

# Introduction to International Relations

Undergraduate Lecture

Political Science 1000

Fall 2024

**Instructor:** Sam Houskeeper

**Email:** [university email]

**Office:** [office location]

**Office Hours:** [schedule]

**TA:** [TA name]

**Email:** [university email]

**Office:** [office location]

**Office Hours:** [schedule]

**TA:** [TA name]

**Email:** [university email]

**Office:** [office location]

**Office Hours:** [schedule]

## Course Description

Why do wars happen? Why are some countries poor and others rich? Why is international cooperation on refugee displacement, pandemic prevention, or climate change so difficult? This course begins to answer some of these questions by introducing students to international relations (IR), a subfield of political science focused on politics between countries rather than politics within countries.

This course is centered on paradigms, or families of theories around which IR research has been orga-

nized for decades. We will use these paradigms as a lens to understand major trends and events in recent world history as well as ongoing challenges global governance. Students will read both classical and recent IR research, which they will discuss with their peers and analyze in writing.

## **Learning Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Conceptualize international relations as the politics of a system, distinct from the comparative politics of individual countries.
- Understand and critique the core theoretical paradigms of IR.
- Apply these IR paradigms to both historical cases and current problems.
- Express these ideas in open discussion and in clear and succinct writing.

## **Requirements and Evaluation**

### **Course Conduct**

Conduct in class, section, office hours, or any other part of this course should be professional and respectful. Disagreement (with myself and others) is encouraged, but productive disagreement can only be rooted in mutual respect.

### **Readings**

All readings listed on the syllabus are mandatory and are considered essential to the course's learning objectives. You are not expected to buy any books or other material for this course. Readings are generally available through the university's online library system. When this is not the case, I will post a PDF of the reading on the course website.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. TAs will monitor section attendance (including tardiness). While lecture attendance will not be monitored, it will be extremely difficult to keep up with course material without attending lecture.

An excused absence from section (i.e. an absence cleared with the TA ahead of time due to some reasonable conflict such as a family emergency) can be made up by submitting a 500-word answer to a discussion question on the week's material given by the TA. Unavoidable absences from lecture should be made up by attending the office hours of myself or the TA.

## **Section Participation**

Active section participation is defined by regular contributions that students have done the course readings and are actively listening to their peers. You cannot be a good participant if you do not listen to other participants in the conversation. You also cannot be a good participant if you do not come to section prepared. Participation can take many forms, such as asking clarification questions, putting forward your own arguments about the material, or engaging with other students' questions or arguments.

## **Papers**

Students will write three short papers: one for each of the first three parts of the course. Prompts will be posted after the final class of each part and papers will be due two weeks later. Papers should be 1200 words (+/- 100 words) and must answer the prompt while prioritizing clarity and demonstrating a robust understanding of course readings and topics.

## **Final Exam**

The final exam will be administered in person during the university-scheduled exam time during finals week. Final exams will consist of a series of short-answer questions covering material from the entire course.

## **Grades**

Participation grades will be determined by TAs and will be based on section attendance and participation. TAs will distribute rubrics explaining their specific grading criteria.

All grading of papers and finals will be done by TAs and will be done blindly, meaning that the student's name/identity will not be viewable to the grader until after grading is complete.

Late papers will automatically be marked-down one grade (i.e. from an A to an A-), with an additional grade lost for each additional 24 hours of lateness.

TAs are not authorized to change grades after they have been given. Any request for a grade alteration must be sent to me. Please send your paper (with the TA's comments and grade) and a 250-word explanation of your complaint. Note that your grade can decline after my review, as I will take a holistic approach to re-grading.

Breakdown:

- 30% Section Participation
- 40% Papers (10% each)
- 30% Final Exam

## **Academic Integrity**

### **Plagiarism**

This course adheres to the university's academic integrity policies and honor code. All papers will be checked with standard plagiarism detection software and clear violations of university standards will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment. Please reach out to me or your TAs if you have any questions or confusion about plagiarism.

### **Use of Large Language Models**

We live in an age of rapid developments in machine learning. Large language models (LLMs) are particularly exciting and a promising tool in the study of politics. While LLMs can be useful to brainstorm, locate resources, identify alternative arguments or conventional wisdom, etc., please be aware of two notes of caution:

- Use of LLMs to directly write course essays or in any other way that passes off LLM output as your own work is considered plagiarism.
- LLMs are not "smart." LLMs produce a (somewhat garbled and often inaccurate) summary of whatever is available on the searchable internet (i.e. Google). This means that a student using LLMs for permitted tasks like brainstorming must remember that everything an LLM says should be double-checked. It also means that a student using LLMs for prohibited tasks such as plagiarizing an essay should remember that any essay written by an LLM would likely receive a poor grade anyways.

## Disability Accommodations

Special accommodations are available for students who are registered with the school's disability services offices. Please reach out to me if this applies to you.

