

Political Science 3328
International Relations
School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences
The University of Texas at Dallas

Spring 2025

Time: Mon-Wed, 11:30AM –12:45PM

Room: Green Hall 3.302

Teaching Assistants: Humza Khan

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Drop-in Hours: Mondays, 1:00 – 3:00PM

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What This Course is About

Almost every aspect of our lives is not just touched but radically transformed by political interactions of global scope. This course helps students make sense of those global political interactions through introducing them to the history, core concepts, and major contemporary challenges of international relations. It focuses on key enduring questions that international relations scholars have been asking for centuries: why does war occur? Why do some nations and not others prosper economically? What forms of international society are most conducive to human flourishing? Through readings, discussion, engaged exercises, and joint reflection the course seeks to equip students to meaningfully join the rich scholarly tradition that has sought to better understand these questions as a key part of engaged citizenship.

What You'll Learn

The goal of this course is to give you a solid foundation in the context, core concepts, key issues, and contemporary challenges in international relations. By the end of the course you should have achieved the following objectives:

- You will have a strong understanding of how today's international system came about and be conversant with the central concepts scholars use to understand it, including anarchy, soft and hard power, and levels of analysis.
- You will understand the major features of the international system, including international conflict, international economics, international organizations, and international law.
- You will be able to apply the concepts and features from the first two learning objectives to better understand current events and some of the major challenges in today's international system
- You will be able to effectively and insightfully apply your own research, analysis, and critical thinking to the international system.

How Hard You'll Have to Work

I expect you to put in an average of 5 hours of independent learning per week on average outside of class throughout the semester. This includes reading, taking notes, studying for exams, working on writing assignments, and answering online discussion questions. Note that this is an average, not a minimum or maximum. In some weeks you may spend less than this (for instance if you do not have an assignment due), in some weeks you may spent significantly more.

What Books You Have to Buy

University textbook costs are a travesty, and deeply unfair to students who do not come from economically privileged backgrounds. Costly textbooks have been shown to be a barrier to education among historically marginalized college students, making reducing textbook costs a social justice issue.¹ UTD's student basic needs survey found a high number of students went without purchasing a textbook because they were unable to afford it. In recognition of this fact, there is no required textbook for this class. All the required readings are either available on eLearning or elsewhere online. You should complete the reading before the first class period in the week where it is listed on the schedule to be prepared to discuss it during that class time.

All required readings are indicated as required on the class schedule below. Most weeks also have additional recommended readings that will deepen your understanding of the topics under discussion.

I may add additional readings or change readings for future class sessions as the semester goes on. When I do so, I will give you at least one week's notice and change the version of the syllabus on eLearning.

What Topics We'll be Covering and When (and what you have to read)

Part 1: Background and Core Concepts

1. January 22: Introduction: What is international politics?
 - a. **No Required Reading**
2. January 27 – 29: Where did the current international system come from?

Required Reading:

 - Erik Ringmar “History of International Relations: A Non-European Perspective:” Chapter 1 “Introduction,” Chapter 6 “Africa,” and Chapter 8: “European Expansion.”

Recommended Reading

 - Andreas Osiander “Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth”
 - Barry Buzan and Richard Little. “World History and the Development of non-Western International Relations Theory.” In *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*. Edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan.
3. February 3 – 5: Anarchy and Hierarchy

Required Reading:

 - Jack Donnelly: “Elements of the Structures of International Systems” (pages 609-622)
 - Helen Milner: “The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations Theory: A Critique.”

Recommended Reading

 - The rest of the Donnelly article
 - Alexander Wendt: “Anarchy is What States Make of It”
 - David Lake: “Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics.”
4. February 10 – 12: Power

Required Reading:

¹ J. Jacob Jenkins et al., “Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue,” *Journal of Interactive Media Education* 1, no. 3 (2020): 1–13.

- Joseph Nye: “Hard, Soft, and Smart Power.”
- Maria Repnikova: “The Balance of Soft Power: The American and Chinese Quests to Win Hearts and Minds.”
- Amitav Acharya: “Hierarchies of Weakness: The Social Divisions that Hold Countries Back.”

Recommended Reading

- All articles in Foreign Affairs July/August special issue “What is Power.” You can access these by searching for “Foreign Affairs” on the UTD library website, and then searching for “what is power” on the Foreign Affairs website.
- Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall. “Power in International Politics.”
- Michael Beckley. “The Power of Nations: Measuring What Matters.”

