

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PLSC 111
Summer 2025 Syllabus

Contact Information

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Course Description

The course provides a grounding for other courses in international relations by introducing students to the study of conflict and cooperation among states through an examination of the major issues, methods, questions, and theories of world politics. Students should leave the course proficient in four key areas, able to:

- Discuss the crucial events of contemporary world politics (WWI – Present);
- Argue the main schools of international relations theory and their approaches;
- Test a social science theory through qualitative or quantitative research; and
- Assess competing explanations for international conflict and cooperation.

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Policy on Attendance, Grading and Course Requirements

There are no pre-requisites for the course. Students are expected to do all the readings and attend both weekly meetings. Attendance is mandatory and is graded as part of participation. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

Reading Responses (Two, worth 10% each)	20%
Discussion Participation	20%
Midterm:	30%
Final Exam:	30%

In order to receive an overall passing grade, students must receive a passing grade in at least four of the five components of the final grade. In other words, a grade less than 60 in two or more components of the course will lead to a failing grade in the overall course.

Policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Please read these elements of the university's policy on plagiarism.

- You need to cite all sources used for papers, including drafts of papers, and repeat the reference each time you use the source in your written work.
- You need to place quotation marks around any cited or cut-and-pasted materials, IN ADDITION TO footnoting or otherwise marking the source.
- If you do not quote directly – that is, if you paraphrase – you still need to mark your source each time you use borrowed material. Otherwise, you have plagiarized.

It is the policy of Yale College that all cases of academic dishonesty be reported to the chair of the Executive Committee.

Policy on the use of ChatGPT and Other LLMs

ChatGPT and other LLMs are now capable of editing, rewriting, and even generating original content for papers. It is permissible to use these tools for this course, but *only* in accordance with the following requirements.

Failure to meet these requirements will be considered an academic integrity violation.

- You must indicate where text has been generated or altered by a LLM with footnotes that make clear where the affected text begins and ends.
- You must include an appendix (which does not count towards your word count) that *shows your work* by copying and pasting the relevant interaction with the model, including all of your prompts and the raw text generated.
- LLMs still hallucinate. You are responsible for independently fact checking, sourcing, and appropriately citing any claims made in generated text that are not common or general knowledge.

Policy on Assigned Readings and the Must-Should-Could System

There are assigned readings associated with each lecture. The readings for this class are chosen to represent a wide variety of perspectives on world politics and give students a solid empirical grasp of the issues at stake.

Like many social science classes, this course has a significant reading load. As a summer course, weekly reading expectations are even higher than usual.

Across the university, one of the most frequent answers to the question “What would you change about this course?” is a reduced reading load. So why continue to assign so many pages of reading?

There are two main reasons.

- First, to directly expose you to great works and important documents.
- Second, to convey information, significantly increasing the number of topics we can cover in only 10 substantive lectures.

However, I take a realistic approach to assigned readings. While you are expected to devote approximately 20% of your working time each week to a full 3-credit course, there are weeks where you will have other priorities or time commitments that preclude you from completing the full slate of assigned readings.

Therefore, each reading has been categorized as “Must,” “Should,” or “Could.”

“Musts” are the absolute minimum expectation for the day. This is usually either multiple short pieces or a single longer piece. If it’s listed as a must-read, you can bet that content from that reading will show up on the quizzes, midterm, and/or final exam. By taking this course, you are committing to completing at least the “must” reading for each lecture.

“Shoulds” make up the remainder of the expected readings for a topic. These are pieces that would be listed alongside the “musts” as assigned reading on a standard syllabus. If a reading is identified as a should-read, you should try to at least skim the piece prior to lecture and ideally return to review it later. Content from “should” readings is fair game to show up on quizzes or exams.

“Could”s are purely optional readings. These are additional resources for students with greater interest in learning more about a topic. Content from “could” readings *will not* directly show up on a quiz or exam (although you may of course cite “could” readings when answering an exam question).

Schedule of Assigned Readings

Lecture One

Power, Interests, and Ideologies: Is There a “Right Way” to Look at the World?

Must:

Stephen M. Walt. 1998. “International Relations: One World, Many Theories.”

David C. Kang. 2003. “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks.” *International Security*.

Laura Sjoberg. 2015. “Seeing Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in International Security.” *International Journal: Canada’s Journal of Global Policy Analysis*.

Robert Vitalis. 2000. “The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations.” *Millennium*.

Should:

Alexander Wendt. 1992. “Anarchy is what states make of it.” *International Organization*.

Immanuel Kant. 1795. “Perpetual Peace.”

Margaret Mead. 1990. “War is Only an Invention -- Not a Biological Necessity.”

Thucydides. Circa 411 BCE. “The Melian Dialogue.”

