

PLS 150: Introduction to International Relations

Nazarbayev University
Spring 2022
TR, 13:30 PM- 14:45 PM

Professor: Dr. Bimal Adhikari
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Office Hours: T, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (by appointment only)

Teaching Assistants:

- **Name:** Mr. Basit Gulzar
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- **Office Hours:** M, 15:00 PM - 16:00 PM (by appointment only)

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- **Office Hours:** R, 12:30 PM - 13:30 PM (by appointment only)

Course Description and Objectives

This introductory course is designed to help students grasp the basics of international politics. This course will introduce students to the scientific study of interstate interactions and provide the background and conceptual tools necessary to understand and analyze contemporary international relations. As such, the course covers a wide range of issues, including but not limited to causes of war, political economy, human rights, and environmental politics. The semester is broadly divided into four sections. The course begins by briefly discussing the scientific approaches to the study of international relations. Next, the focus will be on the causes and effects of inter- and intrastate conflicts. The third section will focus on the study of globalization, international trade, and monetary relations. The final section includes topics including international law, non-governmental actors, human rights, and the environment. At the completion of the course, students will (i) be acquainted with the foundational literature in international relations, (ii) be prepared to enroll in upper-level courses on each of these major topics, (iii) be able to understand how the scientific study of international politics relates to “real life” by having a specialized knowledge of contemporary issues in the global system, (iv) be able to use the knowledge to gain entry-level positions with various governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Readings

- Frieden, Jeffrey A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2016. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 3rd Edition. WW Norton & Company. [FLS]

Course Requirements

1. Exams (2 * 30 = 60%)

There will be two take-home exams (worth 30% each). The exams may include multiple-choice questions, short responses, and essay questions.

2. **Quizzes** (2 * 10 = 20%)

There will be two quizzes in total (worth 10% each). The quizzes will be over the assigned readings for a given class meeting and/or on the materials presented in previous lectures. The primary goal of this assignment is to keep students engaged with course readings and lecture notes. As such, requests for deadline extension will not be entertained unless a student has a legitimate excuse.

3. **Paper** (20%)

The last component of the course circles back to the concept of sovereignty and interstate affairs. Students will be tasked to write a 1000-1200 word-length paper (excluding citations; see written assignment guidelines below) that will discuss whether or not humanitarian intervention i) is in the “national interest,” ii) should be done even if it violates the concept of state sovereignty, and iii) is consistent with any of the international relations theories discussed during the course. Additional guidelines will be provided at a later date. The paper will be due during the exam week via Turnitin; late submissions will not be graded. Students are highly encouraged to consult with the [Writing Center](#) staffs before turning in the final version.

4. **Discussion Sessions**

I will be holding a total of three discussion sessions to answer any questions that you may have about the course and/or the readings. These sessions are not mandatory, but I strongly encourage everyone to attend. You are also encouraged to submit your questions on Moodle by 9:00 AM on the scheduled day to facilitate the process. **Invite Link:** [Zoom Link](#) **Meeting ID:** 402 931 0255 **Passcode:** 1srhJN

Grading

Grading Components

Exams (2 * 30) :	60%
Quizzes (2 * 10) :	20%
Paper :	20%

Letter Grade Distribution

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

>= 95	A	65.00 - 69.99	C
90.00 - 94.99	A-	60.00 - 64.99	C-
85.00 - 89.99	B+	55.00 - 59.99	D+
80.00 - 84.99	B	50.00 - 54.99	D
75.00 - 79.99	B-	<= 50.00	F
70.00 - 74.99	C+		

Other Considerations

Make-up Assignments

Students who know they will miss an assignment, even if it is a School or University activity, must contact the instructor before the class. If this is not possible, the instructor must be contacted within 24 hours. Students must provide documentation. Certificates attesting medical

crisis must be provided no later than three days after the consultation with the doctor. Certificates submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

If a student misses an assessment and does not find a way to contact the professor within the twenty-four-hour window (either personally or via a friend or family member), 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).

If an assessment is missed, instructors can give a zero. The instructor may also offer a more difficult version of the assessment; a make-up with a penalty; increase the value of a subsequent assessment; or some other option.

All assessments should be completed before the day final grades are due. In exceptional circumstances (for instance a long-term hospitalization) a grade of incomplete may be given. Such grades are given only with the approval of the instructor and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

Availability

Since this is a large introductory course, I first request you to seek an appointment with the teaching assistants at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. If your problem or concern remains unresolved, schedule a meeting with me during office hours. (This is only for office hour visits related to the coursework. Questions that can be answered via email should be sent to me.) By doing so, I will be able to give enough time during office hours to those that require my attention. Office hours are listed at the beginning of the syllabus. You are required to make an appointment at least 48 hours prior to the meeting with the professor. All meetings will be held via Zoom – the credentials will be posted on Moodle.