## Schedule

The semester is 14 weeks long, with 2 class meetings per week. Class topics are listed below.

### **Part I: Paradigms of international relations**

- 1 Background
- 2 Realism: Classical
- 3 Realism: Structural
- 4 Realism: Hegemonic
- 5 Liberalism: Democratic Peace Theory
- 6 Liberalism: Capitalist Peace Theory
- 7 Liberalism: Institutionalism
- 8 Constructivism: Identities and Interests
- 9 Constructivism: Norms and Ideologies
- 10 Dependency Theory / World Systems Theory

[first paper prompt distributed]

### **Part II: A very brief history of the modern state system**

- 11 The Origins of the Modern State System
- 12 The European Empires
- 13 The First World War
- 14 The Interwar Period and the Second World War

[first paper due]

- 15 The United Nations and Decolonization
- 16 The Cold War and the Nuclear Revolution
- 17 Unipolarity

[second paper prompt distributed]

**Part III: Problems in international relations**

**18 War: System-Level**

**19 War: Dyad-Level**

**20 Human Rights: Laws of War and Interventions**

**21 Human Rights: Activism and Shaming**

[second paper due]

**22 Economics: Global Stability**

**23 Economics: Growth and Development**

**24 The Environment: Free-Rider Problems**

**25 The Environment: Upstream-Downstream Problems**

[third paper prompt distributed]

**Part IV: The future of international relations**

**26 The End of Unipolarity?**

**27 The Transformation of the State System?**

**28 The Future of the Field of International Relations**

[third paper due]

# Part I: Paradigms of international relations

## 1 Background

What is international relations? What is a theory? What is a theoretical paradigm?

- no readings for today

## 2 Realism: Classical

Does human nature make conflict inevitable?

- “The Melian Dialogue” from Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The Penguin classics. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Eng., Baltimore], rev. ed edition, 1972
- Chapter 1 of Hans Joachim Morgenthau. *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*. Knopf, New York, 5. ed., rev edition, 1978

## 3 Realism: Structural

What does it mean to call the international system anarchic? What is the security dilemma?

- Chapter 6 of Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Massachusetts, 1979
- Chapter 2 of John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, updated edition edition, 2014

## 4 Realism: Hegemonic

- Robert Gilpin. The Theory of Hegemonic War. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4):591–613, 1988
- Chapter 2 of David C. Kang. *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute*. Columbia University Press, New York, October 2010

## 5 Liberalism: Democratic Peace Theory

Are democracies less likely to fight each other?

- Michael W. Doyle. Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12(3):205–235, 1983
- Neta C. Crawford. A security regime among democracies: cooperation among Iroquois nations. *International Organization*, 48(3):345–385, July 1994

## 6 Liberalism: Capitalist Peace Theory

Does economic interdependence stop conflict?

- Beth Simmons. Pax Mercatoria and the Theory of the State. In Edward D. Mansfield and Brian M. Pollins, editors, *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict: New Perspectives on an Enduring Debate*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 2003

## 7 Liberalism: Institutionalism

Can international institutions stop conflict?

- Robert O. Keohane. International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work? *Foreign Policy*, (110):82–194, 1998

## 8 Constructivism: Identities and Interests

Is anarchy what states make of it?

- Chapters 1 and 5 of Martha Finnemore. *National Interests in International Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1996

## 9 Constructivism: Norms and Ideologies

Is anarchy what people make of it?

- Nina Tannenwald. The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use. *International Organization*, 53(3):433–468, 1999



- Sankaran Krishna. Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 26(4):401–424, 2001

## 10 Dependency Theory / World Systems Theory

Is the profit motive the driving force of international relations?

- Theotonio Dos Santos. The Structure of Dependence. *The American Economic Review*, 60(2):231–236, 1970
- Johan Galtung. A Structural Theory of Imperialism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 8(2):81–117, 1971

[first paper prompt distributed]

## Part II: A very brief history of the modern state system

### 11 The Origins of the Modern State System

What are states and where do they come from?

- Charles Tilly. War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Peter B. Evans, and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Bringing the State Back In*, pages 169–191. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985

### 12 The European Empires

Why did European states prevail over political structures elsewhere? How did a global state system emerge?

- Chapter 1 of Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, October 2010
- Chapters 1-2 of Dani Rodrik. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company, February 2011

### 13 The First World War

Why did the First World War begin? How did the Versailles settlement succeed or fail?

- Chapter 5 of Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, October 2010

## 14 The Interwar Period and the Second World War

Why did the Second World War begin? How was the settlement of the Second World War different from that of the First?

- Chapter 6 of Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, October 2010

[first paper due]

## 15 The United Nations and Decolonization

What is international law? Why did decolonization occur?

