

Politics 15a

Introduction to International Relations

Summer 2021: June 1 – August 9

Session O: Online Asynchronous

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Course description

This course introduces the study of International Relations. Topics include the nature of the state system, the sources of international conflict and cooperation, the outbreak and settlement of wars and militarized disputes, and the origins and effects of international institutions and international agreements. The course is organized in three parts: 1) Conceptual and Historical Foundations; 2) Theoretical Perspectives; 3) Problems in International Security.

Prerequisites and enrollment

Prior coursework in Politics or International Relations is not required. Enroll using class number 2013.

Mode of instruction

Instruction for the course will be in remote asynchronous format. There are no class meetings.

Course structure

This is a ten-week course. Week 10 is ‘finals week,’ when you will write a take-home final exam. In Weeks 1-9, your assignments are to:

- Review course readings and two asynchronous lectures.
- Complete two remote exercises; a discussion forum post and a reply; and a weekly quiz.

Latte course website

All course content, with the exception of two required texts, can be accessed in Latte. Login using your UNET ID and Password at <https://moodle2.brandeis.edu>.

Asking questions and requesting help

Please ask questions about course materials or international relations in general using the “Ask a Question” forum in Latte. Office hours are by appointment; email me to request a meeting. I will answer emails and questions in Latte within 24 hours.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Identify and interpret major patterns, trends, shifts, and decisive moments in international relations.
- 2) Utilize analytical tools to understand state actions and interactions, and the consequences for the international system.
- 3) Critically evaluate contending perspectives on and diverging explanations of general trends and major developments in international relations.
- 4) Apply concepts and theoretical perspectives to interpret primary-source information such as government documents and news media articles.
- 5) Advance to higher-level study in more specialized courses in international relations.

Course texts

There are two course texts. Purchase or rent them from the [Brandeis Bookstore](#), or the vendor of your choice. Be sure to have access to the edition listed, not an earlier edition.

- 1) Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 10th edition (Pearson, 2017). ISBN-13: 978-0-13-462541-6.
- 2) Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis, *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, 13th edition (Pearson, 2016). ISBN-13: 978-0-13-448201-9.

Financial barriers

Digital images of the two course texts are accessible via Brandeis Library. Follow the links in the Course Resources tab on Latte. Although it isn't the best option for image quality and navigability, it is a cost-saving alternative. If you are having difficulty paying for course texts, contact [Student Financial Services](#).

Technology requirements

The technology you will need for this course is an Internet-connected device; a PDF reader; word processing software; and Google apps accessible via your UNET account. To obtain

software, visit the [Information Technology Services](#) website. If you are having difficulty paying for technology, contact [Student Financial Services](#).

Note regarding credit hours

This is a four credit-hour course condensed into a ten-week term. Plan to spend a minimum of 12 hours per week on asynchronous lectures, course readings, and assignments.

Assignments

The required assignments and their weight in the final grade are as follows:

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|---------------------------|-----|
| 1) Class exercises | 20% |
| 2) Discussion forum posts | 20% |
| 3) Latte quizzes | 35% |
| 4) Final assessment | 25% |

Class exercises

Each week, you will complete two class exercises, one for each topic for the week. Class exercises will ask you to analyze and interpret a document or set of documents, or assemble and organize information about a case using the Internet. Class exercises are due by 11:59pm EST on Fridays.

Discussion forum posts

Each week, you will submit one discussion forum post, and you will comment on a classmate's post. Discussion forums will ask you to analyze a news media article related to that week's topics, or answer a discussion question based on course readings. Forum posts are due by 11:59pm EST on Fridays, and comments by 11:59pm EST on Sundays.

Latte quizzes

Each week, you will take a quiz in Latte after reviewing the asynchronous lectures and completing course readings. Quizzes are 20 questions; they are untimed, open book, and open note. You may take a quiz up to two times; the highest score will count. Additional details, including academic integrity for quizzes, are posted in the page "Latte quizzes" in the Course Resources tab on Latte. Quizzes are due by 11:59pm EST on Sundays.

Final assessment

The final assessment will be 3 essays of no more than 750 words each; it is untimed, open book, and open note. You will be asked to apply concepts and examples from the course to scenarios in international relations. The essay prompts will be circulated at the start of Week 10 on Monday, August 2. Answers must be submitted via Latte by 11:59pm EST on Sunday, August 8.

Grading

Assignments will be graded on a point basis. Final scores for the term will be computed using the weights for each assignment and this scale: A (93+); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D (65-69); F (<65).

Academic accommodations

The course has no timed exams. If you are entitled to accommodations because of a documented disability, email me your letter of accommodation no later than Sunday, June 6. For questions, contact Student Accessibility Support at access@brandeis.edu or 6-3470.

Illnesses and emergencies

If an illness or emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, be sure to notify me via email on or before the due date. Late work without a valid excuse may be deducted one-third of a letter-grade per 24 hours.

Community standards

Exemplary citizenship is expected of every class member in all social and online interactions, bar none. Respect the ideas, opinions, and backgrounds of your classmates; always be thoughtful and constructive online. Everybody is a valued contributor to our learning community.

Academic integrity

Honesty is expected in all of your academic work. Consult the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards' [Rights and Responsibilities](#) handbook and its [Academic Integrity](#) webpage for policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Also be sure to review academic integrity for quizzes on the page "Latte quizzes" in Course Resources. Suspected academic dishonesty will be referred to the Director of Academic Integrity.

Course schedule

See Latte for the detailed schedule of course readings, asynchronous lectures, and assignments. Each week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday. At the top of each weekly topic page in Latte is an overview and a checklist of tasks to keep track of your work. Each week is organized into two parts, or ‘sessions,’ each one with course readings, an asynchronous lecture, and a class exercise. In the headings for each session are learning objectives; important terms, concepts, people, and events; a list of course readings; links to asynchronous lecture recordings; and the class exercises. At the bottom of the weekly topic page is the discussion forum and the Latte quiz.

Part 1: Conceptual and Historical Foundations

Week 1: June 1 – June 6 (note the term begins on Tuesday)

- Session 1.1: The State System
- Session 1.2: The ‘Long’ Nineteenth Century

Week 2: June 7 – June 13

- Session 2.1: World War I and After
- Session 2.2: The Interwar Crisis

Week 3: June 14 – June 20

- Session 3.1: World War II and After
- Session 3.2: The Cold War

Part 2: Theoretical Perspectives

Week 4: June 21 – June 27

- Session 4.1: IR Theory: Realism
- Session 4.2: IR Theory: Institutionalism

Week 5: June 28 – July 4

- Session 5.1: The State Level
- Session 5.2: Domestic and Transnational Politics

Part 3: Problems in International Security

Week 6: July 5 – July 11

- Session 6.1: Regional Conflicts
- Session 6.2: War in Yemen

Week 7: July 12 – July 18

- Session 7.1: Nuclear Weapons
- Session 7.2: Nuclear Proliferation

Week 8: July 19 – July 25

- Session 8.1: The United Nations
- Session 8.2: UN Peacekeeping

Week 9: July 26 – August 1

- Session 9.1: Regime Change
- Session 9.2: International Terrorism

Part 4: Finals Week

Week 10: August 2 – August 8

- Final assessment is due by 11:59pm EST on Sunday, August 8