5. February 17 – 19: Levels of Analysis

Required Reading:

- Carmen Gebhard. “One World, Many Actors: Levels of Analysis in International Relations.” Pages 32-45 in Stephen McGlinchey “International Relations.”
- Kenneth Waltz. “Man, The State, and War: Introduction.”

Recommended Reading

6. February 24 – 26: Gender, Race, and Class

a. Required Reading:

- i. Cynthia Enloe: “Gender Makes the World Go Round: Where Are the Women?” in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*
- ii. Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken: “Why Race Matters in International Relations.”
- iii. W. E. B. DuBois. “The African Roots of War”

b. Recommended Reading:

- i. Carol Cohn: “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals.”
- ii. Sankaran Krishna. “Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations.”
- iii. Robert Vitalis. “The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations.”

Part 2: Major Questions

7. March 3 – 5: Why do we wage war?

Required Reading

- Christopher Blattman: *Why We Fight*: “Introduction” and “Why We Don’t Fight”
- Tanisha Fazal: “The Return of Conquest? Why the Future of the Global Order Hinges on Ukraine.”

Recommended Reading

- The rest of *Why We Fight*
- James Fearon: “Rationalist Explanations for War.”

8. March 10 – 12: How has international conflict changed? (Terrorism, Civil War, State Fragility)

Required Reading

- Barbara Walter. “The New New Civil Wars.”
- Comfort Ero and Alan Boswell. “South Sudan’s Dismal Tenth Birthday: The World’s Youngest Country Needs an Overhaul.”

- Katherine Brown. "Transnational Terrorism." Pages 152-162 in Stephen McGlinchey "International Relations."

Recommended Reading

- Martha Crenshaw. "The Causes of Terrorism."
- Monica Duffy-Toft. "Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?"
- Hazem Adam Goharrah, Paul Huth, and Bruce Russett. "Civil Wars Kill and Maim People – Long After the Shooting Stops."

March 17 – 19: **Spring Break: No Class**

9. March 24 – 26: How does international trade and finance work?

Required Reading

- Gunter Walzenbach. "Global Political Economy." Pages 87-97 in Stephen McGlinchey "International Relations."
- Michael Hiscox. "The Domestic Sources of Foreign Economic Policies."

Recommended Reading

- Niccolo Bonifai, Irfan Nooruddin, and Nita Rudra. "The Hidden Threat to Globalization: Why the Developing World is Turning Against Free Trade."

10. March 31 – April 2: Why do we have international organizations and how do they shape our world?

Required Reading

- Shazelina Abigin. "International Organizations." Pages 71-77 in Stephen McGlinchey "International Relations."
- Madeleine Albright. "Think Again: The United Nations."
- Hannah Ryder, Anna Baisch, and Ovigwe Eguegu. "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five."

Recommended Reading

- Suzanne Nossel. "The World Still Needs the UN."
- Barbara Walter, Lise Morje Howard, and V. Page Fortna. "The Astonishing Success of Peacekeeping."

11. April 7 – 9: What is international law and how does it work?

Required Reading

- Council on Foreign Relations. "What is International Law?"
- Evan Bloom: "Five Takeaways from the US Continental Shelf Announcement."
- Marietje Schaake: "The Premature Quest for International AI Cooperation."

Recommended Reading

- Knut Traisbach. "International Law" Pages 57-71 in Stephen McGlinchey *International Relations*.
- Mira Rapp-Hooper: "Parting the South China Sea: How to Uphold the Rule of Law."

Part 3: Contemporary Challenges

12. April 14 – 16: Transnational Authoritarianism

Required Reading

- Anne Applebaum: “The Bad Guys Are Winning”
- Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon. “The Real Crisis of Global Order: Illiberalism on the Rise.”

Recommended Reading

- Anna Luhrmann and Staffan Lindberg: “A Third Wave of Autocratization is Here: What is New About It?”
- Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig: “The Long Arm of the Strongman: How China and Russia Use Sharp Power to Threaten Democracies.”

13. April 21 – 23: Existential Risk – Nuclear Weapons, Climate Change, and AI

Required Reading

- William MacAskill: “The Beginning of History: Surviving the Era of Catastrophic Risk.”
- Stewart Patrick. “The International Order Isn’t Ready for the Climate Crisis: The Case for a New Planetary Politics.”

