students should analyze a specific episode from their own simulation experience, using concepts and theories learned in the course. Each essay should be no shorter than 1,000 words and demonstrate the student's critical thinking and application of IR concepts and theories from the course. See the *Guideline for Writing Assignments* for more details.

Evaluation and Grading

The final grade is determined by the student's overall performance of all course requirements. The final score is a weighted sum of each requirement score and will be rounded to the first decimal point (not to ones). Following the NU grade policy, the final letter grade will be given as follows:

Composition		Scale		
Module completion	10%		A 95.0 - 100.0	A- 90.0 - 94.9
Quizzes	15%	B+ 85.0 - 89.9	B 80.0 - 84.9	B- 75.0 - 79.9
Exam 1	15%	C+ 70.0 - 74.9	C 65.0 - 69.9	C- 60.0 - 64.9
Exam 2	15%	D+ 55.0 - 59.9	D 50.0 - 54.9	
Essay 1 & 2	30%	F < 50.0		
Simulation	15%			

Late submission Late submissions are accepted. This applies to essay assignments and simulation memos.

Plagiarism/cheating This will never be tolerated. Students must be familiarized with the NU Student Code of Conduct and the university regulations about academic misconduct. If you don't agree with the penalty imposed by the instructor, you can appeal to the SSH Disciplinary Committee. See the *Academic Misconduct* section of the syllabus for details.

Re-grading Students can request re-grading of their assignments and quizzes within one week after it is graded. Such a request must be made by a written form and submitted to the professor's email with a full description of reasons for request. Note that the entire of the requested assignment, not a specific part(s), will be re-graded and that the new grade may be lower than the original one. There will be no re-grading of once re-graded assignments.

Extension and make-up Extensions or make-up assessments are not granted under any circumstances. See the *missed assessments* section below.

Final grade Final grades will be computed at the end of the semester once all assignments and quizzes are collected and graded. There will be no curve to any of assignment grades. Students will be notified about their grades per assignment whenever it becomes available. Final grades will be only available at the end of the semester, and will not be changed or negotiated, unless there found a computational error.

Missed assessments Students are responsible for all course assignments and assessments outlined in the syllabus, even if they have a legitimate excuse (e.g. medical emergency). Students who know they will miss a deadline for an assignment or an assessment, even if it is a School or University activity, must contact the professor before the deadline. If this is not possible, the professor must be contacted within 24 hours. Students must provide documentation for their missing deadlines. If a student fails to do so, the student may receive a zero for the assessment. If circumstances are so dire as to keep the student from making contact during this twenty-four-hour-window, then the student must provide substantial documentation corroborating the situation (a simple spravka will *not* suffice).

Academic Misconduct

Official documents Students must become familiarized with the NU Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, which is the official document outlining policies and procedures about academic misconduct. Here are links to important NU policies:

- Academic policies and procedures for undergraduate programs (English/Russian).
- Student code of conduct and disciplinary procedures (English/Russian).
- Undergraduate attendance policy and procedures (English).

Cheating This refers to any attempts to deceive the student's original status of works and/or efforts, including, but not limited to, cheating during any types of tests (i.e. quizzes and exams) and forgery of documents. If a student is suspected for this type of misconduct, a Category B misconduct will be filed. Read the Student Code of Conduct *carefully*.

Plagiarism A plagiarism is defined as "an act of using someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own without appropriate acknowledgement or quotation marks." Following the NU guidelines and the Student Code of Conduct, I use two categories of punishment.

- Category A is to be led when minor plagiarism is suspected (e.g. one paragraph, or 2-3 consecutive sentences). For category A, the student will get zero point for that assignment.
- Category B is to be led when a significant amount of the student's assignment/work is suspected to be plagiarized (e.g. more than one paragraph). For category B, the student will fail this course and possible disciplinary actions will be enforced by the University (e.g. suspensions of stipend till the end of next semester).

Special notes for online misconduct Although I give my full respect for and confidence on my students, there will be strict rules for assessments and assignments to prevent any misconduct:

- Do not (attempt to) communicate with other students during exams or quizzes. Exam and quiz questions are randomly pulled from a large pool of questions. If there is any evidence of communicating during an exam or a quiz, *all* students involved in that communication will be reported for a Category B misconduct.
- The time window for an exam will be strictly enforced to prevent unnecessary misunderstanding or mistrust. Students must be prepared for exams (stable connection to Moodle). It will not be accepted as an excuse that students have connection issues during an exam.
- Moodle log file will be used and accepted as evidence of misconduct. Moodle's activity log file should be sufficient to prove a student's online misconduct. Any suspicious activities found in the student's log will be reported to the School as academic misconduct.

