PS 0500: Introduction to World Politics

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University of Pittsburgh
Fall 2017
Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-2:50
Recitations: As Scheduled
Cathedral of Learning 324
Office Hours: Tuesdays, Posvar 4446, 11:45-1:45

World politics is the study of how states interact with each other. This course builds a working knowledge of our field, introducing the background, theoretical, and empirical tools necessary to understand international relations today. Students will learn about important findings in a variety of subfields, including war, international political economy, institutions, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism. To do so, the course emphasizes readings from original research material rather than from a textbook. Students will also solve problem sets and work with common international relations datasets to obtain a working understanding of the discipline's methodological foundations.

Course Materials

Blackboard is difficult to work with. Thus, I will post all course materials on my website: https://williamspaniel.com/classes/worldpolitics/. Most importantly, this includes links to required readings, PDFs of lecture slides, and recorded videos of lectures.

There are no required books for this course. However, students may find it useful to purchase *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions* as a reference textbook. Used copies of the second edition are available on Amazon for less than $10.

Recitation

This class has weekly recitations in place of a scheduled third lecture. Recitations are mandatory and constitute a large portion of your grade. There will be no leniency for students attending lecture but not recitation.

Evaluation

Grades have four components: two problem sets, two data analyses, recitation, and two exams. The problem sets are worth 10% each and will test your ability to think strategically about basic problems in international relations. The two data analyses are worth 5% each and will ask you to become more familiar with IR's common datasets. Recitation is worth 20% and will be based on attendance and participation, as your teaching assistant will further detail. The exams are each worth 25%.

After weighting each individual grade, final grades will be no worse than the following:

$$93\% < x: A$$
$$90 \leq x \leq 93\%: A-$$
$$87\% < x < 90\%: B+$$
$$83\% < x \leq 87\%: B$$
$$80\% \leq x \leq 83\%: B-$$
$$77\% < x < 80\%: C+$$
$$73\% < x \leq 77\%: C$$
$$70\% < x \leq 73\%: C-$$
$$x < 70\%: \text{Non-passing grades}$$

Homework Policy

You are encouraged to work in groups to solve homework problems, but write-ups must be one's own. Please see Pitt's guidelines on plagiarism for more. Be aware that political science is becoming an increasingly quantitative field, and the problem sets will require some basic algebra to complete.

Late Work

Absent any university regulations that provide exceptions or a North Korean attack on the American homeland, no late work will be accepted under any circumstance. This is to facilitate faster turnaround times and to allow the TA to go over the correct answers as soon as possible.

Teaching Assistant Recitation and Office Hours

Matthew Jackson
mij35@pitt.edu
Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00, Political Science Department

Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both myself and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. You alone are responsible for attending lecture and checking the website to stay up-to-date.

Readings and Schedule

The readings and schedule are subject to change, pending international crises and how fast we move through the material. Please see the website for links to the readings and an up-to-date schedule.

Topic 1: Introduction and IR Basics (8/29, 8/31)

No readings.

Topic 2: Basic Models of Conflict and Cooperation (9/5, 9/7)

"[The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War](#)"

The Evolution of Cooperation. [Chapter 1](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

Topic 3: Bargaining and War (9/12, 9/14, 9/19)

"[Rationalist Explanations for War](#)"

[The Rationality of War](#). Chapter 2.

Topic 4: International Trade (9/21, 9/26)

Problem Set #1 due 9/21.

Topic 5: The Democratic Peace (9/28, 10/3)

[The Logic of Political Survival](#). Chapter 1.

Data Analysis #1 due 10/3.

Topic 6: Leader-Based Explanations (10/5, 10/12)

"[International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still *Ex Post* Inefficient?](#)"

"[Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War](#)"

Note: No recitation on 10/6. We do not meet on 10/8 due to the class shift for fall break.

Exam 1 (10/17)

Topic 7: Economic Sanctions (10/19, 10/24)

"[Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?](#)"

"[The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions](#)"

Topic 8: International Institutions (10/26, 10/31)

"[The Rational Design of International Institutions](#)"

Controlling Institutions. [Chapter 1](#).

Problem Set #2 due 10/31.

Topic 9: The United Nations (11/2, 11/7)

"[How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations](#)"

Topic 10: Nuclear Proliferation (11/9, 11/14)

"[Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb](#)"

"[Winning with the Bomb](#)"

Data Analysis #2 due 11/14.

Topic 11: Terrorism (11/16, 11/21)

"[The Strategies of Terrorism](#)"

"[Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism](#)"

No class on 11/23 and no recitation on 11/24 (Thanksgiving).

Topic 12: International Intervention (11/28, 11/30)

"[The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement](#)"

"[Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature](#)"

In-Class Review (12/5)

Exam 2 (12/7)