Recommended Reading

- Toby Ord: Selections from *The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*
- Priya Satia. “The Way We Talk About Climate Change is Wrong.”
- Arunabha Ghosh, Artur Runge-Metzger, David G. Victor and Ji Zou. “The New Way to First Climate Change.”
- Rose Gottemoeller: “How to Stop a New Nuclear Arms Race.”

14. April 28 – 30: **Student-Selected Topic 1:**

Required Reading

- **TBD**

Recommended Reading

15. May 5 – May 7: **Student Selected Topic 2** and final wrap-up

Required Reading

- **TBD**

Recommended Reading

How You’ll Learn in Class

If you were to take an educated person from the Middle Ages and put them in the 21st century, it’s likely that one of the only things that would be completely familiar to them would be a standard university lecture. In other words, it’s an old-fashioned and often not very helpful format. While lectures are sometimes necessary, they are far from the best way to encourage and retain learning. Thus, while I will give short lectures in each class session, much of our class time will be spent on other, more interactive exercises. We will typically have a more lecture-heavy class on Monday, and a more discussion-based class on Wednesday.

- *Current events discussion:* As a branch of political science, International Relations is deeply concerned with the important events in contemporary politics. To that end, a portion of class discussion will be devoted to current events and led by students themselves (See the Current Events Discussion assignment below). I expect students to keep up with major news sources to participate in these discussions. Recommended sources (all of which are either freely available

online or through the UTD library) are *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Vox*. The “world” section of Google News is also a good aggregator of relevant international stories.

- *In-Class Exercises*: Large portions of several of our class sessions will be used for small group discussion and other in-class exercises. For example, I might present you with a scenario from current events and ask small groups of you to come up with various policy responses. We will also use various games and simulations to analyze important concepts.
- *Online Reflective Responses*: After each class session one of our TAs will post a question based on the day’s readings and discussion on eLearning. I encourage students who feel less comfortable or find it difficult to participate in in-class discussion to offer comments and thoughts here.

Because IR concerns major political issues of the day, many of the conversations we have in class may be particularly emotional for students. I encourage lively debate, but demand that all students treat one another with dignity and respect. Critique ideas, not people. Disrespecting other students will not be tolerated, and students who engage in it may be asked to leave the class.

How I’ll be Evaluating Your Learning

1. **Attendance**: You are required to attend class. You can have up to 3 unexcused absences with no penalty. For each additional absence you will lose 1% of your total final grade. Any exceptions to this rule for religious reasons, sports team schedules, family emergencies, etc... must be approved by our teaching assistant before the class session that will be missed.
2. **Participation (20% of final grade)**: I expect you to participate actively in class. A significant portion of our class time will be used for discussion and other interactive activities, as described in the class format session. Our TA will evaluate your participation grade based on genuine engagement with the topics informed by having completed the readings and spent a reasonable amount of time attempting to understand them. Not knowing all the answers is fine if you can demonstrate that you have made a significant effort. For those of you who are less comfortable speaking up in a larger class session you have a few alternate ways of showing active participation.
 - **Small-Group Exercises**: Much of our in-class discussion will take place in small groups, rather than in front of the full class – this can provide a more comfortable environment if you’re not comfortable speaking in front of the full class.
 - **Pre-Class Reading Response Questions**: Before each class session our TA will create a forum on the course eLearning page where you can post questions that came up for you while doing the reading for that class session. All questions that show genuine engagement with the material will boost your participation grade.
 - **Post-Class Reactions**: In the same forum after each class session our TA will post a discussion question that you can offer your thoughts and opinions in reaction to. All reactions that show genuine engagement with the material will boost your participation grade.
3. **Current Events Discussions (15% of final grade)**: At the beginning of the semester, you will select two Wednesday class sessions before which you will prepare a 300-500 word bullet point summary of a current event relevant to international relations. This summary will be due on eLearning no later than midnight on the day prior to that class session. At the beginning of each Wednesday class we will split into small groups and if you have picked that week you will present your current event to the other members of your group. Note that to ensure that all class sessions have good discussion, there will be a limited number of discussion slots for each class session, which will be assigned on a

first-come, first-served basis. You will be graded both on how well the bullet points fulfill the rubric laid out on eLearning and on how actively and effectively you facilitate discussion in class.