Could:

Michael Howard. 2001. *The Invention of Peace*. Introduction and Chapter 4.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. 2001. “Power and Interdependence” Excerpt, in *Conflict After the Cold War*, Richard K. Betts ed.

Kenneth Waltz. 1988. “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory.”

Lecture Two

Why Are There States? & The Tragedy of the Commons: Climate Case Study

Must:

Scott Barrett. 2014. “Why Have Climate Negotiations Proved So Disappointing?” *Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature*.

Garrett Hardin. 1968. “The Tragedy of the Commons.” *Science*.

Should:

Robert O. Keohane and David G. Victor. 2011. “The Regime Complex for Climate Change.” *Perspectives on Politics*.

Tom Rivett-Carnac. 2021. “Inside the Paris Climate Agreement” *The Negotiators*.
[Podcast available here](#)

Could:

Jessica F. Green. 2013. *Rethinking Private Authority: Agents and Entrepreneurs in Global Environmental Governance*. Chapter 1.

Michaël Aklin and Matto Mildemberger. 2020. “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics*

IPCC Report on the Mitigation of Climate Change, Policymakers Summary 2022 [here](#)

Lecture Three

Regime Type and Peace: The Science of International Relations

Must:

James N. Druckman et al. 2011. "Experimentation in Political Science." in *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.

Paul M. Sniderman. 2011. "The Logic and Design of the Survey Experiment: An Autobiography of a Methodological Innovation" in *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.

H.E. Goemans and Alexandre Debs. 2010. "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War." *American Political Science Review*.

Michael Tomz and Jessica Weeks. 2013. "Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review*.

Should:

Andrew Bennet and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2014. "Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices."

Jacob I. Ricks and Amy H. Liu. 2018. "Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide."

Jessica Weeks. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *American Political Science Review*.

Could:

Kenneth Schultz. 1999. "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War." *International Organization*.

Alan Gerber and Don Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Introduction and Appendix A pp.1-17, 447-451 (23 pages)

Lecture Four

The Origins & Conduct of WWI

Must:

James Fearon. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization*.

John Keegan. 1976. *The Face of Battle*, Excerpt from Chapter 4: The Somme, pp 225-54.

NB: You **should** read the entire chapter, but if you must, you can read only this section of the chapter before lecture.

Should:

Michael Howard. 1984. "Men Against Fire: Expectations of War in 1914." *International Security*.

John Keegan. 1976. *The Face of Battle*, Chapter 4: The Somme.

Could:

Alexandre Debs. 2020. "Mutual Optimism and War, and the Strategic Tensions of the July Crisis." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Hew Strachan. 2010. "The First World War as a global war." *First World War Studies*.

Lecture Five

The Inter-war Period and WWII

Must:

Charles Kindleberger. 1973. *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*. Chapter 14.

Herman Ochsner, *History of German Chemical Warfare in World War II: Part I (The Military Aspect)*, Summary, pp.23-24. (2 pages)

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/NHC/NewPDFs/USArmy/USArmy%20German%20Chemical%20Warfare%20WWII%20Pt.%201.pdf>

Should:

Haile Selassie, "Appeal to the League of Nations," June 1936.

Woodrow Wilson, "Peace Without Victory," 22 Jan 1917.

Theodore Ropp. 1959. *War in the Modern World*, Chapter 10.

Could:

Justin Peck. 2022. "America Firstism from a Developmental Perspective." *American Political Thought*.

Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch. 1990. "Catastrophic Failure: The French Army and Air Force, May-June 1940." *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Lecture Six

The Liberal International Order and the Cold War

Must:

Gideon Rose. 2019 “The Fourth Founding: The United States and the Liberal Order.”
Foreign Affairs.

Robert Jervis. 1978. “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma.” *World Politics*.

Should:

John Lewis Gaddis. 2006. *The Cold War: A New History*, pp.7-34, 40-47.

George Kennan. 1951. “Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *American Diplomacy*, pp.89-90, 95-106.

Ian Hurd. 2011. *International Organizations*. Chapter 3: The United Nations **and** Chapter 5: The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Could:

John Ikenberry. 2019. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*. Chapter 6.

Jack S. Levy. 1984. “The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology.” *International Studies Quarterly*.

Paul Thomas Chamberlin. 2018. *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace*.

Andrew F. Krepevech Jr. 1988. *The Army and Vietnam* **and** Harry G. Summers. 1995. *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*.

Lecture Seven

Nuclear Weapons, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control

Must:

Thomas Schelling. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. “The Manipulation of Risk.” (pp.92-125.)

Rebecca Davis Gibbons. 2018. “The Humanitarian Turn in Nuclear Disarmament and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” *The Nonproliferation Review*.

Matthew Kroenig. 2013. “Think Again: American Nuclear Disarmament.” *Foreign Policy*.

