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## **PLSC 1380: Introduction to International Relations**

**Spring 2020**  
**TuTh 2:00PM - 3:20PM**  
**Hyer Hall 200**

### **Course description:**

This course introduces students to contemporary theories, concepts, and issues in the study of international relations. Questions addressed include: Why do wars occur? Are democracies more peaceful than other types of states? How are foreign policy decisions made? Why are some countries seemingly mired in poverty? What do terrorists want? The course consists of three parts: Part one (“Foundations”) introduces key concepts and theories. Part two (“War and Peace”) acquaints students with contemporary international security studies, dealing with issues such as the causes of war and the conditions of peace, ethnic conflict, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Part three (“The International Economy and Transnational Challenges”) covers the basics of international finance and trade, before discussing some of the challenges posed by environmental degradation, terrorism, and human rights violations.

### **Readings:**

All the readings listed on this syllabus are required, unless explicitly marked as recommended. Students are expected to complete all of the required readings *before* class so that they can engage in active discussion. Students who regularly skip the required readings or miss more than one or two class meetings will not be in a position to do well in the required essays and exams and may fail the course. There is one required textbook that all students enrolled for this course should purchase, listed below. Many of the required readings are taken from this textbook.

### **Required Textbook:**

- Joseph Grieco, G. John Ikenberry, and Michael Mastanduno, *Introduction to International Relations*, second edition (New York: Macmillan, 2019).

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

Class attendance and participation: 15%

Two take-home essays: 15% each (due on Feb 25 and April 9)

Midterm exam: 25% (on March 5)

Policy simulation: 10% (on April 23 and 28)

Take-home final exam: 20% (due on May 8)

### ***Class attendance and participation***

Class attendance is mandatory and, although this is primarily a lecture course, active and informed student participation is expected. Students who consistently come to class late, seldom contribute to discussion, or blather ceaselessly showing no knowledge of the assigned materials, will be downgraded.

If you need to miss a class due to a family bereavement, illness, or officially sanctioned University extracurricular activity, you must notify the professor in advance via email and provide appropriate documentation. Religiously observant students who will be absent on religious holidays should notify the professor via email at the beginning of the semester. Students who miss a class should make arrangements to obtain the lecture notes from another classmate.

### ***Take-home essays***

Students are required to write two analytic essays for this course. Essays should be 6-8 pages long, double-spaced, and use 12-point Times New Roman font. Students will have one week to write each essay. Questions for the first essay will be made available on February 18, and the essay will be due on February 25. Questions for the second essay will be made available on April 2, and the essay will be due on April 9. Essays will be graded on the basis of: mastery of the required readings and lecture material; ability to summarize, critically discuss and juxtapose relevant arguments; clarity of writing and appropriate use of grammar and syntax. Essays should be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Electronic copies will not be accepted. Late submissions will incur a penalty of one full letter grade for each 24-hour period.

### ***In-class midterm exam***

For the midterm exam, students will be required to identify five key concepts and write one short essay (choosing from two essay questions available), based on material from the first half of the course. The midterm will be held in class on March 5.

### ***Policy presentation***

There is a required group project for this course. The class will be randomly divided into six groups. Students will find out in early February to which group they have been assigned. Each group will then explore a particular policy challenge related to contemporary international

relations. Each group will appoint two speakers, who together will make a 15-minute oral presentation to the class. Students may choose to structure their group's presentation as a debate between the two speakers. It is strongly advised that students meet ahead of their scheduled presentation to coordinate and divide up the required work. Students should prepare a one-page written outline of their presentation, structured in bullet points, and print out sufficient copies for distribution to the entire class.

### ***Take-home final exam***

Students will be required to answer two essay questions (choosing from three questions available), drawing on theories and arguments from the second half of the course. Questions will be made available at 10.00am on May 7, and the essays will be due by 5.00pm on May 8. The *combined* length of both essays should be 7-10 pages, double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. Late submissions will incur a penalty of one full letter grade for each 24-hour period.

**Office hours:** Students are always welcome to attend the professor's office hours, if they have particular questions about the content of the readings or the lectures. Students should not come to office hours expecting to find out what exactly they need to know for the midterm and final exams. Students can book their ten-minute office hour slot on the professor's website, at <http://www.stefanorecchia.net/teaching.html>

**Laptop policy:** Studies show that students learn less when they work with laptops in class. Therefore, to minimize distraction and maximize learning, the use of laptops, tablets and smartphones in class is not allowed unless you have a medical reason to use one.