The teaching assistants and I aim to be responsive to emails. However, please do not expect an answer to your question sooner than 24 hours after it is sent during weekdays and 48 hours during weekends. We will also not answer emails that can be answered by looking at the syllabus. When you write an email to me, do not start your email without a salutation. Instead, “Dear Dr. Adhikari” or “Dear Professor Adhikari” should be used for initial contact. I will not answer emails that do not use or use an improper salutation. I want you to develop professional email writing habits early in your career.

Grade Appeals

You may contest the grade on an exam up to five business days after it is returned. If you believe that there has been a grading error, submit a written description of the error you believe occurred with your work via official NU email to me. However, you must wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned to you before contacting me. Please also note that if you appeal a grade on an assignment and decide to reexamine the assignment, the grade may increase, decrease, or remain the same. It will be treated as a new grade on the assignment, and all aspects of the assignment are open to reexamination. There will be no re-grading of the re-graded assignment. For the final assignment, students will have 48 hours to request the re-grading of the assignment. I do not scale or curve exams, and I do not envision any extra credit opportunities.

The grade you earn in the class is the grade you deserve. I will not tolerate any form of grade lawyering, which includes requests for the grade to be raised for no legitimate reason, flattery, insults, threats, etc. Students involved in such acts will be reported to the Vice Dean of Aca-

demetic Affairs for an academic misconduct report (category B offense).

Written Assignment Formatting

Your papers are professional products and should be formatted as such. Each paper should be a word document (no PDFs), double-spaced, in a normal font (Times New Roman, size 12), with standard 1” margins. I strongly recommend you to use the [American Political Science Association](#) citation style. You are free to choose other citation styles. However, you must be consistent throughout the assignment. Keep in mind the page limit does not include references. Failure to adhere to these formatting instructions will adversely affect your assignment grade. Students are highly encouraged to consult with the Writing Center staffs before turning in the final version of the assignment.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct is defined broadly to include a wide variety of behaviors that conflict with the values and mission of NU. Students should become familiar with the NU Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (Student Code), the official document that outlines policies and procedures around academic misconduct at NU. Students are responsible for complying with NU policies and those described in the syllabus for an individual class, whether the student has read them or not. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other academic dishonesty, feel free to consult the course instructor.

All materials, including the syllabus, lecture notes, and other documents are copyrighted. Students are prohibited from sharing them without the express written permission of the professor. Violation of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct and will be reported to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

Teaching

Keeping in mind that some of you may face difficulty with the synchronous teaching method, I will be posting the lectures online by class time each week. I have also broken down the lectures into smaller parts. I hope doing so will help those of you with limited internet package or slower internet connection. I will also be posting the PDF version of the lectures.

Rule of Thumb

College students should spend, on average, two hours on work outside of class for each hour of class time. If you find that this course regularly demands more (or fewer) than six hours of out-of-class work per week, please talk to me about it.

Class Outline

The information contained in the course syllabus may change throughout the semester. All changes will be announced via Moodle. It is the responsibility of the student to take note of any changes. The videos with the “*” sign contains scenes of violence that may be difficult for some of you to watch. In that case, please let me know by the end of first week of classes, and I will have you do an alternative assignment.

Week 1 (January 24-28): Introduction

- Course Overview
- [How to Read Political Science](#)
- Snyder, Jack. 2004. “One World, Rival Theories.” *Foreign Policy* 145: 52-62.
- Lake, David A. 2011. “Why “isms” Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress.” *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 465–480.

Week 2 (January 31 - February 4): Major Paradigms

- FLS, Introduction & Chapter 1

Week 3 (February 7 - 11): Interests, Interactions, and Institutions

- FLS, Chapter 2
- [Video: Obama at War*](#)

Week 4 (February 14-18): The Causes of War

- FLS, Chapter 3
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations?.” *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22–49.
- [Video: The 9/11 Decade : The Clash of Civilizations?*](#)
- Discussion Session

Week 5 (February 21-25): Domestic Politics and War

- FLS, Chapter 4
- [Attacking Iran Will Not Help Trump Win Reelection. Here’s Why.](#)
- **Thursday - Quiz #1 Due**

Week 6 (February 28 - March 4): International Institutions and War & Civil War and Terrorism

- FLS, Chapters 5 & 6
- Discussion Session

Week 7 (March 7-11): Exam Week I

- Thursday: Exam I Due

Week 8 (March 14-18): International Trade

- FLS, Chapter 7
- [A Quick Guide to the US-China Trade War](#)
- [Video: Trump's Trade War](#)

Week 9 (March 21-25): Spring Break

Week 10 (March 28 - April 1): International Financial Relations & Development

- FLS, Chapters 8 & 10
- [Video: The Debt of Dictators](#)

Week 11 (April 4-8): International Law and Norms & Human Rights

- FLS, Chapters 11 & 12
- Thursday - Quiz #2 Due

Week 12 (April 11-15): Exam Week II

- Discussion Session
- Thursday: Exam II Due

Week 13 (April 18-22): Paper Week

- [Video: Ghosts of Rwanda*](#)
- Thursday: Paper Due