Course Topics and Readings

This course is a self-paced online course that students should work on their own schedule. However, there are deadlines by which students should complete each module. To complete each module, students should take all lessons and pass the end-of-module quiz. You have two attempts for each quiz. Reading materials are available on the course Moodle.

Module 1. Introduction: Making Sense of IR

This module introduces general ideas about the definition of international relations. Students will learn about the intellectual history of IR and its distinctive characteristics.

Concepts: plagiarism, critical thinking, academic writing

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 1
- Statecraft Simulation Manual (simulation grouping)

Module 2. Realist Theories of IR

This module introduces the intellectual history of IR realism and identify key assumptions and argument of realist approaches. Students will learn about how to interpret global issues from the perspectives of various IR realism.

Concepts: power, anarchy, balancing, bandwagoning, polarity, hegemony, stability

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 2
- Simulation turn 0

Module 3. Liberal and Social Theories of IR

In this module, students will learn about two major explanations of international politics stemmed from liberalist tradition and a social approach to IR.

Concepts: institutionalism, international regime, democratic peace, constructivism, positivism, post-positivism

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 3
- Simulation turn 1

Module 4. Foreign Policy

This module leads you to the theorization entrepreneur of decision making at a state level. Students will be introduced to various models of foreign policy decision making.

Concepts: decision making, rational choice model, cognitive model, rally effect

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 4
- Simulation turn 2

Module 5. International Conflict

In this module, students will be introduced to various theories on the causes of war at different levels, including the bargaining theory of war.

Concepts: types of war, conflicts, MIDs, bargaining theory of war

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 5
- Simulation turn 3

Module 6. Military Force and Terrorism

This module focuses on the use of military force and explanations of such uses in various contexts. Students will also learn about terrorism and counterterrorism through the lens of collective action problem.

Concepts: types of weapons, civil-military relations, terrorism, asymmetric warfare, arms control

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 6
- Simulation turn 4

*** Exam 1 (25 February)**

Module 7. International Organizations, Law, and Human Rights

This module leads to the discussion of international organizations and laws, their origins, effectiveness, and roles in world politics.

Concepts: collective security, international norms, peacekeeping, human rights, intervention

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 7
- Simulation turn 5

Module 8. International Trade

This module introduces basic concepts and approaches of international trade. Students will also learn about the general topics and issues of IPE.

Concepts: balance of trade, protectionism, trade regimes, globalization

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 8
- Simulation turn 6

Module 9. Global Finance and Multinational Corporations

This module introduces the impact and role of global finance and MNCs. Students will learn about the challenges and risks of globalization in finance and investment.

Concepts: exchange regimes, currency stability, balance of payment, national debt, central bank, MNC, FDI

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 9
- Simulation turn 7 (last turn)

Module 10. International Integration

This module offers a broad introduction to the theorization of international integration at various levels. Theories like neofunctionalism serve the ground for discussion. Students will also learn about the influence of information, communication, and cultural exchanges on international integration.

Concepts: plagiarism, critical thinking, academic writing

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 10

*** Soft Deadline for Essays (3 April)**

Module 11. Environment and Population

This module introduced theories and arguments on environmental issues. Students will learn about how political science deals with the causal link between environment/population and conflicts and growing concerns about the coordination problems in those issue areas.

Concepts: tragedy of the commons, global warming, migration, pandemic

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapter 11

Module 12. International Development

This module introduces theories of development in the IR literature. Students will learn about how global actors have to do with a country's development and different strategies (and their challenges) in growing economies.

Concepts: development, modernization theory, world system theory, North-South gap, foreign aid, conditionality

- Goldstein & Pevehouse, chapters 12 and 13

*** Hard Deadline for Essays (17 April)**

Module 13. Final Wrap-up and Student Evaluations

In this final module, students will have opportunities to present their works and ask questions during scheduled live sessions.

*** Exam 2 (25-30 April)**

Deadlines and Assessments

All deadlines will be strictly enforced. All modules are available after activated until the last day of class (23 April). Any modules completed past deadlines will earn 50% of the full mark (see module completion requirement)

Date	Expected tasks
16 January	Module 1 completed
23 January	Module 2 completed; simulation turn 0
30 January	Module 3 completed; simulation turn 1
6 February	Module 4 completed; simulation turn 2
13 February	Module 5 completed; simulation turn 3
20 February	Module 6 completed; simulation turn 4
25 February	Exam 1 (modules 1 through 6)
6 March	Module 7 completed; simulation turn 5
13 March	Module 8 completed; simulation turn 6
20 March	Module 9 completed; simulation turn 7 (last turn)
3 April	Module 10 completed; soft deadline for essays
10 April	Module 11 completed
17 April	Module 12 completed; hard deadline for essays
20 and 22 April	Module 13 live sessions
25-30 April	Exam 2 (modules 7 through 12)