

Politics 15a

Introduction to International Relations

Session O: Online Summer Session

June 1 – August 9, 2020

*** If you were placed on the wait list, please e-mail me to request a consent code *****Contact details**

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Course description

This course introduces the study of International Relations. Topics include the nature of the state system, the outbreak and settlement of violent conflicts, the sources of international conflict and cooperation, and the origins and effects of international institutions and international agreements. The course is organized in three parts: 1) conceptual and historical foundations; 2) contending theoretical perspectives; 3) issues in international security.

Prerequisites and enrollment

Prior coursework in Politics or International Relations is neither expected nor required. If you were placed on the wait list, e-mail me to request a consent code.

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 information literacy skills to analyze an important state decision in the past century using government documents.
- 5) Advance to higher-level study in more specialized courses in international relations.

Course structure and preparation time

The course will be conducted asynchronously; there are no required class meetings. I will hold office hours via Zoom, and I will make every effort to reply to e-mail within one day. Students are expected to spend approximately 12-15 hours per week on course readings, lecture materials, and assignments.

Latte online platform

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

Required texts

There are two required texts, which you should purchase or rent from 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: 978-0-13-440316-8.
- 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

If you are having difficulty purchasing textbooks, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.

Assignments

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

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Discussion forum posts | 15% |
| 2) Online quizzes | 30% |
| 3) Digitized documents analysis | 30% |
| 4) Final assessment | 25% |

Discussion forum posts

Most weeks, you will submit one forum post, and you will comment on a classmate's forum post. Forum posts respond to either a 'question of the day' based on course readings, or to prompts about a supplementary news media or think tank reading.

Online quizzes

Most weeks, you will take an untimed quiz on Latte after viewing lectures and completing course readings for that week's lessons.

Digitized documents analysis

The digitized documents analysis will investigate decision-making in international relations using government documents and other primary-source materials. You will choose from a list of topics, and documents for your analysis of your topic will be linked via Latte. A write-up of no more than 2,500 words is due by Monday, July 27.

Final assessment

The final assessment will be an open book, open notes written exam in two parts: part one, passage interpretation, will ask you to interpret and critically evaluate three passages from course readings; part two, applying knowledge, will ask you to use concepts and examples from the class to analyze two 'what if' scenarios in international relations. Your answers are due by Sunday, August 9.

Grading

Assignments will be letter-graded. Final scores for the term are computed using the weights for each assignment and this scale: A+ (4.3); A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D (1.0); F (0.0).

Illnesses and emergencies

If an illness or emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, be sure to notify me via e-mail on or before the due date. Work submitted late without a valid excuse may result in a one-third letter-grade deduction per 24 hours.

Academic accommodations

There are no timed exams in this course. If you are entitled to other accommodations because of a documented disability, e-mail me your letter of accommodation no later than the second week of the term. For questions, contact Student Accessibility Support at access@brandeis.edu or 6-3470.

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 all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Any suspected instance of academic

dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. A guide for proper citation and attribution is available from [Brandeis Library](#).

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 in Latte forums. Everybody is a valued contributor to our learning community.

Course schedule

The course runs for 10 consecutive weeks. Each week is organized into two lessons. See Latte for the detailed schedule of lecture materials, course readings, and assignments for each lesson.

Week 1: week of June 1

- Lesson 1: The State System
- Lesson 2: The ‘Long’ Nineteenth Century

Week 2: week of June 8

- Lesson 1: World War I and After
- Lesson 2: The Interwar Crisis

Week 3: week of June 15

- Lesson 1: World War II and After
- Lesson 2: The Cold War

Week 4: week of June 22

- Lesson 1: IR Theory: Realism
- Lesson 2: IR Theory: Institutionalism

Week 5: week of June 29

- Lesson 1: State Structure
- Lesson 2: Domestic and Transnational Politics

Week 6: week of July 6

- Lesson 1: Introducing the Digitized Documents Analysis
- Lesson 2: Regional Conflicts



Week 7: week of July 13

- Lesson 1: Nuclear Weapons
- Lesson 2: Nuclear Proliferation

Week 8: week of July 20

- Lesson 1: The United Nations
- Lesson 2: UN Peacekeeping

Week 9: week of July 27

- Lesson 1: International Terrorism
- Lesson 2: Regime Change

Week 10: week of August 3

- Lesson 1: World Order
- No second lesson; work on your final assessment