- Stanley Hoffmann. International Systems and International Law. *World Politics*, 14(1):205–237, October 1961
- Chapter 4 of Dani Rodrik. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company, February 2011
- Chapter 2 of Martha Finnemore. *National Interests in International Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1996

## 16 The Cold War and the Nuclear Revolution

Was the Cold War inevitable? How do nuclear weapons change wars, crises, or arms races?

- “X” (George F. Kennan). The Sources of Soviet Conduct. *Foreign Affairs*, 25(4), July 1947. Volume Title: July 1947
- Albert Wohlstetter. The Delicate Balance of Terror. *Foreign Affairs*, 37(2), January 1959. Volume Title: January 1959

## 17 Unipolarity

How did American supremacy change global politics? How did it change American politics?

- Francis Fukuyama. The End of History? *The National Interest*, (16):3–18, 1989
- Charles Krauthammer. The Unipolar Moment. *Foreign Affairs*, 70(1):23–33, 1990

[second paper prompt distributed]

## Part III: Problems in international relations

### 18 War: System-Level

Are some distributions of power more conducive to peace than others? Is there a valid distinction between peace and stability? What is the stability-instability paradox?

- Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer. Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability. *World Politics*, 16(3):390–406, 1964
- Chapter 8 of Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Massachusetts, 1979

### 19 War: Dyad-Level

Can wars be rational? Could rationalist theories of war incorporate realist, liberal, or constructivist theories of war?

- James D. Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–414, July 1995
- Jonathan Kirshner. Rationalist explanations for war? *Security Studies*, September 2000

### 20 Human Rights: Laws of War and Interventions

Are there limits to acceptable action in war? Can these limits be enforced? Does a powerful state (like the United States) have a responsibility to protect citizens of other states from human rights abuses?

- Chapter 3 of Martha Finnemore. *National Interests in International Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1996
- Jon Western and Joshua S. Goldstein. Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(6), November 2011
- Virginia Page Fortna. Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War. *International Studies Quarterly*, 48(2):269–292, June 2004
- Alexander B. Downes. Regime Change Doesn't Work. *Boston Review*, September 2011

## 21 Human Rights: Activism and Shaming

Do international advocacy networks have an effect on human rights?

- Chapter 1 of Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn A. Sikkink. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press, 1998
- Emilie M. Hafner-Burton. Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem. *International Organization*, 62(4):689–716, 2008
- Jack Snyder. Backlash against human rights shaming: emotions in groups. *International Theory*, 12(1):109–132, March 2020

[second paper due]

## 22 Economics: Global Stability

Who manages the world economy?

- Stephen D. Krasner. State Power and the Structure of International Trade. *World Politics*, 28(3):317–347, 1976

## 23 Economics: Growth and Development

How can we explain wealth inequality between countries? Is trade always good?

- Chapter 4 of Martha Finnemore. *National Interests in International Society*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1996

- Chapters 7 and 9 of Dani Rodrik. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company, February 2011

## 24 The Environment: Free-Rider Problems

What is excludability? What is rivalrousness?

- Garrett Hardin. The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859):1243–1248, 1968
- Chapter 3 of Scott Barrett. *Why Cooperate?: The Incentive to Supply Global Public Goods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, July 2007

## 25 The Environment: Upstream-Downstream Problems

What is an externality? Should higher emitters pay for climate finance? For climate reparations?

- Thomas C. Schelling. Some Economics of Global Warming. *The American Economic Review*, 82(1):1–14, 1992
- Jeff D. Colgan, Jessica F. Green, and Thomas N. Hale. Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change. *International Organization*, 75(2):586–610, February 2021

[third paper prompt distributed]

## Part IV: The future of international relations

### 26 The End of Unipolarity?

Are we living in bipolarity? Are we living in multipolarity?

- G. John Ikenberry. The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism After America. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(3):56–68, 2011
- Barry R. Posen. Emerging Multipolarity: Why Should We Care? *Current History*, 108(721):347–352, 2009
- Chapter 10 of John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, updated edition edition, 2014

## 27 The Transformation of the State System?

How far can globalization go?

- Moisés Naím. Globalization. *Foreign Policy*, (171):28–34, 2009
- Thomas C. Schelling. A world without nuclear weapons? | American Academy of Arts and Sciences. *Daedalus*, 4(138):124–129, 2009
- Steven R. Ratner. International Law: The Trials of Global Norms. *Foreign Policy*, (110):65–80, 1998
- Kenneth N. Waltz. Globalization and Governance. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 32(4):693–700, December 1999
- Chapter 10 of Dani Rodrik. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company, February 2011

## 28 The Future of the Field of International Relations

Are international relations paradigms useful?

- Helen V Milner, Ryan Powers, and Erik Voeten. The Myth of the Eclectic IR Scholar? *International Studies Perspectives*, 24(3):308–335, 2023
- Lina Benabdallah, Carlos Murillo-Zamora, and Victor Adetula. Global South Perspectives on International Relations Theory, November 2017

[third paper due]