Should:

Bernard Brodie. 1946. *The Absolute Weapon*. “War in the Atomic Age.” (pp.14-56.)

Rose Gottemoller and Laura Rosbrow-Telem. 2022. “What it Took to Negotiate a Nuclear Arms Treaty With Russia.” *The Negotiators*. [Podcast available here](#)

Matthew Bunn et alii. 2014. “Advancing Nuclear Security: Evaluating Progress and Setting New Goals” Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. [here](#)

Edward Geist and Andrew J. Lohn. 2018. “How Might Artificial Intelligence Affect the Risk of Nuclear War?” *RAND*.

Could:

Nina Tannenwald. 1999. “The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use,” *International Organization*.

Matthew Bunn. 2013. “Nuclear 101: How Nuclear Bombs Work.” *YouTube*. [Part 1 here](#), [Part 2 here](#)

Samuel Glasstone and Phillip J. Dolan. 1977. *The Effects of Nuclear Weapons* [here](#)

Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs. 2014. “The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation,” *International Security*.

Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz. 1995. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*. Chapters 1-2 (pp. 3-87).

Lecture Eight

International Law, Treaties, and Trade

Must:

Robert Keohane. 1984. *After Hegemony*. Chapter 1.

George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom. 2009. "Is the good news about compliance good news about cooperation?" *International Organization*.

Stephen Walt. 2017. "There's Still No Reason to Think the Kellogg-Briand Pact Accomplished Anything." *Foreign Policy*.

John Kaag & Sarah Kreps. 2014. *Drone Warfare*. Chapter 5, "The Ethics of Drone Warfare."

Should:

Andrew T. Guzman. 2010. "Chapter 2: A General Theory of International Law." *How International Law Works: A Rational Choice Theory*.

Amanda Kennard. 2020. "The Enemy of My Enemy: When Firms Support Climate Change Regulation." *International Organization*.

Beth Simmons. 2010. "Treaty Compliance and Violation" *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Could:

Oona Hathaway and Scott Shapiro. 2017. *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*. "The End of Conquest."

Christina Davis. 2012. *Why Adjudicate? Enforcing Trade Rules in the WTO*. Chapters 2 and 4 (Airbus-Boeing Case Study).

Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. 1969. [here](#)

Oona Hathaway. 2012. "The Law of Cyber-Attack."

Lecture Nine

Unipolarity, Insurgency, and Foreign Aid

Must:

Frances Fukuyama. 1989. "The End of History?" *The National Interest*.

Carly N. Wayne. 2023. "Terrified or Enraged? Emotional Microfoundations of Public Counterterror Attitudes." *International Organization*.

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*.

Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun. 2003. "The Responsibility to Protect." *Foreign Affairs*.

Richard Betts. 1994. "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention." *Foreign Affairs*.

Should:

Nuno P. Monteiro. 2014. *Theory of Unipolar Politics*, Chapter 6 and Conclusion.

Stephen Biddle, Jeffery A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2012. "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *International Security*.

Virginia Page Fortna. 2015. "Do Terrorists Win? Rebels' Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes." *International Organization*.

Could:

Mary Kaldor. 1999. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*.

Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III. 2009. "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars." *International Organization*.

Crost, Benjamin, Joseph Felter, and Patrick Johnston. 2014. "Aid under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict." *American Economic Review*.

Lecture Ten

Rising China, Resurgent Russia, and the backlash against Globalization

Must:

Graham Allison, “Is war between China and the US inevitable?” [TED Talk here](#)

John Sullivan. 2020. “Trapped By Thucydides? Updating the Strategic Canon for A Sinocentric Era.” *War on the Rocks*. [here](#)

Naveed Jamali, David Brennan, and Tom O’Connor. “Exclusive: U.S. Expects Kyiv to Fall in Days as Ukraine Source Warns of Encirclement” *Newsweek*. February 24, 2022. [here](#)

Dan Rice. “The Untold Story of the Battle for Kyiv.” *Small Wars Journal*. May 31, 2022. [here](#)

Kenneth Scheve and Matthew J. Slaughter. 2007. “A New Deal For Globalization.” *Foreign Affairs*.

Should:

Stephen Biddle. 2004. *Military Power*. Chapters 2 and 3.

Thomas Christensen. 2016. “Why China Still Poses Strategic Challenges.” *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*.

Jessica Weiss. 2017. “China and the Future of World Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics*.

Beth A. Simmons and Michael R. Kenwick. 2022. “Border Orientation in a Globalizing World.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

Could:

Dingding Chen, Xiaoyu Pu, and Iain Johnston. 2013. “Debating China’s Assertiveness,” *International Security*.

Garry Kasparov. 2015. *Winter is Coming*.

Lawrence Broz, Jeffrey Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth. 2021. “Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash.” *International Organization*.