4. **Background and Core Concepts Exam (20% of final grade):** During our March 3rd class session we will conduct a 75-minute open-book virtual exam on eLearning covering the material from the readings, lectures, and discussions up to that point. The exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short essay questions. On the short essays you will be graded based on how well you are able to creatively apply the course material to answering the questions, not just on whether your answers include correct information.

There's increasing research that students benefit from having forms of evaluation that match their skills and personality. To that end, for both the major topics and final major assignment you have two options. Students will select their preferred option on the first day of class.

5. **Major Topics Assignment (20% of final grade).**

- a. Major Questions Option 1 Argument Evaluation Paper: You will write a 1500-2000 word paper focused on one of the five topics from this section of the course. The paper should examine at least two conflicting perspectives on some question related to the topic, evaluate the arguments behind those perspectives, and propose ways in which one could conduct research to definitively determine which of the two is closer to the truth. You will be graded based on how well your paper achieves the goals laid out in the assignment rubric on eLearning. The paper will be due at **11:59PM on April 13th**
 - b. Major Questions Option 2 Open-Book Exam: You will complete a short-answer format exam on eLearning covering the material from the readings, lectures, and discussions from weeks 7 through 11. The exam is open-book, and can be taken online any time from **April 11th to April 13th**. The exam will be timed – you will have one hour from the time you begin the exam to complete it, and the exam cannot be re-taken. The exam must be taken by yourself. Taking the exam together with other students in the class or sharing question prompts with other students will constitute cheating. See the plagiarism and cheating policy below for more details. You will be graded based on how well you are able to creatively apply the course material to answering the questions, not just on whether your answers include correct information.
6. **Final Assignment (25% of final grade).**
 - a. Final Option 1: Crisis Negotiation Simulation: If you select this option you will participate in a simulation of a crisis negotiation between government leaders during our final exam period (I will add the specific date and time once this has been assigned by UTD). Students selecting this option will be assigned roles in the simulation and given details of the scenario during the class session on April 30th. Each student in the simulation will also turn in a 250-500 word document summarizing their role in the simulation and the interests and strategy that they will pursue. This document must be turned in on eLearning before the simulation. Students will be graded based on how well they apply the tools of international relations analysis to the situation, their level of knowledge of their role, and their level of activity and engagement during the simulation.²
 - b. Final Option 2 Analytical Paper: If you select this option you will write a 1500-2500 word analytical paper on a topic of your choosing relevant to international relations. An analytical paper is a paper that tries to explain why something happened the way that it did or is the way

² This option will only be feasible if selected by at least 30-40% of the students in the class. If fewer than 10 students choose this option then all students will write the final paper.

that it is, making an argument with evidence to support your explanation. A paper could, for instance, try to explain a specific historical event such as World War II; an aspect of a current world political problem, like nuclear weapons, an interesting empirical phenomenon, such as “Why do democratic countries tend not to go to war with each other?” Or even a fictional phenomenon such as: “Why is war so common in *Game of Thrones*?” Outstanding papers will focus on a single, strong argument and weave in the tools and theories of International Relations. Students choosing this option must turn in a 500 word summary of their topic and the argument they wish to advance, with at least three sources no later than **Wednesday, April 23rd, 11:59PM**. The summary should be turned in on eLearning. This summary will be graded. It will count as 10% of your final paper grade. The paper itself will be due no later than the end of our class’s scheduled final exam period, which I will add to the syllabus once we have received the date from UTD.

How to Understand Your Grades

I do not grade on a curve. Each of your work will be evaluated independently. It is possible for every student in the class to get an A. However, getting such high marks will require hard work. Here is how grades should be interpreted, as well as how a letter grade translates to a 0-100 numeric scale.

A	(94 and higher)	The student performed far beyond my expectations, displaying a grasp of the analytical and empirical material as well as creativity or insight beyond the material.
A-	(93 – 90)	I was impressed by the student’s performance. The student has strong analytical, theoretical, and empirical skills.
B+	(89 – 87)	The student met all my expectations in the course.
B	(86 – 84)	The student met most expectations, but demonstrated weakness in either analytical or empirical skills.
B-	(83 – 80)	The student demonstrated weakness in analytical and empirical skills, but clearly attempted to prepare for assignments.
C	(79 – 70)	The student demonstrated disregard for the course requirements.
D	(69 – 60)	The student demonstrated negligence or disrespect in their assignments.
F	(Below 60)	The student violated a class policy, did not attend class, or did not perform to a level that I knew they were attending.