### **Student learning outcomes (SLOs):**

This course satisfies the following SLOs as identified in SMU's 2016 University Curriculum:

#### *History, Social and Behavioral Sciences*

1. B1a. Students will analyze and evaluate critically research outcomes and different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political and social experiences.

#### *Oral Communication*

1. Students will use appropriate vocal and visual cues to deliver a presentation to a specific or targeted audience.

#### *Writing*

1. Through multiple opportunities supervised and/or directed by a professor, an editor or other authority, students will demonstrate proper use of language through completion of a substantial amount of purposeful writing appropriate for a specific or targeted audience.

## I. Foundations

### **Jan. 21: Introduction**

### **Jan. 23: Concepts, actors, methods**

- Grieco, pp. 1-28.

### **Jan. 28: The sovereign states system: 1500-1945**

- Grieco, pp. 32-55.
- [Recommended: Stephen Krasner, "Westphalia and all That"]

### **Jan. 30: The Cold War and its aftermath**

- Grieco, pp. 55-74.
- Robert McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2003), pp. 1-34.

### **Feb. 4: Theoretical perspectives I: Political Realism**

- Grieco, pp. 76-84.
- Hans Morgenthau, "Six Principles of Political Realism"

### **Feb. 6: Theoretical perspectives II: Liberal Internationalism**

- Grieco, pp. 86-94.
- Michael Doyle and Stefano Recchia, "Liberalism in International Relations"

### **Feb. 11: Theoretical perspectives III: Social Constructivism**

- Grieco, pp. 101-108.
- Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It"

### **Feb. 13: Foreign policy analysis I: Actors and models**

- Grieco, pp. 113-138
- Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, "Governmental politics," pp. 255-258 and 294-312.

### **Feb. 18: Foreign policy analysis II: Tools**

- Alexander George, “Coercive Diplomacy”
- Daniel Drezner, “Sanctions Sometimes Smart”

## **II. War and Peace**

### **Feb. 20: Causes of war I: Individuals and domestic politics**

- Grieco, pp. 194-224.
- [Recommended: Robert Jervis, “War and Misperception”]

### **Feb. 25: Causes of war II: System-level factors**

- Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma”
- Robert Gilpin, “Hegemonic War and International Change”

### **Feb. 27: Paths to peace I: Power and Institutions**

- Grieco, pp. 236-264.
- Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, “Power and Interdependence”

### **March 3: Paths to peace II: Collective action**

- Thomas Weiss et. al., “The Theory and Practice of UN Collective Security”

### **March 5: Midterm exam**

### **March 10: Ethnic conflict and civil war**

- Grieco, pp. 224-233.
- Barry Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict”

**March 12: International peacekeeping**

- Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, “Peacekeeping Operations”

**March 17 and 19: Spring break****March 24: Weapons of mass destruction**

- Grieco, pp. 266-303.
- Kenneth Waltz, “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb”

### **III. The International Economy and Transnational Challenges**

**March 26: International political economy I: Trade**

- Grieco, pp. 310-322; and 363-378.
- Dani Rodrik, “Why Doesn’t Everyone Get the Case for Free Trade?”

**March 31: International political economy II: Finance**

- Grieco, pp. 322-353.

**April 2: International development**

- Grieco, pp. 392-418.
- [Recommended: Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, “The making of prosperity and poverty.”]

**April 7: The global environment**

- Grieco, pp. 464-489.

**April 9: International law and institutions**

- Grieco, pp. 148-162; and 178-190.
- Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?"

**April 14: State failure and terrorism**

- Grieco, pp. 434-452.
- Louise Richardson, "What Terrorists Want"

**April 16: Human rights**

- Grieco, pp. 162-173
- Beth Simmons, "Mobilizing for Human Rights"

**April 21: Humanitarian intervention**

- Alex Bellamy and Nicholas Wheeler, "Humanitarian intervention in world politics."

**April 23: Policy simulation I****April 28: Policy simulation II****April 30: What will the future hold?**

- Grieco, pp. 496-532.
- Fareed Zakaria, "The New China Scare"