If you wish to dispute your grade on an assignment you must contact our TA within 48 hours of receiving your grade. The TA will assist you in setting an appointment with the TA and me to discuss it. At this appointment you must bring a typed summary of the reasons why you believe the grade is unfair. I will then reevaluate the assignment based on these reasons. All revised grades are final, and they may be lower than the original grade.

All assignments must be turned in by the due date on the syllabus. An assignment turned in late at all will receive an automatic half-letter grade point deduction. Assignments turned in more than three days late may receive heavier penalties, at my discretion.

How to Best Get Answers to Your Questions

For questions on due dates, assignments, or any other minor matters related to the course, you should first double-check the syllabus and our course eLearning page. If you are unable to find an answer there, then you should reach out our course TA. The TA will refer questions they are unable to answer to me.

If you would like to chat with me directly, I'm always happy to discuss any questions you might have about the course, the assignments, or your academic work in general. If you have a quick question that can't wait until our next class session, the best way to get in touch with me is by coming by my drop-in hours (listed at the top of the syllabus). This is time that I set aside for discussion with students. You may come to my office any time during those hours with no need to schedule an appointment ahead of time (though if you have a complicated question, it may be helpful to send me a heads-up ahead of time, so I can prepare). If you would like to meet with me and are unable to come to office hours, please reach out to our TA Humza and he will help you to schedule a time to meet with me.

Some Tips on Reading and Writing for This Course

All written assignments should be turned in on eLearning. I have no preferences regarding font, margin-size, etc... (within reason). However, you should make your submissions double-spaced to make my comments easier. I give all guidelines on appropriate paper length in terms of words, not pages.

All your written work should advance an argument, with an introduction presenting the key points of your argument, a body giving evidence in support of that argument, and a conclusion drawing the connections between the evidence presented and the key points from the introduction. Any claims you make in your written work that are not common knowledge should have a source and a citation attached to them so that our TAs and I know where you are getting the information from. My preference is for citations to be made in the Chicago author-date style ([more information here](#)), but you are welcome to use any standard academic citation style as long as all the information necessary for us to identify your sources is included and you use the same style throughout the entire assignment.

Clear and professional writing can be a challenge, particularly for those first entering college, however, it is one of the most useful life skills you can get from your higher education. To that end, I evaluate written assignments both on content and the clarity and style of the writing. Written work should be clear and not have grammatical and spelling errors.

If you wish to improve your writing, your TA and I are happy to help you think through how to do so. UTD's Writing Center also provides free, one-on-one sessions where you can learn how to improve your writing. You can find more information [here](#).

You may find completing all the reading for this class challenging. There are a few tricks that you can use to make the reading load easier and ensure that you are prepared to discuss the readings in class.

1. Always read the introductions and conclusions of articles carefully. These will typically have the most important points for you to remember.
2. Always ask yourself: "what are the one or two main things the author is trying to say in this piece?" It can often be helpful to write this down and have it with you to refer to in class.
3. If necessary, skim the central parts of articles, particularly if the introduction gives you a clear sense of the core argument. If, after skimming, you're not sure what the article was about, you may need to re-read in a little more depth.

What the Formal Policies for this Course Are

I encourage all students to briefly review the complete list of UT Dallas's standard course policies at <https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>. I highlight a few particularly important policies below.

Policy on Academic Integrity

I expect students to behave with honor, honesty, and integrity when it comes to both their behavior in class and their course assignments, and to not engage in any form of academic dishonesty (plagiarism including self-plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or collusion). Suspected incidences of academic dishonesty will receive discipline following the procedures and potential penalties laid out in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The recent emergence of highly skilled large language models such as ChatGPT represents a particular challenge for academic integrity. While you are not prohibited from using such tools in your written assignments, you must disclose the use of such tools and cite them in your work, including the prompt and original text provided by the large language model. Any un-cited use of ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence writing tool constitutes academic dishonesty.

Accommodation for Disability

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the Office of Student Accessibility, located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. Their phone number is 972-883-2098, email: studentaccess@utdallas.edu and website is <https://studentaccess.utdallas.edu>. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Office of Student Accessibility letter of accommodation and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.